



The first housing of CCB, Dommelstraat in Eindhoven

Coöperatieve Centrale Boerenleenbank

Until 2016 the organisational structure of Rabobank in the Netherlands was one of local banks supported by a central organisation. The Coöperatieve Centrale Boerenleenbank in Eindhoven was a forerunner of the Rabobank and operated as the central bank organisation for the local agricultural credit unions (boerenleenbanken) that were its members. In 1972 the Coöperatieve Centrale Boerenleenbank merged with the Coöperatieve Centrale Raiffeisen-Bank (CCRB) and became Rabobank.

1898 Establishment and goal

Establishment of the Coöperatieve Centrale Boerenleenbank (CCB) 1898

The Coöperatieve Centrale Boerenleenbank (CCB) was established in December 1898 in response to the decision by the Coöperatieve Vereniging van Raiffeisen-banken en Landbouwverenigingen (as the CCRB was still known at the time) to accept only those agricultural banks which met the requirements of the legislation governing cooperative associations (Wet op de coöperatieve verenigingen, 1876). Membership of the CCB was open to all agricultural credit unions, irrespective of their legal basis, provided that they adhered to Christian principles. This distinguished the CCB from the CCRB. The banks which were members of the CCB tended to be located in mainly Catholic areas and, as such, were part of a Catholic network. This compartmentalisation of society on confessional grounds (known as 'verzuiling' in Dutch) began to gradually erode from the 1960s.

Management board and directors of CCB 1923



Under direct supervision of De Nederlandsche Bank 1952

The CCB was a central organisation of local agricultural credit cooperatives in the Netherlands. It operated as their central bank. For the local banks the CCB also served as the giro clearing institute, central investment institution, knowledge centre, advocate and control body. In its control body role, the CCB conducted regular inspections to supervise the management and administrative control at the local banks. This situation was the result of the dual cooperative structure and the statutory obligations. In 1953 the statutory aspects of this role were enhanced based on the Credit System Supervision Act (1952) whereby the regulator in the Netherlands (De Nederlandsche Bank, referred to as DNB) delegated supervision of the member banks to the CCB. The CCB itself came under direct supervision of DNB from 1952, given its role as a lender to large regional and national agricultural cooperatives.

The cooperative structure of CCB consisted of three bodies: the management board, the supervisory board and the general meeting (of the members). This general meeting monitored and supervised the activities of the other two bodies. It also selected the members of the management and supervisory boards, drew up the profit and loss account and the balance sheet, and took decisions on all matters relating to the association.

Stable growth

The idea of agricultural credit unions based on the cooperative model quickly gained ground in the Netherlands. In 1900 46 banks were members of the CCB. By 1920 that number had risen to 283 and by 1930 to 490. In the 1950s some 10 other banks joined the CCB, due in part to the new supervision legislation. The number of member banks reached a high point of 601 in 1961. Local mergers reduced that number to 570 by the time the national merger took place in 1972. In contrast, the total number of members at the local banks grew from 141,000 to 213,000 in the ten years up to 1972.

High point of 601 member banks 1961

Like the Raiffeisen banks, by this time the Boerenleenbanken had become more than just the exponents of agrarian business. For instance, they had extended their banking activities to serve small- and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). With the dawn of the computer age, many private individuals started to bank with them as well. This was the result of the shift in how employees were paid in the 1960s. Workers no longer received



Housing of CCB, Dommelstraat in Eindhoven 1911-1967

their wage packet or salary in cash but via a giro transfer to a bank current account. These were known as ‘family accounts’ at the Boerenleenbanken. The current account with cheque book was a new development in payment transactions in which automation of the banks played a key role.

In the wake of these changes came new forms of service provision and products, such as mortgages, insurance products and travel agency services. In 1965 CCB acquired the Amsterdam-based securities broker N.V. Effectenkantoor Schretlen & Co (1911) in order to develop its securities business. For mortgages, the CCB had already created a mortgage bank in 1908, known as the Boeren-Hypotheekbank NV. This was followed in May 1969 by the establishment of the finance company, De Lage Landen N.V. (DLL). As its activities expanded so too did the number of staff employed by CCB.

The CCB in Eindhoven city centre

In the early years the CCB did not have its own premises. Management and supervisory meetings were held in a café close to Eindhoven railway station. In 1899 it was from this café that an invitation to tender was issued to build premises that would provide offices, a Dutch auction facility for butter, a conference room, and living and storage areas. For more than 10 years this building on the Dommelstraat was home to the CCB and its director among others. In 1910 the CCB commissioned a new bank building at the corner of the Dommelstraat and what was to become the Raiffeisenstraat. The facade of the building bore coats of arms representing the Netherlands, the city of Eindhoven and the CCB. As the organisation grew, an extension was built at the rear in 1932. The bank building, which was designed by the architect J. Stuyt, is now a listed building. The CCB quickly outgrew these premises and set up various departments at ten other locations in central Eindhoven. In the mid-1960s the bank commissioned another new building and *moved to Fellenoord 15* in 1967. The design and construction of this modern construction of concrete and glass reflected the specific requirements of the new computer age.

Merger of the CCRB and the CCB into the Coöperatieve Centrale
Raiffeisen-Boerenleenbank B.A., known as Rabobank 1972



Banking premises
Fellenoord in Eindhoven 1975
Photographer Herman Jonkman

Merger to form Rabobank

As the distinctions within the banking sector blurred and banks expanded their branch networks, the sector was becoming increasingly competitive in rural and urban areas alike. In many places there were both a Boerenleenbank and a Raiffeisenbank. Integration was therefore the next logical step. The establishment of the N.V. Gemeenschappelijk Bankkantoor in The Hague in 1949 had already signalled the start of collaboration. This body dealt with some of the payment transactions for large companies and organisations which were serviced by both central bank organisations. There was increasing collaboration on other fronts as well (for instance, consultation or a form of collaboration) between both organisations.

Following two years of preparation, in May 1972 the member banks of both organisations voted in favour of a merger. On 1 December 1972 the merger of the CCRB and the CCB into the Coöperatieve Centrale Raiffeisen-Boerenleenbank B.A., known as Rabobank, became a reality.

Further reading

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