

---

## Limit to enrolment

Two Bachelor's programmes  
step on the brakes | **p.6** |

---

## Force of nature

More murders during  
extreme weather | **p.8** |

---

## Flora

New plant guide  
in 25 parts | **p.10** |

# RESOURCE <sup>[EN]</sup>

For students and employees of Wageningen UR

no 11 – 28 January 2016 – 10th Volume



Living among  
refugees

p.12

**INTERNATIONAL  
EDITION**



# >> WOUT + FOOTBALL CARDS

Wout Pronk, responsible for post and archive matters at the LEI in The Hague



## ‘It is sheer nostalgia’

A lot of people collect football cards as kids. They get them from chewing gum packs, the petrol station or the supermarket. Wout Pronk never stopped. He has countless albums full of them. As well as signed photos of course. ‘Footballers used to be approachable; you could go right up to the changing room door. I like those old photos best. Oh, and if anyone has an incomplete album lying around in the attic, I’m interested.’ <sup>©</sup> RK / Photo: Harmen de Jong



# >> CONTENTS

no 11 – 10th volume



**>> 4**  
**PARLIAMENTARIANS**  
 The Hague comes to campus



**>> 16**  
**FORMER GLORY**  
 Unitas revisits its past



**>> 20**  
**GHOST TOWNS**  
 Countless empty new buildings in China

## AND MORE...

- 5 credits for MOOC**
- 6 Deposit scheme study 'lax'**
- 9 Crowd measures air quality**
- 18 Interviews with new directors**
- 22 Is science a 9 to 5 job?**
- 24 Swimming classes for international students**
- 27 No selection yet for Master's programmes**
- 25 Meanwhile in Iran**

## WHERE DO YOU WORK?

Five stranded sperm whales dominated the national news for a few days. As usual, experts were tripping over each other to say something about the phenomenon. Each programme has its own favourite. Someone from the whale team at natural history museum Naturalis, or from the Dutch Wildlife Health Centre at the University of Utrecht. Ecomare and the NIOZ say their bit as well, as does a Texel beachcomber. And we had our own Mardik Leopold. He was the first to report after a couple of days that the sperm whales were healthy. The national media picked up on this and ran stories on Leopold. But where does he work, actually? There were several different versions: Imares, Wageningen University, Wageningen Universiteit, 'Imares, part of Wageningen UR' and even 'Imares Texel'. Of course, what really matters is what Leopold had to say, but it is perfectly clear that outsiders haven't got a clue where he works. It just so happens that I was bombarded with rumours this week about a new branding policy in Wageningen UR. I don't know the details yet, but perhaps the Leopold case can provide some inspiration.

*Edwin van Laar*



**>> Is eating meatballs a right? | p.11**

# WAGENINGEN UR DOES BUSINESS WITH IRAN

- Iran seeks advice on agriculture and water management
- Drought is a big problem

Wageningen UR is currently working on a plan for improving agricultural production in Iran. A curriculum is also being developed for a new water institute in Iran and there is a possibility that training will be provided to improve food safety.

An Iranian delegation which visited Wageningen last year has asked Wageningen UR to provide expertise in the field of agricultural and water management, reports Wageningen International.

Iranian agriculture is hampered by severe drought and falling groundwater levels. Wageningen UR is working on a multidisciplinary approach to making more efficient use of the available water. Wageningen knowledge of climate-smart agriculture, irrigation and the breeding of drought-resistant crops has a role to play in this.

The second area in which Wageningen UR has been asked to contribute is the curriculum for a new water institute in Teheran. This institute will focus on courses, con-

sultancy and a professional training programme in the field of water management. The Wageningen input will relate to the multidisciplinary themes of 'water and agriculture' and 'water and the economy'. The Wageningen courses are already being taught on the Bachelor's and Master's programmes at the university. The Unesco-IHE water institute in Delft is going to contribute to the new Iranian water institute too.

Iran is also interested in Wageningen knowledge about food safety. On 29 January Rikilt will sign a memorandum of understanding with the Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (SBUMS) in Teheran. The details of the collaboration still have to be worked out, but Rikilt director Robert van Gorcom expects that his institute will provide training in how you can track down contamination in food using new methods and apparatus. But the Iranian partners have other ambitions too, Van Gorcom believes. He thinks the university wants to develop a reference labo-

ratory which not only detects undesirable substances in food but can also independently improve the quality of the research on food contamination. It is possible that this university would like to fund PhD students at Rikilt to develop new methods of analysis.

The collaboration with Iran has been on the back burner for a few years because of the western sanctions. But in spite of these sanctions there have always been links between Iranian institutions and Wageningen UR. Last year for example, Rikilt trained two employ-

ees of the Shahid Beheshti university in detecting PCBs and dioxin in food.

The university's main partners in Iran are the University of Teheran, the Tarbiat Modares University and the Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. There are currently 35 Iranian PhD candidates in Wageningen. And researchers at the university have published nearly 100 articles together with Iranian academics in the past five years. **AS**

*See also the feature 'Meanwhile in...' on page 29*



PHOTO: CPWF BASIN FOCAL PROJECT



PHOTO: GUY ACKERMANS

## DUTCH MPs VISIT CAMPUS

A delegation from the lower house of the Dutch Parliament visited the Wageningen UR campus on 25 January.

In the course of a full programme the MPs learned about Wageningen soil and climate research, health research, genetic modification and research on the biobased economy. The afternoon ended with a drinks party in Impulse at which a handful of young Wageningen knowledge-based companies introduced themselves.

At the presentation on food security and new plant breeding techniques in Radix the MPs asked a lot of questions about how global food production can be increased. The Lower House will be debating this subject soon. **AS**



# CREDITS FOR MOOC

## • A first: credits for online course

From April Master's students can take an entirely online elective course and gain three credits for it. This is the first time that a MOOC (massive open online course) is worth credits.

The course, *The future of food: environmental sustainability* can be taken entirely on-

line. The credits, however, can only be obtained by taking the exam on campus. This is because it is not yet possible in Europe to convert a certificate gained online into official credits. 'But we are heading towards a situation in which you can take MOOCs as part of your degree programme, as long as they are properly examined,' says Ulrike Wild, director of distance learning at Wageningen UR. She explains that universities and the min-

istry of Education are also talking about the option of gaining credits with MOOCs from other universities.

Students can already register for the first Wageningen online elective. They are allowed to spread the course over two periods (periods 5 and 6). Next academic year *The future of food: environmental sustainability* will even be available as an elective all year round. Exams will then be scheduled four times a year. **KG**

## © COLUMN | STIJN

### PhD

My heart races when I think about the manuscript I have submitted. That one comma and that strange word



choice – should I have changed them? 'No!' I tell myself out loud, 'It is gone, you are not going to look at it again.' I take a few deep breaths.

Just as I manage to breathe more calmly a slight feeling of panic comes over me. Should I have taken another look at table 2? What if there's a 0.031 somewhere instead of a 0.032? Or, worse still, what if a whole row has moved and policymakers make wrong decisions based on my ineptness?

I take myself in hand: 'Stijn, you have gone through it at least a thousand times; it is fine.' More deep breaths. Slowly my panic gives way to general anxiety about my thesis. This manuscript is just a start. Soon a complete book needs to be ready, with endless figures and millions of opportunities to make mistakes. I try to think about something else. Not research for a change. A break from thinking about things in the past that should have been done better or things that could go wrong in future. I call an old friend. He looks after Scottish highlanders in nature reserves: that must be very calming.

'So how are you then?' he asks eventually. 'Well, I'll be happy when I've finished my PhD,' I say quietly. 'If I don't manage what's to become of me?'

Silence. 'Um, sorry,' he says hesitantly, 'but what's a PhD?' **KG**

**Stijn van Gils** (28) is doing doctoral research on ecosystem services in agriculture. Every month he describes his struggles with the scientific system.



## in brief

### >>FISH FARMING

#### Research relocating

Five fish farming researchers from Imares in Yerseke have relocated to Livestock Research in Wageningen. They hope being on campus will make it easier to collaborate with animal scientists. Three researchers have moved to the Animal Breeding and Genomics Centre in Radix, the other two to Zodiac. The five are working among other things on the introduction of the yellowtail kingfish (*Seriola lalandi*) to Europe. This relative of the horse mackerel lives in the Indian and Pacific Oceans and is very popular as an ingredient for Japanese sushi. **AS**



PHOTO: ROBERT BLONK

### >>CROWDFUNDING

#### Platform launched

As of Monday 25 January, it is possible to donate money to Wageningen research via crowdfunding.wageningenur.nl. On 18 January, three projects were given permission to raise funds online. The first is Sander Koenraadt and Arnold van Vliet's mosquito radar. They want to raise 25,000 euros to develop an app. Wieger Wamelink, who is growing vegetables in soil like that on Mars and the moon, hopes to raise 25,000 euros to extend this research. Finally, Gerlinde De Deyn, Ingrid Lubbers and Jan-Willem van Groenigen are asking 'the crowd' for 10,000 euros so that they can make a video with artist Wim van Egmond showing the interaction between life above ground and soil life. **KG**

### >>TEAM OF THE YEAR

#### Fighting Ebola

The Central Veterinary Institute employees who performed analyses last year in Ebola labs in Sierra Leone and Liberia have been voted the Animal Sciences Group's Team of the Year. They are Bart Kooi, Arie Kant, Jet Kant, Anne-mieke Dinkla, Heleen Klos, Nancy Beerens and Evelien Kern. In 2015, they used their expertise to help combat the Ebola epidemic. The prize, which was first awarded in 2006, consists of a bronze statue for the team plus 500 euros and an engraved pen for each team member. **AS**

For more information, read a longer version of these news items at [resource-online.nl](http://resource-online.nl).

## DEPOSIT SCHEME STUDY SLIPSHOD

### • Finding of integrity committee leaked

A 2012 Wageningen study of the costs of the deposit scheme for PET bottles was sloppy, according to Wageningen UR's Committee for Academic Integrity (CWI). This was reported in *Trouw* newspaper, based on a leaked report.

The committee received 14 complaints about the study by Food & Biobased Research. There are grounds for one of the complaints: that the researchers should have scientifically verified the figures on waste that companies gave them.

Using these figures, the researchers came up with high estimates of the costs of the deposit system, which their clients - the companies - passed on to government with the aim of getting the deposit system scrapped. Supporters of the system did not trust the costs estimate and submitted a complaint to the CWI. The committee concludes now that the researchers have not breached academic integrity but were lax.

The committee's report has not been published yet,

says Wageningen UR spokesperson Simon Vink. He suspects one of the critics sent the draft statement to *Trouw*. **RR**

**Want to know more about the deposit scheme issue?**

**The facts have been lined up for you on resource-online.nl**

## TWO DEGREE PROGRAMMES WANT ENROLMENT LIMIT

### • Biotechnology and Molecular Life Sciences • Concerns about popularity

The Biotechnology and Molecular Life Sciences programme committees have submitted a request for an enrolment limit. The committees say that the massive growth in student numbers is threatening to undermine the quality of the teaching.

Both degree programmes have grown fast in recent years. Biotechnology had 52 first-years in 2011, compared with 108 this year. Preliminary registrations for the coming academic year suggest the programme is set for another big rise. The number of Molecular Life Sciences first-years has grown from 44 in 2011 to 92 now. The programme committee is worried by the huge interest from schoolchildren. An open day last November attracted around 700 young people, compared with about 300 in previous years.

'We can cope if we grow by a couple of percent every year,' says Biotechnology programme director Sonja Isken. 'But if we get a couple more 20 to 30 percent in-

creases, we will have a real problem.' It would not be possible to recruit enough new lecturers and revise the timetable in time. The quality of the practicals is also at risk, says Wilko van Loon, the Molecular Life Sciences programme director. 'We could no longer let the students work in pairs, so they would have to be in threes. That would affect the quality.'

A lengthy process applies before you can introduce an enrolment limit. For instance, the measure has to be approved by the university's Education Institute, the Executive Board and the Council. So the cap on the number of students would take effect from September 2017 at the earliest. That lengthy process is precisely why they have submitted the request now, explains Isken. If the intake turns out manageable after all, they can always withdraw the request.

The number of first-years and the student population as a whole at Wageningen have been growing steadily for years. So far, only one degree programme has introduced an enrolment limit. Nutrition and Health decided in 2014 to accept a maximum of 130 students (now 140).

**RR**



PHOTO: AART-Jan VAN DE GLIND

## PRINTING PASTA

How can you print pasta with a 3D printer? For three Tilburg high school students, including Irene Mommers (photo), this was the topic of their interdisciplinary final project. They made pasta dough and brought it to Food Process Technology to print a wheel layer by layer. Printing plastic is becoming increasingly normal but it is no easy task to print your own meal. The students' design for a rose was too complicated and even the pasta wheel requires a bit more experimentation before we'll see it on our plates. **RR**

**Watch the video on resource-online.nl.**



# DUIVENDAAL TO BECOME FORUM, COURTYARD OR PARK

- Three plans for WUR site
- Former administration centre to go

The future of the Duivendaal site, Wageningen UR's former 'campus' in the town centre, is still undecided. That was clear last week in the second public information evening about Duivendaal. Town planner Marlies Rohmer presented three options: Duivendaal as forum, courtyard or park.

According to Rohmer, all three embody that typical 'Duivendaal feel', meaning greenery, a mix of functions and a central place for the listed buildings on the site. None of the plans retain Wageningen UR's former administration centre. The huge Meteo building is also set to go.

The Forum plan features detached buildings, similar in appearance to the existing listed buildings, encircling a central area with squares. The Courtyard plan consists of various U-shaped courtyards, each with an unusual tree

in the middle. The Park plan differs in that it encompasses the adjoining the Plantsoen road. The residential buildings mainly take the form of two rows of houses along Costerweg.

The three scenarios are still at the design stage. An important question is whether the Hof van Wageningen hotel wants to move to new premises in Duivendaal or not. Duivendaal will have room for a variety of functions. Around 70 percent of the buildings will be used as residential accommodation. Student housing is also a possibility. **RR**



The three sketches for Duivendaal: Forum, Courtyard and Park.

## DISSECTING WHALE IS 'TRIAL OF STRENGTH'



**Five sperm whales got stranded on Texel island. What does a marine researcher do then?**

'I went straight to the beach that evening. There was a lot of commotion, but all I could see in the dark was five silhouettes. I had a quick look and went home. The next morning they were dead. That changed the situation completely. Then it was like there were five stomachs on the beach. Only they were still in their packaging.'

**In the end you got the stomachs and intestines from the dissecting team. So what was your weekend like then?**

'A group of us worked on it for four days. One and a half whales a day. Cutting the guts into sections of one metre, and rinsing and sieving the contents. Imares director Tammo Bult and his wife helped too.'

**How did you feel when you were done?**

'I was cold for a whole day. It was freezing, it hailed and there was a strong wind in the harbour where we were working. And being a desk-based biologist, you end up with aching muscles. It was a real trial of strength.' **RR**

**Who?** Mardik Leopold, researcher at Imares Wageningen UR

**What?** Revealed the contents of five whale stomachs

**Where?** In numerous newspapers, on *Radio 1*, the children's news and TV programme *Kennis van Nu*

# FRESH DAILY!

Visit [resource-online.nl](http://resource-online.nl) for the latest news



**RESOURCE**  
For students and employees of Wageningen UR



# EXTREME WEATHER LEADS TO VIOLENCE

- **Causal relationship proven for colonial Nigeria**
- **Method exposes false correlations**

Extremely heavy rainfall and drought influenced levels of violence in colonial Nigeria. PhD candidate Kostadis Papaioannou has demonstrated this using a method which could help now in refuting false correlations.

Google ‘spurious correlations’ and you will find, for example, a statistical correlation between people who drown in a swimming pool and the number of films starring Nicolas Cage. This is nonsense of course, because there is no causal relationship. Yet there can be a danger of this even in more serious research, says Papaioannou, a PhD candidate in the Agricultural and Environmental History chair group.

In recent years there have been an increasing number of studies of the relation between climate change and violence. The theory is that extreme weather harms agriculture, affecting the food supply and causing more conflict. One example is the high food prices which led to the Arab Spring in Egypt. But, says Papaioannou: ‘the majority of these studies only look for statistical correlations without verifying whether there is a causal relationship.’

The economic historian did verify this. He first compared rainfall figures with the number of prisoners, court cases and murders in colonial Nigeria from 1912 to 1945. There was no question of climate change yet then, but there were weather extremes. The figures show that periods of extreme drought or heavy rains corresponded to periods of serious violence.

In order to establish whether



there was also a causal relationship, Papaioannou studied reports by British colonial officers. And they spoke regularly of drought and floods as the cause of conflict. He also noted that the relationship was weaker in areas with

more cash crops providing additional income. Papaioannou sees this as reason to promote export agriculture in Africa now. His results will be published in the *Journal of Political Geography* this month. **BJT**

# USING MUSSEL TECHNOLOGY TO PAINT

- **Water-based paint that flows properly**
- **Chemistry inspired by mussels**

Professional housepainters have to use water-based paints because paints based on volatile solvents are bad for their health. But water-based paints are not as easy to use, which is why companies such as Akzo Nobel have been trying for a while to develop variants with better flow properties.

So the company was very interested in funding some great basic research by Juan Yang, a PhD candidate working for polymer chemist Marleen Kamperman. The starting point for her research is the mussel. That animal lives in water and adheres to surfaces. Mussels do this using strands of protein polymers. They are secreted from



PHOTO: RIJKS WATERSTAAT

the foot in a liquid, watery form. Once exposed to the outside environment, the strands solidify to become hard and tough. The mus-

sel's trick is the model for what a water-based paint should do, explains Kamperman. So the chemistry in question is inspired by the

mussel: the polymerization of catechol using an amino acid.

The resulting polymer is in fact a long chain with the catechol molecules hanging off it like charms. This catecholamine polymer is water-soluble in acidic environments and hardens in air. The curing is due to rapid oxidation of the catechol side groups of various chains. The network that this creates produces a thin film. Hardening is initiated by reducing the acidity of the solution.

In fact, that is one of the problems that still need to be tackled, explains Kamperman. ‘Akzo Nobel’s paint systems are in fact based on raising the acidity. They are not keen on a system in which the hardening takes place in a basic (high-pH) environment. That would mean altering all the paint components, such as the pigments, so that they too remain stable when using our route.’ **BRK**



## PUBLIC TO MEASURE AIR QUALITY

- **Amsterdammers equipped with sensor**
- **Dense measuring network without great expense**

Air quality in cities is being increasingly closely monitored. But there are few measuring stations as these are too expensive. So Matthijs Danes at Alterra is getting the crowd to work for him.

Using state-of-the-art sensor technology, everyone can play at being a scientist. And that is exactly what Danes is aiming at: to use simple technology to establish a dense measuring network for getting an accurate picture of the air quality in Amsterdam. He can get going now thanks to funding from the Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions (AMS).

The air quality in Amsterdam is measured in several different ways, explains Danes. 'The GGD has a network with 12 measuring locations. And the RIVM has two measuring stations in the city as well.' This provides a reasonable picture for the city as a whole, but little is known about local differences on a small scale.

Danes wants to see whether the blind spots between the stations can be filled in

with the help of the public. He is focusing on the Valkenburgstraat and the Kromme Waal, two streets in the top ten of Amsterdam streets with the highest concentrations of the exhaust gas NO<sub>2</sub>. The measuring sessions are planned for April and May.

The measuring will be done using a sensor developed in Wageningen. The data are sent in using an app. Of course, Danes adds, in accuracy the measurements collected in this way cannot compete with those from official stations. But they don't need to. 'Lay people explore the limits and take measurements in places where no one usually measures. By doing so they provide a spatial diversity you couldn't achieve using traditional measurements. The trick is to extract information from that broad package of measurements.'

Danes' project is one of eight initiatives to get off the ground with funding from AMS. Wageningen UR is involved in four of these projects. Smart Wasting is tackling Amsterdam's garbage problem. Climadaptool is developing an app for describing the city's climate issues, and Industrial Symbiosis will map the flow of mineral building materials in the city. AMS is contributing 25,000 euros to each of the projects, covering half the total project costs. **✎ RK**



## VISION <<

### 'Antibiotic-free meat is not always bacteria-free'



**The Dutch Sustainable Pork Chain (KDV), a group of 300 pig farmers, abattoirs, retailers and catering firms, wants to produce environmentally and animal-friendly meat. The organization now claims that it can supply meat from pigs reared 100 percent free from antibiotics. That will only be a success if the organization is clever in its communication with the consumer, says researcher Nico Bondt of the LEI.**

#### *Does the initiative stand a chance?*

'This could well fit into the overall KDV concept. KDV has its own outlets and might therefore be able to differentiate itself from the standard meat in the supermarkets. It is difficult, though, to promote antibiotic-free meat directly to the consumer, because you are profiling yourself in negative terms. You might unintentionally create the impression that there is something wrong with the other meat on the shelves.'

#### *Standard meat contains antibiotics?*

'It wouldn't surprise me if a lot of people think so, but that is not the case and it is not the issue. The issue is that the pigs on the farms didn't get antibiotics. That doesn't mean that the meat at the butchers is necessarily free of antibiotic-resistant organisms, because meat can become infected with these bacteria during the slaughtering process. You'll have to communicate very clearly about that. You could present antibiotic-free meat under a Healthy Life logo, for instance.'

#### *Apparently the supermarkets are interested.*

Antibiotic use in the livestock sector is an issue at the supermarkets, which feel the pressure of public opinion in favour of cutting down. So perhaps where antibiotic-free meat really goes down well is in the business-to-business trade, between the abattoir and the supermarket or butcher.'

#### *Are the production costs higher for this pork?*

'It's not too bad. You don't necessarily have to build a whole new shed. You do have to pay extra attention to the design of the shed, climate control, feed and management, and you can often do that fine in an existing shed. But it doesn't happen by itself. The KDV pig farmers have made big efforts to reduce antibiotic use, experimenting for years and exchanging experiences.' **✎ AS**





# WILD VEGETABLES MAY BE GOOD FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

- 105 species are eaten during pregnancy
- More research is needed on characteristics and benefits

During their pregnancies women in Ghana and Benin eat the leaves of various plant species. This custom can help combat undernutrition, write Tiny van Anel, special professor of Ethnobiology at Wageningen University and professor at the University of Leiden, and PhD candidate Alexandra Towns in the *Journal of Ethnopharmacology*.

Deficiencies of iron, zinc, vitamin A and to a lesser extent iodine are a big problem in developing countries. Around the world there are 100 million people with anaemia caused by iron deficiency, for example. Although the problem is coming in for plenty of attention, iron and zinc deficiencies are particularly persistent.

Van Anel and Towns questioned 56 women about their use



PhD candidate Alexandra Towns interviews women about their consumption of wild plants.

of plants, with the help of a group of students and interpreters. They also looked to see which plants were on sale at markets. It emerged that pregnant women

cook and make tea with a range of wild plants. A total of 105 species were mentioned: 81 in Benin and 32 in Ghana, with 8 overlapping species. 'A lot of them are weeds

you see growing along the side of the road, or which people take home and plant in their own gardens.'

Frequently mentioned species from the forest and savannah were the liana (*Dichapetalum madagascariense*) and the violet tree (*Securidaca longipedunculata*). According to the users, these plants are strengthening or help the baby to grow faster. In the scientific literature Van Anel and Towns found evidence that a number of the plant species contain beneficial nutrients. This kind of knowledge is often lacking, however, so it is not clear which substances a plant contains and whether our bodies can absorb them. 'That should be tested in the lab,' says van Anel.

The botanist suspects that wild plants could help supply the poorest of the poor with free nutrients. For this reason governments and aid organizations should not discourage people from picking them, as has happened in the past in Malawi. **RR**



This is what the photo pages in the new Flora will look like.

## NOVA FLORA NEERLANDICA IN THE PIPELINE

- Joop Schaminée to compile new flora
- Comprehensive guide in 25 parts

A new flora for the Netherlands is being drawn up. The driving force behind the reference work in 25 parts is Professor Joop Schaminée. The Nova Flora Neerlandica is intended as the first comprehensive and critical flora for the country. The plan was launched at natural history museum Naturalis in Leiden during the jubilee celebrations of the 170-year-old Royal Dutch Botanical Society (KNBV).

'You have these kinds of reference book all over Europe but for our country there is nothing yet, actually' says Schaminée. 'There is the Heukels, but that only runs to 400 pages. It contains only one species of blackberry, for example, whereas there are 200 different species in the country.'

KNBV chair Schaminée and his colleagues are aiming high. They want a scientific, critical

flora with an introductory volume, 12 volumes of text and twelve volumes of pictures. The first parts will see the light in about five years' time. The kick-off will be next year and many tens of authors will be involved. The series will be published by the KNBV Association for Field Biology.

Pictures will play a key role in the new flora. Each textbook is accompanied by a visual counterpart consisting entirely of photos. Every species gets a page of its own in high quality paper, where all its characteristic parts are illustrated. There is a need for such a work, says Schaminée. 'If you Google for a particular plant you usually only get a lot of photos of the flower. You don't see the leaves, the stem, the hairs, roots and seeds.'

A conscious decision was made too opt for a flora in book form even in this digital age, says Schaminée. 'People like paper, and are used to working with field guides and flora.' Anyone interested in the contents of the books can take a look on [www.novafloранеerlandica.nl](http://www.novafloранеerlandica.nl). **RR**



Is it acceptable to exert gentle pressure in order to reduce the energy consumption caused by our meat-eating? This is what the discussions were about this week. Got an opinion too? Join in the online discussion or email [resource@wur.nl](mailto:resource@wur.nl).

REACTIONS ON...



# RESOURCE-ONLINE.NL

PHOTO: SVEN MENSCHER



## MEATY MATTERS

One ice-cold Monday five students were handing out meatballs in front of the Forum building. A protest against the Meatless-free Monday which has been in force on the campus since October.

The protest has caused quite an uproar and has even been mentioned in the national press. The campaigners are against the imposition of 'Meatless Monday' on everyone and think it is more likely to suppress discussion about money than to stimulate it. Someone remarked that ironically enough they themselves have started a discussion about Meatless Monday, thus doing away with their own objection. **Broer Konijn** thinks that is naïve. 'Of course there is a discussion if you restrict people's freedom.' A bad idea, in his view. This 'interference' won't make anyone any more critical about meat and will mainly put

people's backs up. Arguments that thoroughly irritate **Michel**. 'It's just as well these spoiled brats never had to experience war. One day without meat and they drop their books and start protesting.' At this point the discussion goes all over the place. **Broer Konijn** sums the key point up with a sigh. 'So, no, it's not a major problem not to be

offered meat at the uni on a Monday. What I don't like is a group of people trying to impose their way of life on me.' Still plenty to beef about here.

## CHILLY TONES

The thermostat stood two degrees lower in the Forum during woolly jumper week. Blogger **Jan-Willem** sees this as an example of the pushiness with which activists make their point.

This view struck a chord and provoked a stream of reactions in no time. 'Do you too care deeply for the environment and think that other people are not concerned enough?' writes **HdeVries**. 'Go into action and think up a fun way of making your colleagues see red.' He proposes swapping A4 paper for A5. The opposition is just as heated. 'You always have

oafs who don't give a damn about the earth,' writes **Peter**. 'Those types object to a day without frikandel or a day with the heating turned down.' **Peter** thinks being put under pressure is just what these people need. They are so set in their ways that 'sticks' are the only way to make them listen. This draws an irritated response from **Liberalist**. 'This is a free country, so people can make their own decisions.' He doesn't understand why you would want to force behaviour on people rather than convince them with arguments. That is the dilemma which is exposed by the discussions. **Jan-Willem** has the last word when the fierce exchange dies down. He admits that he doesn't have 'readymade answers' himself to the question of how sustainability can be realized. But: 'A dialogue is better and more effective than activism that provokes bafflement and resistance.' **RR**





# AMONG THE REFUGEES

The refugee crisis is a big issue in the Netherlands at the moment. Marit de Looijer and Renee Middendorp took their concern one step further. For their Master's theses they went to Lebanon and to the Spanish enclave of Melilla, where they saw the lives of refugees from close quarters. 'I often felt guilty.'

text Linda van der Nat photos Marit de Looijer, Renee Middendorp and Hollandse Hoogte

**T**here are 53 Syrian families living in the olive orchard of Lebanese brothers Ali and Omar. They fled civil-war-torn Syria three years ago and now live in an improvised tented camp under the trees. The brothers' hospitality costs them a source of income but they see it as their duty to help the Syrians. They built showers and toilets, and provide water and occasionally food.

Ali and Omar's tented camp was one of the nine refugee settlements that Master's student Marit de Looijer visited for her final research project. She wanted to know how refugees and host communities negotiate with each other about a place to live, since

there are no official refugee camps. 'The government does not want any more refugee camps because they are afraid of them becoming breeding grounds for terrorism. Lebanon has taken in far the largest number of refugees per head of its population. That puts a lot of pressure on the country, which is extremely divided religiously, politically and socially.'

The lack of facilities has not stopped more than a million Syrians from seeking refuge in this unstable country. There are now a total of nearly two million refugees in Lebanon, which has a population of 4.5 million. The refugees now coming into Lebanon live in rented rooms, in the shells of unfinished buildings, in garages, in settlements they build themselves and in tented camps such as that of the brothers Ali and Omar. 'Whether a refugee is allowed to live somewhere gets decided based on who you are, who you know, what you believe and what you own. The negotiations about it are very complex and emotional. That was a reason for me to come to the country,' says the student of International Development Studies. 'I thought it would be super-interesting to research how that works.'

## HIGH FENCE

Renee Middendorp, another Master's student of International Development Studies, left in May last year for Melilla, a little patch of Spanish territory in north-western Morocco, to do research for her final thesis. She wanted to give the refugees there a face: the economic

refugees from West Africa, young lads from the poor parts of Algeria and Morocco, and Syrian refugees trying to reach Europe and a better future via this small enclave of Spain.

'Melilla is a strange place,' says Renee. 'A patch of European territory of 12 square kilometres with a harbour and a six-metre fence all around it. There are both physical and symbolic borders and I studied the role these borders play in the daily lives of people in Melilla, in the context of the refugee debate and migration policy.' To this end she talked not only to refugees and migrants but also to aid workers, police officers and border patrol guards. 'It taught me that there are several sides to a story and that everyone is affected by living with that border, albeit in very different ways.'

## STREET KIDS

Renee and Marit both immersed themselves in local life. For Marit that was essential, she says. 'It is naïve to think that you can do your work properly in Lebanon without a social network. You need to make friends and forge connections so people know what you are up to and feel responsible for you.' Renee stayed in a house where a local activist was living as well. She helped street children from Morocco and Algeria and put Renee in touch with the boys who used the harbour to get to Europe illegally by boat. 'There are hundreds of boys throughout the town, many of whom have been living on the streets for years. In the eve-



Marit de Looijer





Syrian refugees in Lebanon sought refuge in an unfinished building.



Pictures of African refugees on the fence around Melilla were circulated around the world last year.





Renee Middendorp by the high fence around the Spanish enclave of Melilla in Morocco.



nings they gather in the alleys of the old town, close to the harbour. It's a bit higher, giving them a good view of the harbour and of the police. Every evening they try to climb onto the last boat to Malaga.'

It was a surreal experience. 'I sat with a group of 15 lads between 12 and 18 years old. In that alley they were waiting for the last boat, chatting and making music. There was a friendly atmosphere, almost a jolly one, and yet those boys' lives are very tough. They get discriminated against, ignored and threatened. The Guardia Civil doesn't know what to do with these boys and that often gets expressed in bullying and violence. The police shave the boys' heads or steal their shoes. I have seen a lot of scars from cuts, too, probably from police violence.'

#### TEARJERKER

By choosing refugees as their topic of research, the students have not exactly made things easy for themselves. Marit: 'I am quite an emotional person; I can burst into tears because of something on the news. But I know that if I get emotional I can't listen well and I can't ask the right questions.' So when she was with the refugees she managed to maintain a scientific, objective attitude. 'I really told myself, you are here now and you have a task. You are not here just to drink coffee, you've got to obtain information and analyse it. But after my visit to Ali and Omar's olive orchard, I did cry in the bus back to Beirut. It was raining, it was cold and those men, women and children there had bare feet. Their whole situ-

ation was so hopeless.'

In the weblog she kept during her stay in Melilla, Renee writes about two boys of 12 and 14 whom she put up for a night. 'Even though we have enough beds, they are lying sideways in one bed. I've always had a soft spot for sleeping people, especially children, but this sight really breaks my heart. They have few prospects, most of them have lost their parents, they feel every day how unwanted they are, the street is their only school and they have only one dream: to get to Europe. The oldest wakes up the younger one by gently stroking his head. What a tearjerker this is. I let them use the stuff in the bathroom. Off they go again, with gel in their hair and in a cloud of perfume, each carrying a donated red rucksack from some charity or other and clutching a banana and a bottle of water, my meagre donation.'

'That whole situation was so emotional,' says Renee. 'I felt very strongly at that moment that these boys were much too young to be in that situation. And I felt guilty because I wanted something from them too, namely information for my research. I realized however that those were my own feelings and that they only made me turn them into 'victims'. That certainly was not the intention behind my research.'

#### GUILTY

This was not the only time Renee felt guilty, or ashamed of her privileged position. 'If I started to feel claustrophobic in the built-up city, I could go into the mountains for a breath of fresh air. It might take me an hour but actually I could cross the border without much difficulty. Whereas there are people who have tried to climb over that fence ten times. Sometimes that made me feel powerless to help because I couldn't do much more for them than write about their experiences.'

Marit struggled with such feelings of powerlessness too. 'But I was always straight with the people I talked to and I got the impression they appreciated my visits. They said: you are not the kind of journalist who just comes once. You've been sitting in my tent with me for nine days already, even when it rains, even when it's cold.'

When they got home both students had a lot to come to terms with. Renee: 'The atmosphere in Melilla is nasty; there is violence in the air there. But there is no point in getting angry about it, so you bottle it up. After I got back I kept going over the stories and events in my mind all the time. It feels strange too to be putting it all into a theoretical framework for

my thesis. My desk is so far away from what is happening there.'

Marit too experienced culture shock on returning to the safe, stable Netherlands. 'Before I left there were car bombs going off in Lebanon. UN staff drove around in armoured vehicles. I always had to be aware of what you could and couldn't do and I listen carefully when people told me not to get out at particular bus stops. I was constantly on the alert. When I came back that was suddenly not necessary. That felt so odd. I was in a different environment but I was still in Lebanon mode.'

#### REFUGEE DEBATE

Marit is still in touch with a Syrian woman. 'When I met her she was living with her family in law in a large, half-finished university building. Seven storeys high with bare concrete walls and loose electric wiring all around the building. There are 1500 people living there, half of them children. She is my age, 25. We whatsapp now and then but the connection is often bad. She is now in a reception camp on the Syrian border with her two little boys. Her situation is hopeless but every time we are in contact she asks me if she can do anything to help me with my research.'

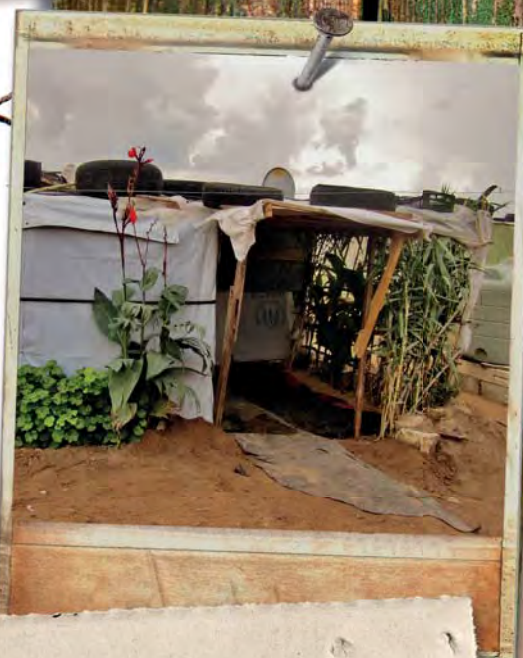
Renee too still feels a bond with the refugees she met, even if in a less direct form. 'I dived into migration policy and the refugee debate for my research, and I want to continue doing something practical in relation to that. I am actively involved in Vluchtelingenwerk [a Dutch refugee organization, ed.], for instance. My research has given me more insight into the reality of the refugee problem. That insight is lacking in the way the subject is talked about in the Netherlands.'

Marit find the harsh tone of the refugee debate hard to take, too. 'I try to understand the people in the Netherlands who worry about the numbers of refugees coming here. I know that there are people in the Netherlands too who are unemployed and poor and fear for their own situations. We must consider them too.' But, she adds, 'in Lebanon there is real cause for concern. The country has far more refugees and is much more unstable. It is very difficult for the brothers Ali and Omar to maintain the tented camp. Their own incomes are small and are asked more and more often by their own community why they are still helping refugees. But they keep going. They say, 'Allah has put these people on our path. Now it is up to us to be good to them.' I hope we can be that hospitable in the Netherlands as well.' ①





Among the places Marit de Looijer visited for her Master's research was an improvised tented camp for refugees in Lebanon.



## DISASTER STUDIES


Marit de Looijer and Renee Middendorp did their research in Lebanon and Melilla in the context of the Master's track Disaster Studies, which focuses on the social dynamics and effects of crises and disasters. Topics covered include emergency aid, disaster risk reduction and refugee issues. Disaster Studies is a small but growing field at the university, says assistant professor Bram Jansen of the Sociology of Development and Change chair group. He works specifically on refugee issues and supervised about 20 students last year who did their internships or final thesis research in countries such as Kenya, Sudan, Lebanon, Malta, Jordan and Turkey. 'Disaster Studies might seem a bit out of place at this university but it actually fits perfectly within the Wageningen domain,' says Jansen. 'Refugee movements have an impact on communities.' And these students' research, says Jansen, makes an important contribution to knowledge about the trends in refugee issues.

Spanish anti-nationalist activists express support for refugees in graffiti: 'Immigrants, please don't leave us alone with the Spanish'.

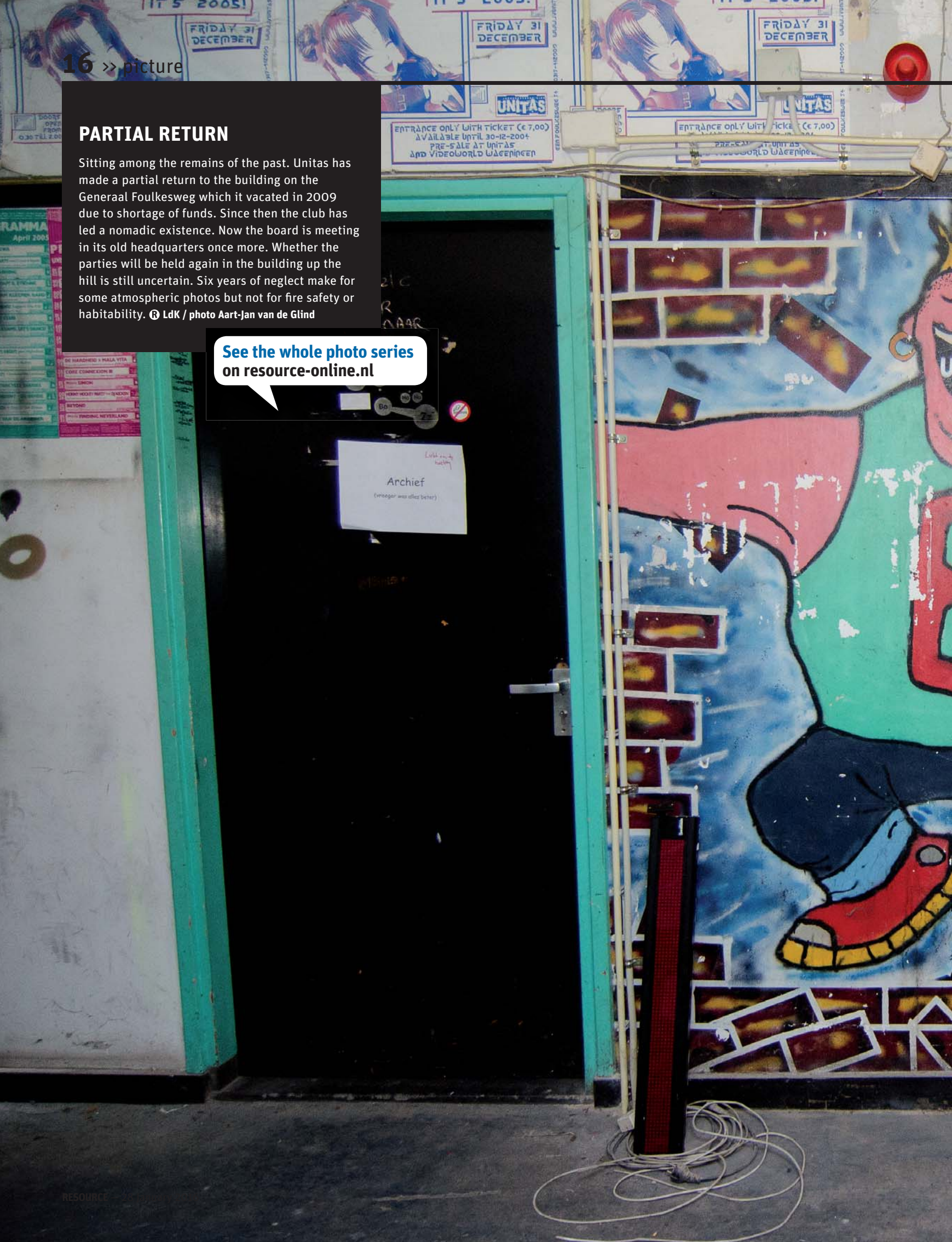
IN MIGRANTES,  
POR FAVOR, NO  
NOS DEJÉIS  
SOLOS CON LOS  
ESPAÑOLES



## PARTIAL RETURN

Sitting among the remains of the past, Unitas has made a partial return to the building on the Generaal Foulkesweg which it vacated in 2009 due to shortage of funds. Since then the club has led a nomadic existence. Now the board is meeting in its old headquarters once more. Whether the parties will be held again in the building up the hill is still uncertain. Six years of neglect make for some atmospheric photos but not for fire safety or habitability.  Ldk / photo Aart-Jan van de Glind

See the whole photo series  
on [resource-online.nl](http://resource-online.nl)







Penningmeester-crib  
(This is where the magic happens)



# New blood

Two science groups got new directors last September. **Bram de Vos** returned to the Environmental Sciences Group after five years in New Zealand. And in the Social Sciences Group **Jack van der Vorst** exchanged his chair for the director's role. Two interviews.

*text* Roelof Kleis en Albert Sikkema *photos* Guy Ackermans

## 'I want a more entrepreneurial mindset'

Five years ago his long career at Alterra reached a dead end. The then management did not see Bram de Vos as their dream operations manager for the Soil Centre. He left for AgResearch, an applied science institute in New Zealand. Now he is back as director of the Environmental Sciences Group.

### *Has much changed while you were away?*

'Alterra and the university haven't changed much but the financial context in which they operate has changed. The government has withdrawn further and the top sectors have been established. There are also a lot more students nowadays and that puts huge pressure on the education.'

### *It is not going well financially. The ESG, and Alterra in particular, have had a bad year. How many jobs is that going to cost?*

'We don't know yet exactly. Anyway I will want to communicate that internally first. One thing we don't want is a reorganization. We want to solve the problem organically through early retirements and staff transfers. And the first aim is of course to acquire more work. But we must be realistic: for the time being there's negative growth. So for the next few years we opt for the zero line. In a couple of years I want to aim for 3 percent profit for Alterra so we can build up a bit of a buffer.'

### *You are supposed to get more work on the market.*

#### *How are you going to go about that?*

'I expect my staff to develop, maintain and make use of their networks. That means we've got to get out there. Go to meetings, look at the agendas of potential clients and how we can fit in with them. I want my staff to have an enterprising mindset. That might be hard for some of them, but you've got to get over that, you've got to make yourself do it.'



Bram de Vos, director of the Environment Sciences Group since September.

### *Is it possible to learn to do that?*

'We'll have to make it possible. I want to create a culture in which it is normal for people who are good at networking, communicating and listening to take junior staff along with them and serve as mentors. In the long term that generates work. And not everybody has to do acquisition. We just need enough people who do have that capacity.'

### *Where are the opportunities?*

'We will have to become more international. The Netherlands is saturated in our field. Wageningen is already making a lot of money in Europe. But there is a lot of competition and the chances of success are small. So you've got to look elsewhere. What makes us unique? Our top quality expertise. We are the best in the world.'

***Does the organizational culture need an overhaul?***

'This organization has a fairly financially driven culture. People often ask me how their worth is being judged. I don't want to hear that word. I would rather talk in terms of evaluation. I want a coaching management style rather than a controlling one. Part of coaching is good feedback: open, transparent and fair. Positive when there are successes to celebrate, constructive when things don't go so well. I also want an organization

that's geared to collaboration. If you want that you mustn't hold people accountable for their financial results at the level of the individual or team. You should set those financial targets at a higher level and then evaluate everyone's contribution in their light. I don't like the word 'business unit'. It has overtones of covering your own back and does nothing to promote collaboration. The main thing is not how well a team does but how well the organization does as a whole.'

## 'We must aim for collaboration'

His new job as general director of the Social Sciences Group took a bit of getting used to for professor of Chain Logistics Jack van der Vorst. 'In the first two weeks I suddenly had 1000 emails to go through.' But he is thoroughly enjoying getting to know the three different cultures within the Science Group. 'For the staff in the chair groups in the Leeuwenborch I am a colleague and a 'first among equals'. At the LEI I am the director and at the Centre for Development Innovation I am Jack. The LEI works a bit more formally and hierarchically than the university. The CDI is a collective of independent colleagues who all want to make their own contribution to progress in developing countries.'

***The chair groups are getting good grades but do not form one whole, noted the visitation committee.******Are you going to do something about that?***

'Seven new chair-holders have started in the past few years and next year two more will join us. The new professors are highly committed and bring in new ideas. On a team-building day with them we concluded: we need to know more about each other, work together more and create a shared vision. A vision like that will help us decide on our research priorities as well as shape our education.'

***One Wageningen, starting at the Leeuwenborch?***

'I believe in One Wageningen. We must aim at collaboration and clearing obstacles to it. I've been tasked with giving some thought to how to create robust chair groups. Currently every chair group gets its own core funding. Imagine if two groups want to merge. In the current setup they would lose half their core funding. Obviously that doesn't provide much incentive for cooperation. We are looking into how that can be improved on. But I also want to see more consultation and collaboration on submitting research proposals. Sometimes six research proposals are submitted to a European innovation programme by groups in the Leeuwenborch, when you know that only one of the six proposals can be accepted. By consulting each other beforehand and choosing the strongest consortium, we can be more effective in the way we submit projects.'



Jack van der Vorst, director of the Social Sciences Group since September.

***The LEI is having trouble acquiring enough research too.***

'The LEI has been making a profit in recent years. That is quite an achievement because the market is tough. The government is pulling out so the LEI has to make more of its money on the market. Given that a lot of research takes place at sector level, and the product boards have been scrapped, this is a big challenge. For example, for years the LEI has managed a large information network with which we monitor developments in the businesses and incomes of 1500 farmers. The farms are not going to fund that themselves. It provides very useful information for the government and the agricultural sector, but there is increasing pressure on the funding for this sort of data collection.'

***Does the LEI need to do more work for private companies?***

'We are not going to become a consultancy firm; we provide independent knowledge of the sector. But finding the setup in which to produce that knowledge is a puzzle. The agricultural sector produces more and more knowledge and companies are making more and more use of that knowledge. The LEI is working with partners on setting up an independent data platform that everybody can use. The LEI has developed proposals and is ready for it.'

**Interested to read what else Jack van der Vorst had to say?**

**Read a longer interview on [resource-online.nl](http://resource-online.nl).**



# GHOST TOWNS IN CHINA



More than 20 percent of all the new buildings in China - 49 million of them –stand empty. These unheard-of numbers of empty premises are not just bad for the country's economic development; they represent massive environmental damage too.

*text* Albert Sikkema *photos* Hollandse Hoogte

**H**alf the Chinese population lives in cities these days. This is the result of the rapid urbanization of the past 20 years. Besides liberalizing the housing market at the end of the 20th century, the Chinese government decided to build 20 cities a year with accommodation for a million people. Parts of these cities now stand empty.

To be precise: in 2013 as much as 22 percent of the new buildings across China were empty, shows a study by professor of Environmental Policy Arthur Mol and his colleagues at the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The results were published in the *Environmental Development* journal, revealing for the first time both the scale of the ghost towns and their environmental impact.

On the basis of Chinese government statistics the researchers estimate that there are a total of 49 million empty premises in the 28 'wasted cities', as they are called. These empty buildings cover 3643 square kilometres and would be

more than enough cover the entire province of Friesland. Between 23 and 90 percent of the premises in the ghost towns stand empty.

## BUILDING FRENZY

The extraordinary thing about the Chinese ghost towns is that they are new and have never been inhabited. The most famous example is Kangbashi, a complete city with apartments, theatres, museums and other – unused – facilities. The building frenzy was triggered by provincial and municipal governments, who profited from the sale of farmland to project developers without looking at the demand for housing. These land transactions account for 30 to 50 percent of the income of the provinces. During the peak period in 2010 the Chinese provinces and municipali-



New, uninhabited houses in the once popular coastal town of Rushan.



Kangbashi is one of the best-known ghost towns in China.



ties were offering a total of 2910 km<sup>2</sup> of land for construction projects, report the researchers. That land went to project developers who don't concern themselves with the longer term demand for housing. And central government was unable to keep an overview of or control over the building plans.

The ghost towns are not just a source of economic problems, such as large financial risks, falling house prices and unemployment, state Mol and his Chinese colleagues. They also represent a stupendous waste of resources. One and half billion tons of building materials, including aluminium, steel, wood, cement, bricks and sand, were used in the construction of the ghost towns. The construction also caused air pollu-

tion, disturbed local ecosystems and wasted energy and water, say the researchers.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS

Mol and his colleagues recommend that the Chinese central government applies stricter control and enforces regulations. Mol: 'Central government could evaluate local governments – mayors for instance – more rigorously on the extent of land speculation and the number of empty premises than they do now. Because currently they are primarily evaluated in terms of economic targets.' He also thinks the government should transfer more money to the regions so they become less dependent on income from land speculation.

The Chinese government should also submit urbanization to environmental regulations, say Mol and his colleagues. 'This is a general problem in China,' explains Mol. 'Increasingly there are better and stricter regulations but the monitoring and enforcement leave a lot to be desired. One of the reasons for this is that the local officials tasked with enforcement are often under the direction of local governments that stand to gain from the land transactions. As a result it is not in the interests of local environmental services to enforce the rules strictly.'

The urbanization will continue over the coming years. The prognosis is that 70 percent of the Chinese will be living in cities in 20 years' time. ③

## FAMOUS GHOST TOWNS

The word 'ghost town' often evokes images of abandoned Italian or Spanish villages, the result of the decline of small-scale agriculture and rural depopulation. Or perhaps of the American city of Detroit, which emptied out after the demise of the car and steel industries. But there have been famous ghost towns in other countries too. The former holiday resort of Varosha on Cyprus has been a ghost town since the Turkish invasion in 1974. Another example is the city of Prypjat in northern Ukraine, which had 50,000 inhabitants until the nuclear disaster in the nearby Chernobyl reactor in 1986. Not

to be forgotten, too, is the abandoned Japanese island of Hashima, familiar from the James Bond film *Skyfall*: this island covered in flats built for the miners working in undersea coalmines has been deserted since 1974.

A ghost city with a touch of Holland to it is found in China: Holland Village, a suburb of Shanghai complete with windmills and giant clogs, started in 2001 to relieve the pressure on the megalopolis. Since the Dutch-style houses did not particularly appeal to the Chinese and are quite pricy, this suburb is still almost empty.



The abandoned Japanese island of Hashima.



# DOES SCIENCE KEEP OFFICE HOURS?

Plants, animals and bacteria do not have a nine-to-five mentality. And yet not all Wageningen UR's buildings are open at all hours. Researchers based in Radix complained recently that this made it harder for them to do their work. Can the pursuit of science be reconciled with opening times?

text Albert Sikkema en Rob Ramaker illustration Henk van Ruitenbeek

## Arjan de Visser



**Personal professor at the Laboratory of Genetics (Radix)**

'I think the opening times in Wageningen are extremely limited. **When I was working as a postdoc in the United States, I could go into the building day and night.**

Sometimes I needed to make growth curves for bacterial cultures over a longer period, and then I took my sleeping bag into the lab: these were exceptional cases that were occasionally necessary. This type of work is important for some people in our group too. But even for us, it was the subject of a discussion over coffee. Some people are against longer opening hours, saying you will then be expected to be on call all the time. That's nonsense, I think. You create possibilities, not obligations. Anyway even with limited opening hours people just work on at home. And the idea that it will be more dangerous strikes me as nonsense, but I wouldn't want to be too insistent on that point. Accidents in the lab are rare. Especially accidents where you are safer with two people than alone, such as when you are rendered unconscious. But people are aware of the dangers and use their common sense.'

## Constant Onstenk



**Lab assistant at Rikilt (Vitae)**

'As far as I'm concerned there's no need for longer opening hours at Rikilt. **I like to keep to normal office hours and I am happy there's a limit.** Rikilt is open from 7.00 to 20.00 hours on weekdays. And on Saturday

morning until 13.00 hours, in case our experiments run on and because the NVWA needs to take measurements in our building on Saturdays. Occasionally there is a pressing reason to stay open at the weekend, in a food crisis. In those incidental cases I work at the weekend too. But as a rule I don't: my lab work is geared to an eight-hour working day. The opening times are fine, I think. Sometimes you have to protect researchers from themselves because their sense of duty can go too far.'

## Lisa Becking



**Assistant Professor at Marine Animal Ecology and researcher at Imares (Zodiac and Den Helder)**

'Purely from the scientist's point of view, buildings should be open 24 hours a day. But in reality there are drawbacks of course, like arranging insurance. Long opening hours are crucial for people studying diurnal rhythms, for instance. And when I was doing my PhD I noticed that it was important for your drive as well. If you are on a roll, you want to keep going and you can easily work 12 hours a day. And some scientists have unusual routines – they might not be morning people, for instance - and you would like them to be free to work when their drive is strongest. Anyway I don't notice all that many restrictions in Wageningen. In Zodiac I can always work in the evening and at weekends if I need to. **When I was working on my PhD – at Naturalis in Leiden – 18.15 hours was the absolute max, with no exceptions.** I could understand that: the collection is national heritage and there had to be security all the time.'





## Michel Handgraaf



**Associate professor of the Economics of Consumers and Households (Leeuwenborch)**

'You need the option to decide how to use your time, in my view. But I think there is enough scope for that already. On weekdays the building

is open between 7 and 22.30 and on Saturdays between 8 and 17.30. So I don't think opening times are much of an issue here. **I have never heard colleagues complaining and I've never felt restricted myself.** Perhaps some people

would like to work on Sundays. That could be an option, although I am not sure whether people here would make use of it. In the social sciences we don't have to consider things like bacteria in our planning. Our experiments involve human test subjects and you plan the work during office hours. Of course you sometimes need to finish something off. It is nice if you can do that at the office but you can actually also do it at home or somewhere else.'

## Renko de Vries



**Associate Professor of Physical Chemistry and Colloid Science (Chemistry building at the Dreijen)**

'The opening times here are quite long – until 23.00 or 24.00 hours – and I've usually gone home by then. But I am happy that it's possible.

Sometimes it is necessary for the tests we do. You can't automatize everything and if something runs overnight

you have to check how it's going in the evening or during the weekend. If the building closed at 20.00 hours the work would suffer. For deadlines too, for proposals for instance, it is useful to have a lot of time outside office hours. You can work on those kinds of things at home as well but that isn't always appreciated by the family. And you can concentrate better here. I think that within reason, it's true that science doesn't have opening hours. **Personally I usually stop around midnight. I don't work all through the night but there are people who do.** Many of them are PhD candidates who are still in another stage of life.'

## Sander Gussekloo



**Assistant professor of Experimental Zoology (Zodiac)**

'In the life sciences you can't do all your research between 9 and 5. You have to look after animals and water plants and for that you need to be able to get into the building in the

evenings and at weekends too. **Even in Zodiac the opening times at the weekend are too limited.** For example, we are doing an experiment with Ichneumon wasps. They need looking after over the weekend as well. And you never know when they will hatch out so you have to keep an eye on them all the time. It is not necessary to stay open 24/7. In molecular biology you sometimes have to do experiments that can go on for 18 hours. Allowing longer access needn't take up staff time. As long as you have good locks and a pass that gives you access.' ③



# NO SELECTION FOR MASTER'S PROGRAMMES YET

**Currently, anyone who gains a Bachelor's degree at Wageningen can go on to a Wageningen Master's programme. And it is going to stay that way for now, says Tiny van Boekel, director of the Education Institute of Wageningen UR.**

Since about two years ago Dutch law does allow for the possibility of not automatically admitting internal Bachelor's students to Master's programmes. The Dutch universities have yet to make use of this right, but it has unleashed a debate. It is being talked about in Wageningen too, says Van Boekel. 'But we haven't come to a conclusion yet.'

A clear advantage, according to Van Boekel, is that you can both raise standards on the programme and advise some students to look for a more suitable programme for them elsewhere. A counter-argument is: if passing the Bachelor's degree – even if only with a grade 6 – is not enough to admit you to the Master's, what does that say about the standard of the Bachelor's degree?

For students coming in from other universities, including applied science programmes, universities were always allowed to use a selection procedure. And Wageningen University does so, checking whether the student's first degree

is a good preparation for the planned post-graduate course, as well as whether the student's level, English language proficiency and motivation are up to scratch. The university is now authorized to evaluate its own Bachelor's students in the same way, but is not yet doing so.

The student council is keeping its finger on the pulse. In a joint statement the three Wageningen student parties say: 'It remains important that all students have access to good education at an institution and on a course of their choice. It is too hard to evaluate students purely on the basis of grades. It should remain possible

to admit students on the basis of strong motivation, for example.'

The students raise another important point: 'At the national level we should watch out for universities wanting to be number one (...) It would be detrimental for universities to start competing in this area. So good communication and consultation at the national level is crucial. We in the student council see this plan as very risky. So we are examining it critically and will take part in the discussion actively.'

Van Boekel acknowledges that once one university installs a selection process for Master's programmes, other will probably follow suit. **KG**



## SPRING IN JANUARY

Many people used the lunch hour on Monday 25 January to take a walk around the campus and enjoy the feeling of spring in the air. Coats open and eyes squinting against the strong light. This student found a lovely place to study at the entrance to The Spot. She had to do her best for it because the colourful garden chairs were still chained together. Not surprising really in January. **Evl**

## SWIMMING CLASSES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students keen to learn to swim are welcome at the Bongerd swimming pool from February. Thymos Sports Association is offering students from countries where swimming is not part of the culture a chance to learn to swim after all.

In collaborating with the Bongerd sports centre and the swimming club De Wageningse Watervrienden, Thymos has planned two courses. The first eight-week course is a real beginners' course, in which you learn to float and to get over any fear of water. In the second course, which runs over three months, students will be taught various strokes by the Watervrienden. Optionally they can also take the test to get a swimming diploma.

There are eight places for students on the first course and six on the second. **LvdN**

## CORRECTION

In the article *Hard to fill boards of sports associations* (Resource 10, 4 January), Romy Willemsen of Thymos was quoted as saying that nearly all the student sports associations faced shortages. According to Willemsen this is not what she said. Thymos's view is that it can vary from year to year how hard it is to find members for boards and committees. For this reason Thymos does not agree with the conclusion reached in the article. **LdK**



# ESCAPE ROOM WITH A BIOLOGY THEME

**'We can do that too,' thought five students from the Biologica study association after visiting Escape Room Wageningen. Three brainstorming evenings later their own biology-themed Escape Room was up and running.**

The event turned out to be so popular that the students had to run a second evening last Monday. 'Within two hours of putting the event online six groups had already signed up,' says Angelina Horsting, one of the initiators. In total about 50 students rose to the challenge.

In an Escape Room people have to solve a number of puzzles in order to be let out of the room - in this case the cellar at the home of one of the organizers. The students thought up all the puzzles for the Escape Room themselves. 'That was quite a challenge. Not only do you have a

small budget, but you also have to make the puzzles form one whole, and that is difficult,' says Angelina. Since clues are hidden all around the room the order of the puzzles is not fixed. 'We had to make sure that you did have to solve all the puzzles before you could go out, without the order mattering very much.'

One of the tasks for the players was to identify an ivy leaf. If they got the right species they found the code to switch on an iPod which played a song containing the next clue.

They were exciting evenings for the Biologica students. 'You hope everything will go well, that the puzzles are not too difficult but not too easy either,' says Angelina. 'In the end all the responses were positive. We had beer and snacks in the cellar as well but everyone was focusing with such concentration that nobody touched a beer.' **© CN**



PHOTOS: ROBERT BENAMINS

## WHAT IS THE NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY?

**More than 700,000 students were recently invited to fill in the National Student Survey. They were lured with a chance to win six months' tuition fees or a 25 euro gift token. But what exactly is the National Student Survey?**

### *What is this survey about?*

Your degree programme. You get asked about all sorts of things, from your teachers' expertise to the availability of desks in the library. In each case students can say whether they are very satisfied, very dissatisfied, or somewhere in between.

### *What is it for?*

School students and their parents can use the results to compare degree programmes. Once they have decided on law, economics or a teacher training programme, they still have to decide which university to go to. Thanks to the NSE they can find out where students are satisfied and where they are not. But the degree programmes them-

selves can take the results to heart too. If students complain about their timetables, for example, they could do something about them.

### *Where are the results published?*

They are published on Studiekeuze123.nl, where the people choosing degree courses can compare them. The student degree guide Keuzegids and the weekly magazine Elsevier make use of them too. Degree programmes are also obliged to report student satisfaction levels in their prospectus.

### *Could it work against me if I'm critical?*

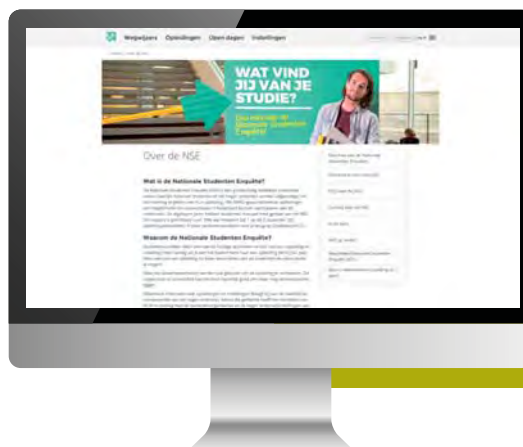
You are always anonymous because the degree programmes are not allowed to trace the answers back to individual students. If your degree pro-

gramme suddenly gets a bad press, it could affect how much your degree is worth. But the programme would have to make a real mess of things to score that badly.

### *Is the survey objective?*

Well, what does a student mean if he says he is 'satisfied' with a teacher rather than 'very satisfied'? The results don't speak for themselves, you have to interpret them. But altogether the answers do provide a lot of information.

What is perhaps more interesting is which questions the students get asked and which they don't. The student organizations ISO and LSVb have to negotiate that with universities and private education institutions, so it is quite political. In the old days they used to ask how many hours a week students spent on their coursework so it was clear which degree programmes were the lightest. That question was ditched. **© HOP, Bas Belleman**



### CAN I TAKE PART?

Students (including part-time ones) can fill in the survey until 6 March. If you graduated or dropped out recently you can take part if you received an invitation. More questions? Go to [www.studiekeuze123.nl/nse](http://www.studiekeuze123.nl/nse)



**SPIDERMAN**

You could climb a wall like Spiderman. But only if your shoe size was 145, say scientists at the University of Cambridge. Not an option for humans then. The gecko is the largest animal to get around on sticky feet. For larger animals it is an evolutionary impossibility, the experts tell us. Scientific proof at last: Spiderman does not exist.

**HUMANURE**

The Romans invented the toilet, the bathhouse and the sewer. But it didn't make them any healthier, British archaeological research suggests. The number of gut parasites around went up instead of down. Possibly because human faeces were used as manure on the land.

**PET DATES**

Success on the marriage market increases considerably if you have a pet, says an American study of singles. One third of the women and a quarter of the men in the survey said they found prospective partners with pets more attractive. Dogs score especially highly. Two reservations here: the respondents all had pets themselves. And the study was sponsored by a pet shop chain.

**GUESTS**

The average American house in the vicinity of North Carolina State University contains more than 500 different insects, showed a thorough scrutiny by local scientists. Mind you, many of these insect are dead and are brought in by the residents. We have a lot of house guests, apparently. Hurrah for biodiversity!

## Psychologists hold open surgery in Forum

Are you lonely or finding something a struggle, but do you hesitate to make an appointment with the psychologist? Since last week you now have the option of just popping in to a walk-in surgery in the Forum during your lunch hour.

Walk-in counselling is a pilot and runs until the summer. It is an initiative by the student psychologists and the student counsellors, who want to provide students with a low-threshold form of support. 'In a quarter of an hour students can tell their story or ask a question, and we will advise them,' says student psychologist Ineke Leenders. 'We might for example put someone on the waiting list for a longer session, or we might tell them to get their GP to refer them.'

Eleven students came by in the first week. Leenders hopes the short sessions will have a preventive effect. 'It sometimes helps students just to be able to get something off their chest. Then we can quite quickly point them in the right direction, saying "get some exercise" perhaps or "find out a bit about that society"'. That way we can prevent things from getting worse.'

In future the idea would be to offer walk-in counseling after lectures too, from five till seven in the evening. 'In the afternoon there are professionals present but in the evening we want to work with volunteers who, after some training, offer students a listening ear.' The student psycholo-



## Students meet Jane Goodall

Last week Wageningen students got an opportunity to meet the world-famous biologist Jane Goodall. They could ask her questions during the recording of the NTR television programme *College Tour* in Artis Zoo in Amsterdam.

Goodall is known around the globe for her pioneering efforts for the conservation of habitats. There was a lot of interest in attending the recording session. But at the last minute Wageningen University was given 20 extra seats. 'I suspect it was because we once cooperated in the recording of *College Tour* with Bill Gates,' says Gerlinde de Deyn.

'It was obvious that everyone was very impressed by Jane,' says student Marlotte Vonk. 'She is 81 but she speaks with tremendous enthusiasm.' According to student of Animal Sciences Hieu

Nguyen Ba from Vietnam, the atmosphere was very amicable. 'Jane answered people in such a friendly and modest way. It was as though she was one of the students.' He thought it was a privilege to hear the opinion of a person who has done so much for animal sciences. Hieu wanted to know what Jane thought about the problem of improving animal welfare in developing countries. 'There was wisdom in her answer. She showed me that there is a connection between animal welfare and human welfare. We must improve them both.' **DK**

*College Tour with Jane Goodall will be broadcast on Friday 5 February on NPO3 at 20.25.*





## EPISODE 64 - MORTIERSTRAAT 14B &lt;&lt;

Text  
Rob  
Ramaker

*The story so far: For the first time since he came out, Derk has a steady boyfriend. That raises some old anxieties.*

## Tiramisu

**I**t took Derk several minutes to notice that he was trying to fry the chopped onion on a gas burner that wasn't on. He was distracted. This evening Jelle was coming to dinner for the first time and all the housemates would be there. It felt like an official introduction, a second coming-out. And that made him anxious. Would his housemates still be so open-minded now he really had a partner? Did Italians deal with these things differently?

'...a really handy trick for making tiramisu quickly,' Bianca was saying as she bent over an oven dish. 'It only has to go into the fridge for a little while, unlike...' She kicked Derk in the shin. 'Hello, Earth to Derk. Did you hear what I said?'

'Yes, um, handy in the fridge,' Bianca grinned. 'Don't worry so much about that exam you failed, man,' she urged, misinterpreting his absentmindedness. Willem-Jan came in meanwhile. Even though he was studying fanatically again, he had found time yesterday to adjust the sound system. Now he could control Spotify from his mobile phone. As he entered the kitchen YMCA blared out from the speakers.

'Well, I am very curious to meet your dishy boy,' grinned Willem-Jan. Derk's heart beat a little faster. What did he mean, he wondered nervously. Was he joking? Willem-Jan grabbed a beer and got out of the kitchen before he could be asked to help. As the tomatoes went into the pan Derk



ILLUSTRATIONS: KIM PETERSEN

glanced nervously at his watch. Where was Jelle? Bianca was talking now about a tiramisu she had once eaten in Naples, but he only picked up snatches of the story. In the background you could hear someone stumbling up the stairs.

'Hi guys. I bumped into Jelle and already let him in.' His heart racing, Derk went into the living room, gave Jelle a kiss and introduced him.

'Yeah, we already met outside,' said Filippo, shaking his hand.

'Nice to meet you,' said Bianca, who was laying the table. During the meal Derk's tension ebbed away like air from a pricked balloon. Why hadn't he had confidence in his housemates? When the tiramisu appeared on the table, he took Jelle's hand in front of everyone. A steamy George Michael song began to play. Derk grinned at Willem-Jan, who winked back.

Resource follows events at Mortierstraat 14B

## Prospect of board year without tuition fees

**Students taking a year out to serve on a board shouldn't have to pay tuition fees, thinks a majority in the lower house of the Dutch parliament.**

The VVD, PvdA and CDA parties tabled an amendment on 21 January to make it possible for students to be exempted from paying tuition

fees when they do not take courses for a whole year while serving on a board or committee. The proposal is that students remain registered at their institution during this period, so they still qualify for loans from DUO and for their public transport passes.

The plan does not however include making it mandatory for

universities to exempt student board members from tuition fees. Institutions retain the right to decide for themselves the extent to which they collaborate on this. The amendment also states: 'We do believe that students making use of this possibility must genuinely refrain from taking course, even at other educational institu-

tions. We also emphasize that this is a one-off exemption valid for a maximum of 1 year.'

Education minister Jet Bussemaker, who herself wants to make a year's exemption from tuition fees possible for student boards, will respond to the amendment in writing. A debate in the House will follow. **KG**



## &gt;&gt; PARTIES

The best parties according to Wageningen Uitgaans Promotie. Check [www.wageningenup.nl](http://www.wageningenup.nl) for all parties.

**DE WILDE WERELD - NACHTBOTER: THE MOST MENTAL SHOW IN TOWN**

**Friday 29 January from 20.00 to 23.30**

The first Nachtboter of 2016 promises to be 'the most mental edition yet'. Mentalists will be showing off their 'paranormal gifts' in De Wilde Wereld. Expect demonstrations of hypnotism, mind-reading and other mindf\*cks.

**CAFÉ LOBURG - ALLE 13 FOUT**

**Saturday 30 January from 21.00 to 04.00**

A party devoted to risqué hits. Sing along as the cover band plays. What could be nicer? From 21.30 Sander will be playing one racy hit after another to get you in the mood. At 23.15 the band will take the stage and bring the house down.

**VILLA BLOEM - B&B CARNIVAL WEEKEND**

**Friday 5 February and Saturday 6 February from 21.00 to 01.00**

Forget the carnivals in Brabant and Limburg. In Villa Bloem mardi gras will be celebrated with Brazilian beats on Friday and Balkan beats on Saturday. The band Surubanda will blow us away on the Brazilian night. The Balkan night will be extra long thanks to the band Grassmoower.

**SHOUT - LOVE YOU LIKE HELL PARTY**

**Saturday 6 February from 22.00 to 01.00**

Get into your most devilish gear and come to De Wilde Wereld, the regular venue for parties thrown by SHOUT, the society for lesbians and gays in Wageningen.

## &gt;&gt; THE WORKS

## FACE TO FACE WITH A LEOPARD

**Who?** Nathalie Scholten, Master's student of Biology

**What?** Master's thesis on fear in bushbabies

**Where?** South Africa, Lajuma research station

'Bushbabies are small primates which forage by night. When they are looking for food they need to be alert for predators. I studied the relation between their fear levels and the amount of shelter afforded by the leaf canopy. I hung up buckets of food in the trees after sunset, with the idea that the bushbabies would spend longer eating from the buckets in more sheltered positions. When I came back the next morning I could see how much food had been taken from the buckets. It was heavy work because I had to get all the buckets out of the trees again before sunrise.

Wildlife in South Africa is very different to in the Netherlands. The research station where I was staying is on a mountain in the middle of the wilderness. We had to drive at least an hour to go shopping in the nearest town.

The moment I will never forget was when I suddenly found myself face to face with a leopard. After hanging up the buckets every evening I had to walk back to the research station in the dark. As I walked I could see eyes glittering in the light of my torch, but I thought it was a species of antelope that you see there a lot. Only when I got closer did I see that it was a leopard. The biologist in me only thought 'how wonderful', even though it could have been dangerous. Eventually the leopard just walked off, of its own accord. This unexpected encounter was enough to


make my fellow students at the research station really jealous. There were local people working at the research station as well. Their working conditions made a big impression on me. They were paid, but it still felt as though they were the property of the employer. They had few rights and they were not allowed to make friends with the students, for example. They were extremely kind and helpful. It was strange that they did anything you asked, even tidying your room. It took a bit of trust when they had cleaned my room and I couldn't immediately find something the next day. In the end I had a great time with them. They all wanted to have their pictures taken with me before I returned to the Netherlands.'  DK







PHOTO: ANTON\_IVANOV/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

## MEANWHILE IN... <<

### Meanwhile in...Iran

**In the news:** After ten years, the West has lifted the trade embargo on Iran because the country has complied with the nuclear deal. This means an end to far-reaching economic sanctions. What are the expectations?

*The Iranian student who was interviewed has asked to remain anonymous as opinions on this subject can be a sensitive issue.*

'This morning I opened my e-mail and saw a message from a software company, with a list of all the improved products I could get as from today. Now we can buy products from Europe such as laptops and smart phones. Iranians are pleased with this.

That is the case for nearly everyone. People are expecting economic growth and progress. A small group is negative about the sanctions being lifted. They don't trust America and think the Americans are just out to get our money. I reckon this group is not more than a couple of percent of the population. This was different in the past. When negotiations with the West began, a lot of people were against it. This changed because the leaders and the media said that lifting the sanctions would have a beneficial effect. Famous sportspeople appeared on the TV praising the negotiations. Personally, I think we won't notice much of an effect in the short term from the sanctions being lifted. We have lost a lot of ground in the past ten years and the economy has shrunk considerably. Our currency has depreciated a lot and that's not something you can simply reverse — it'll take time to recover. The prospects are better in the long term. We can sell our products to the rest of the world. Low oil prices are not a serious problem for Iran as we have other options, unlike other countries in the region. We have gas, agricultural products, fish and many other sources of income. The improved relations with the West are also a good thing, especially now that the situation in the region is so unstable. The progress Iran makes will depend on how the government invests the extra revenue. I think they will do this well and that a lot of new jobs will be created in Iran. The future looks good.' **R LdP**

## Science Cafe Wageningen

www.sciencecafewageningen.nl

### The Human Brain Project

Prof. Paul Tiesinga (RU Nijmegen),  
Prof. Huib Mansvelder (VU Amsterdam)

Thursday, January 28th

19:45 live music

20:15 Science

Café Loburg

FREE ENTRANCE

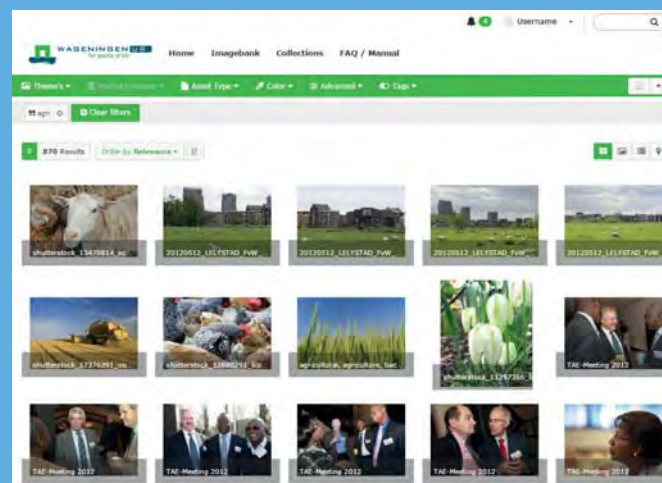
Sponsored by:



## The Brand Portal is live!

Take a look at the Brand Portal to find and share photos and videos of Wageningen UR

[www.wageningenurbrandportal.nl](http://www.wageningenurbrandportal.nl)





# International FameLab

TALKING SCIENCE

BRITISH  
COUNCIL  
CHELTENHAM FESTIVALS

## PASSIONATE ABOUT SCIENCE? FAMELAB NEEDS YOU!

If you think you can explain a concept  
in science in just three minutes, enter a  
FameLab competition near you!

For full details and terms & conditions visit:

[britishcouncil.nl/famelab](http://britishcouncil.nl/famelab)

Follow us on  @nl\_British #famelabNL  [facebook.com/FameLabInternational](https://facebook.com/FameLabInternational)

### YOU COULD WIN:

- Expenses-paid, 2-day FameLab Master Class on Thursday 31 March and Friday 1 April 2016 in Amsterdam to develop your public engagement skills
- Internship with public broadcaster NTR
- Expenses-paid trip to the UK in June 2016 to attend Cheltenham Science Festival and compete in the FameLab International

### LET'S TALK SCIENCE!

All it takes is three minutes!

Perform live at one of these regional heats:

**Groningen** - Thursday 11 February 2016  
GroningerForum

**Utrecht** - Thursday 11 & 18 February 2016  
Academegebouw Utrecht

**Leiden** - Tuesday 16 February 2016  
Academegebouw Leiden

**Nijmegen** - Wednesday 17 February 2016  
Rode Zaal Donders Instituut Nijmegen

**Amsterdam** - Friday 26 February 2016  
Spui25

**Wageningen** - Friday 4 March 2016  
Impulse - Wageningen Campus

The winners of the heats will go through to the **Masterclass** at the KNAW Trippenhuis in Amsterdam on **Thursday 31 March and Friday 1 April 2016** and to the **National Final** at the Academegebouw in Utrecht on **Friday 22 April 2016**.

Registration  
now open!



ntr:



Radboud University



Radboudumc  
university medical center

VU  
Vrije Universiteit  
Amsterdam

UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM



university of  
 groningen



Universiteit  
 Leiden



Universiteit Utrecht



WAGENINGEN UR  
For quality of life



## Classifieds

### Neder-Veluwe food bank looking for volunteers for the Wageningen team

The Neder-Veluwe is urgently looking for new volunteers for various positions, such as drivers, co-drivers, packers, food checking staff, etc. You can specify how often and when you're available. That information will be used to draw up a roster every month. We work in teams, which makes it very social! Information: Anneke Sijbrand via 06-40932724, or via [www.voedselbanknederveluwe.nl](http://www.voedselbanknederveluwe.nl).

### Vacancy: student assistant Sociology of Development and Change (SDC)

For 8 hours/week (flexible), till July 1 2016, to help implement communication strategy: build WordPress websites, start up Facebook & Twitter and populate/produce/collect/upload information, etc. You will work closely together with a small team. Requirements: good knowledge of: WordPress websites, new media, general communication expertise. Familiarity with SDC group themes is a preference. Information/applications via [marielle.takes@wur.nl](mailto:marielle.takes@wur.nl).

## agenda

### Thursday 28 January to Wednesday 13 February FILMS FOR STUDENTS

Lots of films at Movie W, including Janis- Little Girl Blue, about the legendary blues singer Janis Joplin (1943-1970): the voice, the charisma, the emotions and the perfor-

mance, with fantastic archive material, interviews and pop festivals from the past. You can also enjoy Corn Island, a rare gem of a film about an island in a river, an old farmer and his granddaughter, their battle against the elements and months of work to ensure the harvest is safely in on time. Movie W's address: Wilhelminaweg 3A.

[WWW.MOVIE-W.NL](http://WWW.MOVIE-W.NL)

### Saturday 30 January, 20.30 MEIJE VAN HERWIJNEN: LIJFLIED - A THEATRICAL LECTURE ABOUT THE HUMAN BODY

Most people have appliances at home where they have never read the instructions and so never use half the functions. If one of those appliances is your own body, then it is time to come to Lijflied! As well as a Wageningen nutrition scientist, Meijke van Herwijnen is also a lifestyle coach. She teaches people and organizations how to develop healthy habits. In her show, she uses humour to get across an educational message. About the influence of the left side of the brain, for instance, or about spoiling yourself and what you can really do to make sure you feel good. Venue: Junushoff Theatre, Wageningen.

[MEIJE8.WIX.COM/LIJFLIED](http://MEIJE8.WIX.COM/LIJFLIED)

### Sunday 31 January, 15.00 SUNDAY UNIVERSITY: 'REVERSING DIABETES', BY SABITA SOEDAMAH-MUTHU

Type 2 diabetes is no longer a disease for the old as increasing numbers of young children are developing it now. But why do so many people suffer from obesity and diabetes? Can we reverse diabetes and what do we know about nutrition and this disease? Western society has gone through huge changes so that much of what we eat every day is processed, modified and packaged, and keeps for longer. Perhaps we should return to the basic foods and eat like our forebears did. Sabita Soedamah-Muthu PhD from the Human Nutrition Division at WUR will give an insight into the latest scientific findings.

Venue: bblthk, Stationsstraat 2, Wageningen.

[WWW.BBLTHK.NL](http://WWW.BBLTHK.NL)

### Tuesday 2 February, 10.00 – 17.00 CAREER DAY: EXPLORE YOUR FUTURE

Students, PhD candidates, alumni and other interested persons are very welcome to explore the range of employers and find out which one will suit you best. The job fair offers a mix of large international organizations, fast-growing companies, small regional organizations and NGOs. During the day there are several exciting presentations and plenty of possibilities to network and to connect. You might get acquainted via a lunch meeting or an interview. At the KLV Professional Match booth, you can consult career experts about all aspects of the job hunt. Venue: Orion building.

[WWW.WAGENINGENUR.NL/CAREERDAY](http://WWW.WAGENINGENUR.NL/CAREERDAY)

### Wednesday 3 February, 20.00 – 22.00 LECTURE JORIS LUYENDIJK: FOLLOWING THE MONEY

Joris Luyendijk, celebrated author, journalist and anthropologist will share his insights into how dangerous the global financial sector really is, how close to the brink it took all of us in 2008 and why so little has changed since then. Venue: Orion, Bronland 1 Wageningen.

### Saturday 13 February, 10.00-17.00 RECLAIM THE SEEDS FAIR / BOERENGROEP

The fair is an ideal opportunity to find unusual varieties for your garden and to meet other people with the same interest. It is a market where you can exchange, give away or buy seeds. You can also get information there, with talks and workshops on the practical and political aspects of seeds and farming. The collaboration with the Food Otherwise conference, which is on at the same time, means that the market will be particularly big this year, with information about other aspects of the reform of our food system in addition to the usual stalls. Venue: Forum, Droevendaalsesteeg 2.

[WWW.RECLAIMTHESEEDS.NL](http://WWW.RECLAIMTHESEEDS.NL)

Deadline for submissions: one week before publication date (max. 75 words)  
Email: [resource@wur.nl](mailto:resource@wur.nl)

## colophon

Resource is the magazine and news website for students and staff at Wageningen UR. Resource magazine comes out every fortnight on Thursday.

### Address

Akkermaalsbos 14, 6708 WB Wageningen (Nexus, Building 117, bode 31).  
POBox 409 6700 AK Wageningen.  
Secretariat: Thea Kuijpers,  
[resource@wur.nl](mailto:resource@wur.nl), 0317 484020  
Website: [www.resource-online.nl](http://www.resource-online.nl)  
ISSN 1389-7756

### Editorial staff

- Edwin van Laar (editor-in-chief)  
[edwin.vanlaar@wur.nl](mailto:edwin.vanlaar@wur.nl), 0317 482997
- Lieke de Kwant (editor)  
[lieke.dekwant@wur.nl](mailto:lieke.dekwant@wur.nl), 0317 485320
- Roelof Kleis (ecology, social sciences, economy),  
[roelof.kleis@wur.nl](mailto:roelof.kleis@wur.nl), 0317 481721
- Koen Guiking (web editor)  
[koen.guiking@wur.nl](mailto:koen.guiking@wur.nl), 0317 488190
- Linda van der Nat (students, education)  
[linda.vandernat@wur.nl](mailto:linda.vandernat@wur.nl), 0317 481725
- Rob Ramaker (nutrition, fisheries),  
[rob.ramaker@wur.nl](mailto:rob.ramaker@wur.nl), 0317 481709
- Albert Sikkema (plant sciences, animal sciences, organization)  
[albert.sikkema@wur.nl](mailto:albert.sikkema@wur.nl), 0317 481724

### Others who work on Resource

Guy Ackermans, Jeroen Bok, Ton van den Born, Alexandra Branderhorst, Stijn van Gils, Aart-Jan van de Glind, Hoger Onderwijs Persbureau, Milou van der Horst, Amy Jansen, Nicole Janssen, Iris Keizer, Jan-Willem Kortlever, Kito, Hilde de Laat, Django Kaasschieter, Sven Menschel, Carina Nieuwenweg, Rik Nijland, Onnika van Oosterbosch, Derek Pan, Kim Peterse, Camilla Ponte, Lucas du Pré, Simone Rijlaarsdam, Henk van Ruitenbeek, Eva van Schijndel, Kristina Simonaityte, Twan van der Slikke, Joris Tielens, Pascal Tieman, Kees van Veluw, Veronika Wehner, Daniël Dreadson, Rob de Winter, Remo Wormmeester

### Design

Geert-Jan Bruins

### Translators

Clare McGregor, Susie Day, Clare Wilkinson

### Printer

Tuijtel, Hardinxveld-Giessendam

### Subscriptions

A subscription to the magazine costs €58 (overseas: €131) per academic year. Cancellations before 1 August.

### Advertising

External: Bureau van Vliet, T 023-5714745  
[m.dewit@bureauvanvliet.com](mailto:m.dewit@bureauvanvliet.com)  
Internal (reduced rate): Thea Kuijpers,  
[resource@wur.nl](mailto:resource@wur.nl), T 0317 484020

### Publisher

Marc Lamers, Corporate Communications & Marketing Wageningen UR



Your garden well maintained all year?  
Call us for more information

Renkum 0317-313521 [www.everts-weijman.nl](http://www.everts-weijman.nl)



# >>TYPICAL DUTCH



ILLUSTRATION: HENK VAN RUITENBEEK

## Was *drop* invented to trick foreigners?

I love to try new food, more especially typical, local food. So following the advice of various Dutch people I went to try the famous *drop*. No, not droppings but *drop*.

When I saw the black darksome thing they offered me I thought: OK, it's ugly, but it's a candy so why not? I like sweet things. So I put it in my mouth and... arghhhh, it was salty. Can you imagine? A black, salty thing with a Liquorice taste. Sounds like I am describing a medicine, I know, but Dutch people call this candy.

At first I thought *drop* was a prank that Dutch people pull on foreigners. They like to laugh when we try it, I thought, and that's the only reason they sell this stuff in the supermarket. But it's not a prank, they really like it. Even the children. Maybe this explains why there are so many cases of depression in the Netherlands. But try it, maybe you will like it. There are many variations. Drop, to me, is the perfect example of the expression "different strokes for different folks".

Drop, by the way, is the only Dutch local food I don't like. I have also tried other strange things, like apple mousse with fries, or different types of crisps that all have the same flavour: paprika. But these things, although weird, at least taste nice.

© Julio Silva, a PhD student of Plant Pathology from Brazil

**It sounds more like medicine, I know, but Dutch people call it candy**

*Do you have a nice anecdote about your experience of going Dutch? Send it in! Describe an encounter with Dutch culture in detail and comment on it briefly. 300 words max. Send it to [resource@wur.nl](mailto:resource@wur.nl) and earn twenty-five euro and Dutch candy.*