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# RESOURCE [EN]

For everyone at Wageningen University & Research

no 5 – 6 October 2016 – 11th Volume



**INTERNATIONAL  
EDITION**

## Ministry of Food

Idea falls on fertile ground | **p.12**




# >> JOLEIN + ILLUSTRATING

Jolein Schoenmaker, Corporate HR, learning and development



## ‘Expressing the world inside my head’

Marjolein Schoenmaker's paintings look as though they've come straight out of a children's book. And that is no coincidence. 'I love children's books. Fairy tales, animals and humour. One day out at the zoo and my head is full of ideas.' Schoenmaker, who is self-taught, uses acrylic paint to put this fantasy world onto canvas in warm colours. 'It makes me happy. Depicting situations that couldn't really happen. I like that.'  RK / Photo: Guy Ackermans



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New series: portrait of a student

## INTRODUCTION

Whenever the talk turns to hazing I am reminded of the Dutch film *Soldaat van Oranje*, in which the violent initiation of the main character Erik leads to a close friendship with the leader of the corps. Of course, the kind of initiation which leaves wounded in its wake is completely out of order. But is that a reason to ban it outright? Of course not. Apart from the fact that banning things never works, you always have to be careful that you don't throw out the baby with the bathwater.

There is nothing wrong with initiation rituals in themselves. I have never been a member of KSV Franciscus or Ceres but I did once belong to the student athletics club Tartlétos. Our initiation consisted of training like mad. The tough time we went through together forged indestructible bonds. Without the slightest need to humiliate anyone or vomit all over each other.

Abuses like what went on in Groningen don't happen in Wageningen, claim Ceres and KSV. But disturbing rumours about humiliation do sometimes leak out. Are they true? We don't know because hazing is surrounded by a strictly preserved secrecy. And that secrecy may well be the real problem with initiation rituals. Ceres and KSV, shall we agree that next year *Resource* will come along to the introduction and write a nice, truthful report on it?

*Roelof Kleis*

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## TU DELFT AND WUR START ‘METROPOLITAN MASTER’S’

- Programme will be offered at AMS institute in Amsterdam
- Students will learn to solve urban problems

Wageningen University & Research and the Technical University of Delft want to launch a new Master's programme in 2017. The programme in Metropolitan analysis, design and engineering addresses urban issues such as how to make cities climate-proof.

The universities will submit their application for accreditation to the Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organization (NVAO) mid-October. It should be clear within six months

whether accreditation is granted, so the programme should start in September 2017.

There are no plans for a big student recruitment campaign in the coming year, says programme director Erik Heijmans. Information is available on the WUR website, though, with the disclaimer that accreditation is still pending. 'We are already noticing that a lot of people are interested,' Heijmans hopes the Master's will start small with a cohort of around 20 students.

The 'urban Master's' will be offered at the Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions (AMS), which was set up jointly by Wageningen University & Research, the TU Delft and Massachusetts In-

stitute of Technology (MIT) in 2013. Students take core courses in the building of the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) in Amsterdam. For their electives and specialist courses they travel to Delft and Wageningen.

More and more of the world's population lives in – ever larger – cities. The AMS wants to make these cities more sustainable and pleasant to live in. According to the institute, this calls for an integral approach in which experts from a range of disciplines such as ecology, logistics, hydrology and data science collaborate. The AMS is interested in urban cycles, around the food supply, energy and traffic, for instance.

The new Master's was announced right from the launch of

AMS. Since then the idea has been scrutinized to see whether it is sufficiently distinctive, fits the participating institutions' profiles, and meets a demand on the job market. One course module – Sustainable urban development – was launched earlier this year as a free online course (a Massive Online Open Course or MOOC).

The new Master's is Wageningen University & Research's third joint programme. WUR is already offering a Master's programme in Water Technology in Leeuwarden, jointly with the universities of Groningen and Twente. And the Bachelor's in Tourism is run jointly with the NHTV university of applied sciences in Breda. **RR**

## ‘MAKE BUSINESS AND SCIENCE PARK PART OF CAMPUS’

- Merger would give new impetus to BSPW
- WUR is not in favour of a single organization

The Wageningen business and science park BSPW should become part of Wageningen Campus, concludes Holland Food Ventures in a study on the future of the industrial estate in the west of Wageningen. But Wageningen University & Research does not want to go that far.

The BSPW (formerly the Agro Business Park) is in a downwards spiral. There are a lot of empty premises, the space that is available does not match the demands of the market and there is no vision of the future. The BSPW also faces strong competition from the business centre Plus Ultra on the campus. At the behest of the municipal council, Holland Food Ventures got all the stakeholders around the table to look for a solution.

According to HFV, the solution is obvious: create a single campus with one organization responsible for the profiling, strategy and development of business activities. That would be good for the further development of the campus as well. The park would be called Campus West, while the existing campus would be known as Campus East.

Petra Caessens, manager of campus development at WUR, is in favour of closer collaboration in order to profile Wageningen better as a



One of the businesses at Business and Science Park Wageningen is biotechnology company KeyGene.

good location for new companies. 'But setting up a single organization for both parks goes a step too far. That would mean WUR would relinquish its say on part of its own campus. I don't see that happening.' So Caessens does not see a future for a Campus East. 'It is possible that BSPW will be called Campus West but that doesn't automatically mean this will be Campus East. We will still be called simply Wageningen Campus.' Better collaboration should

be possible, she believes, without a far-reaching merger.

BSPW was started in the 1980s – by WUR among others – to market Wageningen knowledge. That never really got off the ground. There are few starters who came from WUR in the business park, and there are hardly any links with the campus, according to the report. The arrival of Plus Ultra on the campus drew away some of the companies at the BSPW. **RK**



## YOUNG STAFF LAUNCH YOUNGWUR

### • Kick-off event aims to attract 100 guests

EA group of staff at Wageningen University & Research will be launching YoungWUR on 6 October. A young professionals network that aims to link up 'young staff at the start of their careers'.

As a student Pien Walraven, an information analyst with Facilities & Services, was part of an active community. She organized activities for her Study As-

sociation Thalia and was even on the board for a year. When she got a job at Wageningen University & Research in 2015, she found it harder to meet people. 'People here have worked here for a long time or went to university here.' So why, she wondered, wasn't there a 'study association' for young staff?

Walraven and seven others are now launching precisely such a network. They are welcoming 'young colleagues at the start of their careers' to join them for the launch in The Spot on

Thursday. There is no age limit: it is up to people to decide for themselves whether they come under this category. All guests can contribute to the discussion and of course have a drink. 'We'd like as much input as we can get at the kick-off event,' says Walraven. Are staff looking for a chance to socialize, for instance, or are they more interested in career tips and development? And what kinds of activities should YoungWUR organize? Walraven expects about 100 guests. **RR**

## © COLUMN | STIJN

### Totalitarian peace

Not all students are darlings, even in Wageningen. The fact that I regularly cannot sleep because our Ceres neighbours have come up with some or other earplug-resistant club track may qualify as insignificant. But clearly even our association members sometimes go too far. Two years ago, for example, a barman at Argo knocked two members of Ceres to the ground. Unlike the most recent victim in Groningen, neither suffered cerebral edema, though both needed stitches. And at the start of this year a Ceres activity was cancelled because drunken first-year students were walking along the motorway. Wageningen 'bang lists' have not yet reached me, but perhaps I am simply not in the loop.

It is quite understandable that here too people are voting to ban initiation rituals – correction, 'association introduction periods'. What's more, every activity held by a student association is a potential threat to the carefully constructed image of Wageningen University & Research. In fact, it is admirable that rector magnificus Arthur Mol made only a gentle plea that students be nice to each other.

It is simply the trend not to take risks with young people and their not yet fully grown brains. Falling numbers of primary school pupils are cycling unaccompanied to school – too dangerous. At secondary school countless homework clubs are ready to help reluctant learners progress – otherwise they won't be accepted onto good courses. Universities, including Wageningen University & Research, are using attendance lists to prevent students missing a lecture – heaven forefend they should fail an exam. Give it a while and we will be living in totalitarian peace. It will be utterly impossible to commit any act of folly and stupidity. Wonderfully safe, but also spine-chilling. Because if you have never had the chance to really screw up, how can you convince yourself that you can do something really well?

Perhaps I would rather run the risk of ending up on a 'bang list'. **RR**

**Stijn van Gils** (29) is doing doctoral research on ecosystem services in agriculture. Every month he describes his struggles with the scientific system.



### in brief

#### >> JENNIFER DOUDNA Lecture on Crispr-Cas

When 700 people – most of them students – turn up on a Friday afternoon to listen to a technical talk on molecular biology, you know there is something unusual going on. This happened on Friday 30 September in the large lecture theatre in Orion. The speakers were the American scientist Jennifer Doudna – a candidate for the Nobel Prize – and WUR alumnus Edze Westra. The day before the event they received the Heineken Prize and the Heineken Young Scientist Award respectively. They talked about the impact of their work on Crispr-Cas, a new technique with which DNA can be changed with more precision than ever. **RR**



Jennifer Doudna (left) talking to Edze Westra and Louise Fresco.

PHOTO: GUY ACKERMANS

#### >> MARINE RESEARCH WUR council wants time

The WUR council wants more time before it comes out with its advice on the position of Wageningen Marine Research (formerly Imares). The executive board wants to bring Wageningen Marine Research, which is currently independent, under the Animal Sciences Group (ASG). In view of their common ground, this would be the most suitable place in the organization. At the beginning of July, the board asked the WUR council for its view. Now the WUR council writes in a memo that it is 'too early for a thorough substantive discussion with the executive board'. The council wants to consult its constituency first and obtain more information. **RR**

#### >> KLOKHUIS SCIENCE PRIZE WUR research in the running

Two Wageningen projects are in the running for the Science Prize awarded by the Dutch children's television programme Klokhuis. The projects are on Vegetables from Mars and Clean School Routes. The television programme aims to reward scientific research which is interesting and relevant to children with the new prize. The Mars project looked at whether plants could grow on Martian soil, while the school routes project identified the cycling route to school with the cleanest air, for children at the Haagse Schoolvereniging in The Hague. The winner will be announced at the scientific film festival InScience on 2 November in Nijmegen. **MF**

# ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES ON THE WAY UP

- **Business and Consumer Sciences still the biggest**
- **Number of first-year Bachelor's students up by 9 percent**

The Bachelor's degree programme in Business and Consumer Sciences has attracted the most first-years, just like last year. Environmental Sciences is the fastest growing programme, shows a comparison of student numbers at the end of September with those of this time last year. There are now 1604 first-year Bachelor's students walking around the campus: 131 (8.9 percent) more than a year ago.

Numbers vary widely between degree courses (see table). Four of the bachelor's programmes have even shrunk, among them the largest degree programme, Business and Consumer Sciences. The runner-up, Biology, is the fastest-growing programme in absolute numbers.

Biotechnology and Environmental Sciences are growing considerably too. For Environmental Sciences, the growth by 60 percent is not just massive, it is also quite

unexpected. 'We haven't done anything out of the ordinary,' says programme director Theo Lexmond. 'For the last three years student numbers have hovered around 35. The 56 we've got this time have broken the trend. How long that will last is anyone's guess of course.'

Environmental Sciences did draw many more students in the past, though. Lexmond: 'In the 1990s, when it was still called Environmental Hygiene, we once had 150 first-years. We have also had years when we only had 15.' For now he sees no problem with the new increase. 'For the first six months students do courses that are common to other programmes too. After that they start on programme-specific courses. We still have to think about how we are going to approach that.'

Other growing programmes are the 'little ones', Communication Sciences and Agrotechnology, which have grown by 46 and 36 percent respectively. Communication Sciences made good progress last year with the Future City Challenge, a competition for secondary school students which seems to be

bearing fruit now. Tourism grew by 27 percent, so it is now the second smallest Bachelor's programme after Communications Sciences.

The biggest loser is Health and

Society, which shrank by one fifth. Plant Sciences, Molecular Life Sciences and, as already mentioned, Business and Consumer Sciences shrank too. **RK**

## NUMBER OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME	2016	2015	
1. BUSINESS AND CONSUMER SCIENCES	162	169	-7
2. BIOLOGY	158	133	+25
3. NUTRITION AND HEALTH	149	138	+11
4. FOOD TECHNOLOGY	148	136	+12
5. BIOTECHNOLOGY	131	108	+23
6. INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES	86	80	+6
7. ANIMAL SCIENCES	85	83	+2
8. MOLECULAR LIFE SCIENCES	85	92	-7
9. INTERNATIONAL LAND AND WATER MANAGEMENT	78	66	+12
10. SOIL, WATER AND ATMOSPHERE	73	67	+6
11. FOREST AND NATURE MANAGEMENT	68	58	+10
12. HEALTH AND SOCIETY	63	80	-17
13. LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AND SPATIAL PLANNING	61	56	+5
14. PLANT SCIENCES	60	65	-5
15. ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES	56	35	+21
16. ECONOMICS AND POLICY	51	44	+7
17. AGROTECHNOLOGY	38	28	+10
18. TOURISM	28	22	+6
19. COMMUNICATION SCIENCES	24	13	+11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1604</b>	<b>1473</b>	<b>+131</b>

## FUN WITH SCIENCE

How do you make a chrysanthemum which lasts longer in the vase or a bell pepper that is even tastier? A large number of visitors got a peek behind the scenes at Wageningen Plant and Animal Sciences last Sunday. The emphasis was on activities for children, with a Pokémon game, a milking competition and easy-to-follow explanations, science has never been so much fun. **RK**

**Watch the video**  
on [resource-online.nl](http://resource-online.nl).



PHOTO: SVEN MENSCHER



# MINISTER PUSHES THROUGH NUTRITION RESEARCH MERGER

- 45 TNO researchers coming to Wageningen
- 'Dutch Food Initiative will play strong leading role'

Nutrition research at the Dutch science organization TNO is to move to Wageningen from 1 January 2018, with 45 TNO researchers joining Wageningen Food & Biobased Research. This was announced in parliament last week by minister of Economic Affairs Henk Kamp.

Niek Snoeij, who as Healthy Life director is responsible for nutrition research at TNO, would have preferred to continue to collaborate with WUR as a separate organization. 'Collaboration was going well; we have joint projects in the fields of nutrition and biobased products.' But he does understand the wish to concentrate too. 'When government funding is cut back it is wise to join forces. The nutrition industry supports this concentration of research too.'

Effectively, this is a question of transferring 45 staff positions from TNO's Functional Ingre-



PHOTO: OOGOPZEIST

dients research group in Zeist to Wageningen. These researchers bring with them TNO's analysing equipment and research funding from the ministry of EZ.

Minister Kamp announced the transfer of TNO's nutrition research to Wageningen on 30 September. 'Wageningen research has a strong position as a research organization for agriculture, biobased, nature, and nutrition and health,' writes Kamp. 'By shifting TNO's expertise on nutrition to Wageningen we get a single

Dutch research centre for food innovation. This 'Dutch Food Initiative' is going to play a strong leading role in applied research on nutrition & health.'

TNO is shedding its nutrition research and concentrating on health research, says Snoeij. The office in Zeist will close mid-2018 and the TNO health researchers will move to Leiden. Snoeij hopes the former TNO researchers in Wageningen will continue to work with TNO. **AS**

## RECTOR: STOP INITIATIONS

- Discussion after incidents at Vindicat in Groningen
- Wageningen societies: 'The present system works fine'

Aurthur Mol, rector magnificus of Wageningen University & Research, has called on Wageningen student societies to put an end to their initiation rituals. KSV Franciscus and Ceres see no reason, however, to change their traditional initiation process.

Mol was responding to the outrage about hazing abuses at the Groningen student society Vindicat. According to the rector, such rituals should be a thing of the past. And he feels there are better ways to achieve a sense of bonding in a group, without humiliation, verbal aggression or dangerous behaviour. He realises that he has no way of putting pressure on the societies and sees his call as a moral appeal.

'At present we see no reason to change,' responds Tom van Geelen, president of KSV Franciscus. According to Van Geelen, strong peer pressure and safety regulations ensure that the KSV initiation rituals 'work fine'. Aspiring members do not drink any alcohol, there are always first-aiders present and members are prepared thoroughly.

Janneke Sloet van Oldruitenborgh, president of Ceres student society, sees no reason to change the society's guidelines either. 'At Ceres we call it an introduction period and not an initiation. There is no question of tough hazing activities here.'

Wageningen University & Research has never had any serious hazing incidents, says Simon Vink, spokesperson for the executive board. 'What we do occasionally get is complaints from parents or from outsiders who have seen something.' **MF, RR en VK**

*Read readers' reactions on page 11.*

### Science Cafe Wageningen

www.sciencecafewageningen.nl

## ADDICTION: A DISEASE OF FREE WILL?

Prof. Roshan Cools (RUMC Nijmegen)  
Prof. Marc Slors (RU Nijmegen)

Thursday, October 27  
19:45 - live music  
20:15 - Science  
Café Loburg  
FREE ENTRANCE

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# DROUGHT AFFLICTS AFRICAN ELEPHANTS

- During long droughts elephants die of starvation
- This problem is just as devastating as poaching

Drought is set to play a bigger and bigger role in the decline of the African elephant. When it does not rain in the savannah for a long time, many elephants die of starvation, shows research by Yussuf Wato in the Tsavo Conservation Area, a cluster of national parks in Kenya.

During prolonged droughts, herds gather near rivers because waterholes elsewhere have dried up. The elephants then face a terrible dilemma. They need to drink every two days so if they wander too far away they will die of thirst. But they also need to forage for ever scarcer food in a limited range full of elephants. If this goes on for longer than four months the food situation becomes critical and then battle commences.

Wato, who works for the Kenya Wildlife Service and is doing his PhD at Resource Ecology in Wageningen, studied the influence of periods of drought over ten years. He used data about the locations of carcasses, which park rangers in Tsavo monitor closely. He only included elephants in his study that had neither been poached nor died of disease.

Most elephant deaths occur during droughts and close to rivers. There is also a clear correlation with a decrease in vegetation (measured by satellite), concluded Wato in an article for the



PHOTO: ERIN BUCHHOLTZ

During prolonged droughts many African elephants die of starvation.

November edition of *Biological Conservation*. In the article Wato makes clear that drought is a natural mechanism that regulates elephant numbers. In national parks with artificial water sources populations often increase explosively and park managers sometimes resort to culling to prevent the elephants from consuming all the vegetation at the expense of gazelles and zebras. Shooting the elephants is less natural than drought, in Wato's view.

But there is a flip side to this. The number of elephants in Tsavo has gone down by two

thirds in the past 40 years. And drought played a 'significant role' in this, according to the researcher. Climate models also predict that rainfall on the savannah will continue to decrease.

The falling populations of African elephants are usually attributed to poaching and encroachment on their habitats. 'The new data indicate that drought is certainly at least as big a factor in the decline of the elephant,' says one of Wato's supervisors, Ignas Heitkönig at Resource Ecology. **✎ RN**

## BREWING BEER USING ENZYMES SPARES ENVIRONMENT

- Malting costly in energy and raw materials
- Alternative preparation more sustainable

Beer brewers can spare the environment by using unmalted barley and enzymes instead of malted barley. This is proposed by Laura van Donkelaar and other researchers at Food Process Engineering and the Institute for Sustainable Process Technology in the journal *Energy*.

The researchers quantified the

energy and raw material use in the two preparation methods. As a measure, they used exergy. This is the amount of physical work that a raw material or energy stream can perform, in other words the energy it contains. The exergy of the conventional process was 441 megajoules, that of the enzyme-assisted process 354 megajoules. Moreover, the consumption of water, raw materials and natural gas in the enzyme-assisted process was lower by 7, 14 and 78 percent respectively.

'In the conventional beer-brewing process, you first soak then

heat the barley, so that the barley produces its own enzymes,' explains co-author Atze-Jan van der Goot. 'Then this mixture has to be dried.' Unmalted barley and enzymes are rather easier than this to use. These enzymes are necessary to convert the barley starch into fermentable sugar.

Nevertheless, the researchers were not certain in advance that the alternative would have a lower environmental impact. 'That would be the case were you to regard these enzymes as a heap of dust and only count their chemical exergy,' says Van der Goot. But

the enzymes also have to be created and with an exergy of 676 megajoules per kilogram that is an energy-intensive activity. However, because very little enzyme is needed, enzyme-assisted brewing turned out to be more sustainable.

In answer to whether brewers will welcome the alternative recipe, Van der Goot says: 'For new markets or products I can imagine they will, but it would be no easy matter to make Heineken and other premium beers in a different way. In their case, the classic method of brewing is much too important.' **✎ AJ**



## FUNGUS STOPS SUZUKI FRUIT FLY

- Researchers find natural enemy
- Good news for Dutch fruit-growing

Wageningen researchers seem to have found a natural enemy of the suzuki fruit fly that has been plaguing Dutch fruit-growing. The fungus *Metarhizium robertsii* blocks the reproduction of the fruit flies almost completely, as cage tests carried out by Wageningen Plant Research have shown. Next year the fungus will be field tested.

The suzuki fruit fly (*Drosophila suzukii*) has established itself in the Netherlands in recent years and is causing increasing damage to soft fruits such as cherries, blueberries, blackberries and raspberries. Unlike other fruit flies, the suzuki lays its eggs in undamaged fruit still hanging on the bushes. It is a significant nuisance for fruit growers, and nor are allotments exempt as the exotic fly survives there equally well.

In het EU project Dropsa researchers are studying ways to limit the damage. Insecticides are not a good option because there can be no residues of these agents on the fruit by the time the crop is harvested. This has prompted the researchers to explore biological control options. Three fungus products are already commercially

available, but they are not effective enough.

This is not the first time the researchers have taken a new insect-killing fungus from nature. One collected earlier was the fungus *Metarhizium robertsii*, which proved to work well with the lure and kill strategy. This involves luring the fruit flies with pieces of blueberry, after which the fungi is supposed to kill the insects.

To test the method, Plant Research carried out a test in cages of this new fungus and two commercially available fungus products. First, the suzuki flies were released in the cages and after four weeks the researchers counted their offspring. In the cages with *Metarhizium robertsii* an average of five offspring were found per cage, while in the control cages 83 offspring hatched in the berries, and in the cages containing commercial fungus products there were 70 and 24 offspring.

This test shows *M. robertsii* to be a promising form of pest control, but the researchers do not yet know whether the lure and kill strategy will also work on farms, where the bait containing the fungus must compete with fruit in the field. If the scent trap containing fungus is used before the fruit is ripe, there is a strong chance this form of pest control will be effective, suspect the researchers. They will be testing this belief in the EU project in 2017. **AS**



PHOTO: MARTIN COOPER

## VISION <<

### 'Fraud can be motivated by greed or by need'



**Lamb dishes without any lamb in them, extra virgin olive oil of lamp oil quality, and oregano padded out with olive leaves. The Consumer Union found a lot of examples of wrongly labelled food in a recent random sampling exercise – something which may suggest fraud. And yet we cannot say for sure that more and more fraud is going on, says Saskia van Ruth, professor of Food Authenticity at Wageningen University & research, and Authenticity and nutrients group leader at Rikilt.**

*You wrote last year that the number of reports of food fraud had gone up internationally. Does this mean there is more fraud going on?*

'You can't jump to that conclusion. There are no official lists that tell you how often fraud and mislabelling occur. What is more, it is coming in for more attention these days and that makes us notice it more. Companies and government bodies became a lot more aware of it because of the horsemeat scandal.'

*So it is not clear whether food fraud is increasing?*

'There are trends that raise the risks in the long term. Due to globalization we source our food from all over the world. And the economic crisis put companies under pressure. Fraud can be motivated by greed or by need.'

*What are the risk factors for tampering with food?*

'Some products are more vulnerable to it than others. The worst you can do with an apple is replace it with a different variety, but with liquids or powders fraud is easier. Other products are more vulnerable because they come in large volumes. Long chains play a role too. Goods from certain Asian countries carry different risks than the same products from the United Kingdom.'

*What can we do about fraud?*

'Companies use 'hard controls'. They can carry out tests, for example, or monitor the mass balance at suppliers: is what comes out the same as what went in or does it multiply miraculously somewhere along the line? Then there are 'soft controls': controls on the ethical aspect of supplier companies and your own organization. Is the focus entirely on monetary targets or also on the way they are met? Is there a code of conduct and is it observed?' **RR**



# ‘THERE IS NO NEED FOR POTATOES TO GET SICK ANYMORE’

The potato is an increasingly major food crop around the world. The yield per hectare is increasing and diseases no longer have to pose a threat, said Anton Haverkort in his farewell symposium on 21 September.

Haverkort was one of the people behind the ten-year Durph project which aims to make potatoes resistant to the fungal disease phytophthora. The research project has already identified several resistance genes from wild potato varieties which can make the common varieties phytophthora-proof. But plant-breeders are not yet embracing the technique this requires – cisgenesis. ‘There is no need for potatoes to get sick anymore’ says Haverkort. ‘It is a choice made by society that resistance has not yet been introduced in practice.’



Anton Haverkort has been to most of the countries where potatoes are grown. This photo from 2011 was taken in India.

## WEAKLING

The potato is a weakling, really, but it does have a great future, says ‘potato professor’ Haverkort. He has been to most of the countries where potatoes are grown. So he has watched the rise of the potato to the fourth most important food crop in the world after rice, wheat and maize. Yields have been boosted all around the world in recent decades thanks to a combination of good propagation materials, better varieties, crop protection, fertilization and in some places irrigation, says Haverkort. Farmers in Rwanda, for example, have increased their potato production by ten times in the past 35 years, whereas the population increased by two and a half times. This constitutes an improvement in the country’s food security, he notes.

Yields are expected to rise further in the coming years due to climate change, to which the potato

is responding well. ‘Because of the expected increase in CO<sub>2</sub> in the air, yields will go up by another 28 percent, our crop models suggest.’ The growing season will become longer in many countries too, because warming will enable farm-

## ‘The potato is a weakling but it has a great future’

ers to plant earlier and harvest later. The rise in temperatures will cause production to go up by another 15 percent on average, estimates Haverkort.

The potato scores well on nutritional value too: the crop contains far more vitamins and minerals than grains do. This makes it an valuable crop for developing countries. ‘As Potato Ltd Netherlands, we can make the most of these de-

velopments by introducing our high quality varieties and technology in countries such as China, India and in east Africa.’

## CONCERNED

Haverkort has been the ambassador and leading expert of this ‘Potato Ltd’. So the whole potato sector was represented at his farewell symposium and drinks party in Wageningen. But Haverkort was also the link between research, practice, policy and industry. He is an open supporter of genetic modification but he also worked with the organic sector. The Durph project exchanged knowledge with the Bio-Impuls project from the ecological sector, for example.

Haverkort is concerned about the future of potato research. ‘The current tendency is for the direction of research to be decided not by bureaucrats but by the business world via the top sectors,’ he stated recently in the sector journal

Aardappelwereld. ‘That went fine at first but now the business world has to contribute one quarter of the research funding. A consequence of that is that most of the research is applied. Hardly any fundamental-strategic research takes place anymore. That means potato research at Wageningen Plant Research is drying up. But you need to keep on developing knowledge of the relationship between the potato and the pathogens.’

At his farewell symposium, Mister Potato received the Broekema award, the highest distinction in the Dutch plant breeding world. He is retiring from Wageningen – 8 December will be his last working day – but the world of potato research has not seen the back of him. Haverkort has been appointed for three years as potato professor at Nigde University in Turkey. He also intends to write a Potato Handbook. **AS**



Is it acceptable for a rector to criticize a tradition such as hazing? There was some heated debate about this online. Meanwhile Ecuadorian students were saddened about a red dot on their country. Follow the news and join in the discussion on [resource-online.nl](http://resource-online.nl).

MEANWHILE ON...



# RESOURCE-ONLINE.NL

## HAZING

Rector Arthur Mol dropped a bomb with his appeal to Wageningen student societies to stop their hazing traditions. He was duly bombarded with indignant reactions on the Resource website, which drew some fire in turn.

'Why this appeal to stop hazing?' **Liberté toujours** wants to know. 'Wageningen students got rid of such initiation ceremonies years ago. This reeks of populism or an inferiority complex on the part of the executive board: Wageningen really does count as a university town.' **Pieter** too calls the rector's statement populist. 'His decision to get involved in the news with the sole aim of getting in the media is cheap.' **Man man man** flips his lid, using words like

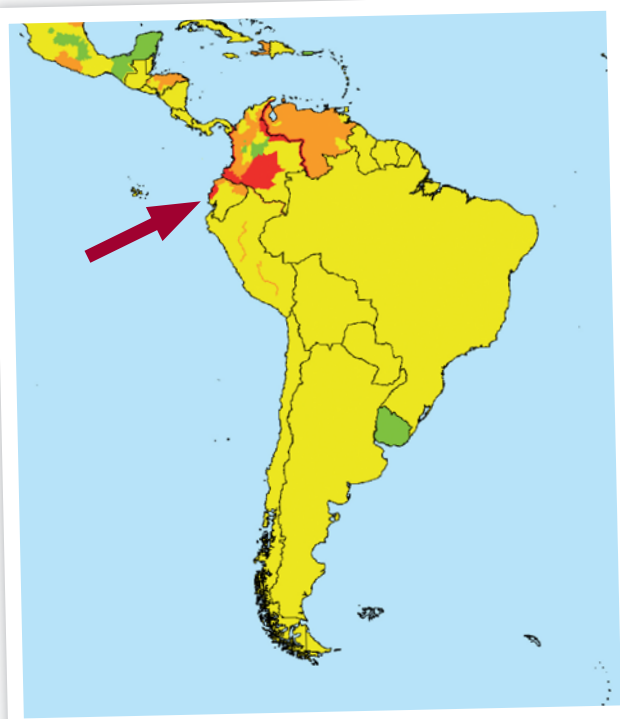
'feeble', 'gratuitous' and 'unworthy of a rector'. Which makes **Lisa** sigh: 'What responses. What is wrong with Mol making a moral appeal not to do hazing a la Groningen? He is not threatening to cut off funding or introduce strict control. Be happy you've got a rector who has something to say when confronted with a journalist and not someone who just says, "No comment"'. **Niek** feels the Wageningen student societies 'are unnecessarily cast in a poor light. 'In my opinion they actually set a good example of how you can go about the initiation/ introduction period.' **Opvallend** sees this differently. 'Anyone who regularly goes down the Generaal Foulkesweg as I do, can see with their own eyes how the hazing (oh sorry, introduction) goes, with the first-years at Ceres being sent out to be hazed (oh sorry, introduced) on the lawn or the street by older students. There is no sign of any respect there. To **Piet is er niet** this is all a storm in a teacup. 'The student societies have all been there a very long time and they'll still be around for a while to come. The way they do things now is different to the way they used to do things, and no doubt to the way they'll do things in future as well.'

Read all the reactions on [resource-online.nl](http://resource-online.nl) under the bulletin 'Rector magnificus appeals to students to stop initiation rituals'

## RED DOT

A group of Master's students from Ecuador were cross about the world map accompanying the article *Dodgy internships* in Resource 3. Their country had a red dot on it, signifying a 'no go' travel advice from the Dutch ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In a letter published on the website the students declare that their country *is* safe. They cite the Global Peace Index (GPI). Ecuador has climbed the GPI rankings from position 123 in 2008 to position 76 now. 'This progress is the result of the reduction in in the crime rate through the establishment of social programmes and policies that promote security', write the students. 'we strongly believe in our people and their intentions to create favourable social living conditions. As Ecuadorian students we would like to promote tourism and research in our country.'



## PROPOSITION

*'Writing a dissertation is good for the brain, but bad for the body.'*

Proposition in the thesis submitted by Aleksandra Berezowska, who graduated with a PhD on 20 September



# THE NEW FOOD COALITION



There is almost a majority in The Hague in favour of a ministry of Food. Six parliamentary parties see such a ministry as the key to a new, integral food policy. Their coalition on this issue is fragile, however, due to numerous differences of opinion.

text Albert Sikkema illustration Pascal Tieman

**T**wo years ago the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) published a report called *Towards a food policy*. The report is a plea for an integral food policy. It came out at a time when there were legal cases about food fraud, a public debate about factory farming, animal welfare and health, and complaints from farmers about low prices and the new power relations in food production chains. Although the Dutch agrofood sector was a major contributor to the Dutch economy, noted the WRR, public confidence in the sector was at a low ebb.

The current agricultural policy needed broadening to become a food policy, the WRR believed. 'That policy should be based not just on economic values but also on considerations such as ecological values, the health of food and of consumers, and the robustness of food chains. These values should be weighed up and balanced in the context of a food strategy.' The WRR also states: 'This demands a strong institutional base.' In other words: we need a ministry of Food.

#### OLD ANTAGONISTS

Oddly enough, the lower house of the Dutch parliament has not yet debated the WRR's paper on food, now two years old. It seems as though the cabinet is at a loss. Meanwhile, more and more political parties have rallied behind the proposals, with the CDA (Christian democrats), the Christian Union, the PvdA (labour), the SGP (a Protestant party) and the Animal Rights Party all speaking out in the past few months in favour of a ministry of Food.

The SP (socialist party) supports the WRR vision too, but would prefer to see a ministry of Food, Infrastructure and Environment (VIM).

Civil society organizations have aired their views too, and old antagonists such as agricultural organization LTO and nature conservation organizations Natuurmonumenten and Natuur & Milieu have united in support of the appeal for a minister of Food. They feel such a ministry is a requisite 'for implementing coherent solutions which address issues of health, sustainability and prosperity,' as Natuur & Milieu put it this summer.

#### FRAGILE COALITION

The new coalition in The Hague is fragile, however, because the motives for setting up a new ministry are quite diverse. This becomes clear as soon as we catalogue the motivations of the various parties.

To start with the CDA, this party really wants to bring back the former ministry of Agriculture. Abolishing this ministry in 2010 was a mistake, says CDA MP Jaco Geurts. He wants a new ministry which puts agriculture back on the map, and an agriculture minister who can join cabinet meetings. 'That kind of ministry is in a better position to develop the food policy.' Food safety, production and export are important themes for the CDA. The agricultural organization LTO shares the wish for farmers to be listened to again in The Hague. 'The roles played in society by farmers and horticulturalists justify a new department of Food, Nature and Rural affairs,' says LTO chair Albert Jan Maat. 'Not just for the sake of safe, reliable and affordable food, but also in the interests of climate, rural areas and landscape.'

#### LIMITS TO AGRICULTURE

The PvdA has very different reasons for arguing for a ministry of Food. 'The new ministry should be the vehicle for a new agricultural policy,' says PvdA MP Sjoera Dijkers. In such a policy, the environment and consumers set limits to our agriculture, says Dijkers. Under the ministry of Economic Affairs, she says, agriculture is strongly oriented towards economic considerations. In the new ministry, the issues of food quality, the environment, food safety and authenticity should be given much more priority. 'I think you should bring together the various different parties, from industry to activists, to create an overarching vision on food.'

For this reason, the agriculture department should be separated from the ministry of Economic Affairs and merged with the environmental department of the ministry of Infrastructure and Environment, and the health department of the ministry of Public Health, Welfare and



Sport (VWS), says Dijkers. Moreover, argues the PvdA, the labour inspectorate should play a role in the new food ministry to scrutinize the use of cheap labour and dubious contracts in the horticulture sector and in abattoirs.

MINISTRY OF VIM

The SP's vision on food is very much in line with that of the PvdA. MP Henk van Gerven too would like to see an integral food policy in which limits are imposed on the agriculture sector and closer attention is paid to health, nature, the environment and food quality. The SP also shares the belief that the current agricultural policy under the ministry of Economic Affairs puts too much emphasis on production, world trade and export. That is why the agriculture department must be moved out of that ministry, says Van Gerven, but there is no need to set up a whole new ministry. 'As far as I'm concerned we could put agriculture under the ministry of Infrastructure and Environment. I&M is a ministry with strong public participation, which considers the public good. I think farmers' interests should come under the ministry of Food, Infrastructure and Environment (VIM).'

IN-THE-BOX THINKING

The current coalition of the PvdA and the VVD is very divided when it comes to food and agriculture. This may well be why the WRR study has not yet been tabled for discussion in the lower house. The VVD is against the idea of a ministry of Food. 'Parties which argue for a dedicated ministry of Food forget that our agriculture and horticulture sector has a lot of overlap with many other ministries,' states MP Helma Lodders of the VVD. 'It's about economics, trade and finance. So the VVD doesn't want to think in boxes, consisting of ministries. Instead of narrowing our focus to one particular ministry, we should actually be taking a broader view.'

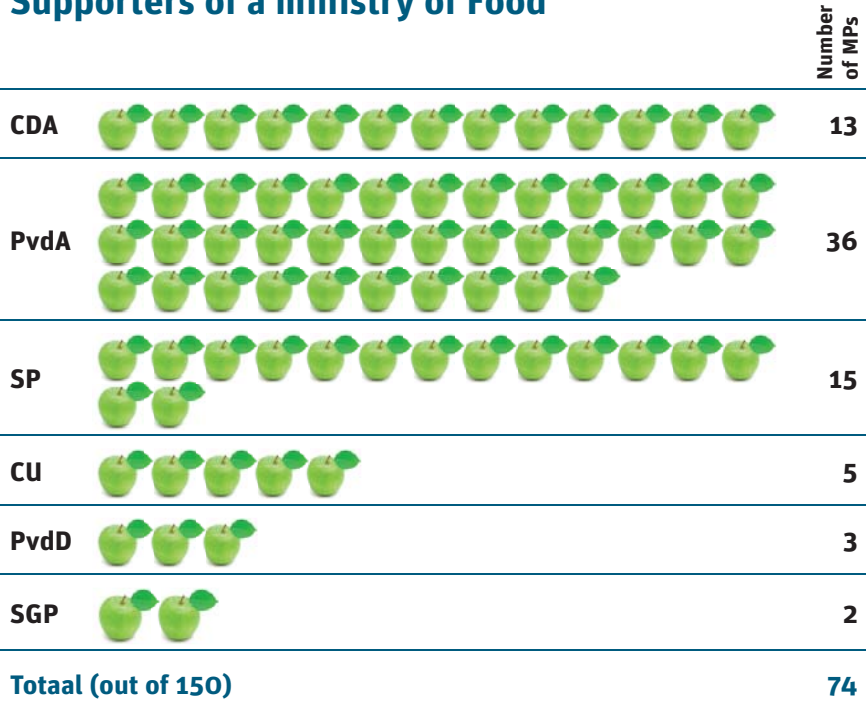
Lodders therefore defends the current agriculture policy, which is oriented to the global market. 'In the Netherlands we have an agricultural and horticultural sector which is a significant player on the world market. We want to keep it that way.' So that agricultural must remain globally competitive. 'Highly production agriculture such as we have in the Netherlands has its advantages. The higher the production, the less scarce farmland you need to produce our food, and the more space you preserve for nature and recreation. That is appealing. What is more, we should look at innovation, so as to ensure that agriculture can develop, but not at a cost to nature and the environment.'

ELECTION THEME

The rift between the VVD and the PvdA on food policy stands in the way of a joint vision on food, but after the elections in March next year a lot could change. It is possible that the right-wing PVV and some smaller parties will then have a say, and coalitions could be formed which do want a ministry of Food. The PVV has not made a statement on the subject, but D66, the SGP, the Christian Union and the Animal Rights Party have done so.

D66 wants a vision of food, but not necessarily a food ministry. 'D66 wants us to make a start together with the farmers on the transition to a new, sustainable agricul-

Supporters of a ministry of Food



ture system with more emphasis on quality and less on bulk and the lowest possible prices,' says D66 MP Fatma Koser Kaya. 'What name a ministry is given is a bit of a political game. The main thing for D66 is for food production to be geared to sustainability, quality and public health.' Unlike D66, the Christian Union and the Animal Rights party are keen to see a ministry of Food. Like the CDA, the protestant SGP would like to go back to a dedicated ministry of Agriculture with its own minister. For the SGP, a new ministry of Food, which defends the interests of farmers better than the ministry of Economic Affairs has done, is an election campaign theme.

FAIR PRICE

What the Christian Union wants to see is a ministry of Food which bridges the divide between the fans and the critics of the current agricultural policy. 'Nature, the environment and public health should have a place in the food policy,' says Christian Union MP Carla Dik. 'Not as a separate element but as the conditions for food production. The agriculture sector is at the heart of the ministry of Food. I am always emphasizing that we need to re-evaluate our food. The farmers are not paid enough for their products. Farmers work 80 hours a week and barely make a living because they have to sell their products for less than cost price.'

Fair food prices will not materialize under the auspices of the ministry of Economic Affairs, believes Dik. 'In







EZ, agriculture is approached from a purely economic point of view. Food is dealt with in a technocratic and procedural way. What is lacking at EZ is any passion for food. Health, nature, environment and animal welfare don't fit into EZ's economic principles, but they are just as important. We should not only be looking at the price of food for the consumer, as the Authority for Consumers and Market does, but also at the price for the producer and the availability, diversity and quality of our food.'

#### MANSHOLT LECTURE

In the current lower house the food coalition includes roughly half the MPs. What unites these MPs is a rejection of the bureaucratic, procedural ministry of Economic Affairs, and the wish for a heartfelt debate on food. Just look at the latest annual King's Speech outlining policy. Not a word about farmers, agriculture or nature. The new food coalition wants to change that. Wageningen is doing its bit. Carla Dik refers not just to the WRR report but also to WUR president Louise Fresco's Mansholt lecture in Brussels. Her plea for an integral agricultural policy was addressed to the EU, but might have more impact in The Hague, suggests Dik. 'Her lecture is good material for a parliamentary debate.' ®



***'The ministry of Food should be the vehicle for a new agriculture policy'***

Sjoera Dijkers (PvdA)



***'Abolishing the ministry of Agriculture (LNV) in 2010 was a mistake'***

Jaco Geurts (CDA)



***'Bring farmers' interests under the ministry of Food, Infrastructure and Environment'***

Henk van Gerven (SP)



***'Food production should be run on principles of sustainability, quality and health'***

Fatma Koser Kaya (D66)



***'What is lacking at EZ is any passion about food'***

Carla Dik (CU)




***'Instead of narrowing our focus to one ministry, we should be broadening it'***

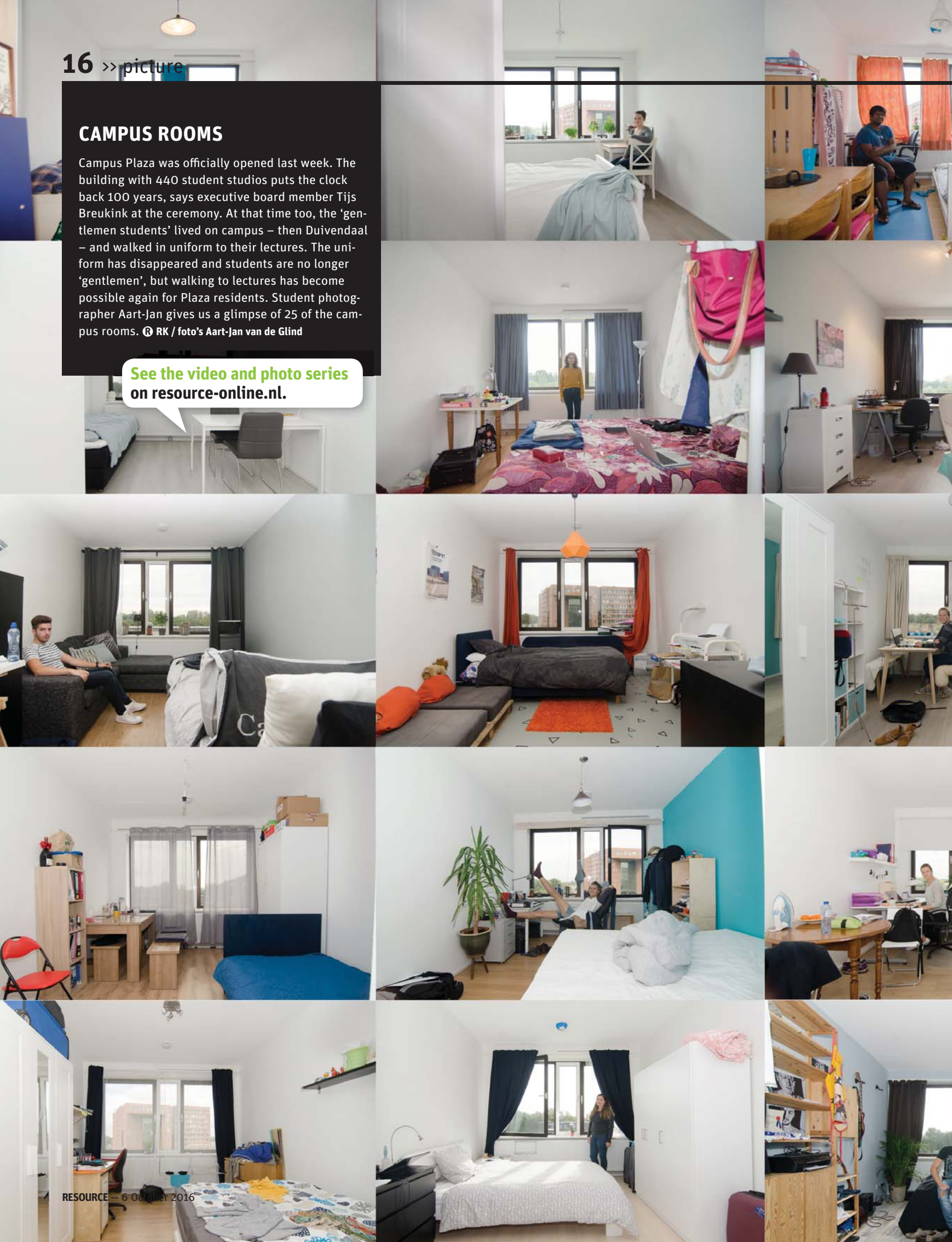
Helma Lodders (VVD)



## CAMPUS ROOMS

Campus Plaza was officially opened last week. The building with 440 student studios puts the clock back 100 years, says executive board member Tijs Breukink at the ceremony. At that time too, the 'gentlemen students' lived on campus – then Duivendaal – and walked in uniform to their lectures. The uniform has disappeared and students are no longer 'gentlemen', but walking to lectures has become possible again for Plaza residents. Student photographer Aart-Jan gives us a glimpse of 25 of the campus rooms.  RK / foto's Aart-Jan van de Glind

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









# Life, but not as we know it

In the basement of Atlas, cameras using time lapse photography are recording the growth of plants. For the first time, both above and below ground. The project is sponsored by 'the crowd'.

*text* Roelof Kleis *photos* Guy Ackermans, Wim van Egmond and Gerlinde De Deyn



Ingrid Lubbers (left) and Gerlinde De Deyn with the apparatus with which they and artist Wim van Egmond (photo below) are recording soil life.

**'M** eet the mysterious soil life' is the name of the enterprise launched with the aid of crowdfunding at the beginning of this year. The target sum of 10,000 euros has recently been reached. It took exactly 137 generous donors to do so. 'Individuals and companies from at home and abroad donated between 15 and 500-plus euros,' says soil ecologist Gerlinde de Deyn with enthusiasm. She is

one of the initiators of the project which aims to reveal the existence of slow-growing underground plants and animals.

## WORLD AUDIENCE

De Deyn and her fellow soil scientists Ingrid Lubbers and Willem-Jan van Groenigen are working with artist and micro-photographer Wim van Egmond. The foursome started two years ago by recording the subterranean life of the worm. This produced thousands of virtu-

ally identical photos which suddenly come to life when strung together to form a film. De Deyn makes regular and successful use of the films at symposia and presentations. And a few seconds of footage were even used at the opening ceremony of the Olympic games, with a global audience.

The pictures now being taken in the basement are intended to show the underground interactions between plant roots and soil life. Encounters with other roots, fungi, bacteria







and other soil life. Maize, pumpkin and bean seeds have been planted in a little slice of potted plant soil between two glass plates. Lamps create a diurnal rhythm and two cameras register what happens both underground and above the surface at intervals of nearly 15 minutes. 'If you play the photos at 25 frames per second you get four seconds of film per day,' explains photographer van Egmond. Life speeded up 21,600 times. 'That is a nice acceleration and it's also easy to calculate with.' Van Egmond knows what he's talking about: he has a lot of experience of recording the growth of fungi.

#### STICKING PLASTER TECHNOLOGY

The installation, hidden in a corner of a chilly basement under Atlas, looks a bit improvised

at first glance. Plasters and clamps dominate the scene. A packet of paper hankies supports a flash. Van Egmond: 'I use an awful lot of those hankies. I often use them to clean my microscope glasses with alcohol. And I suffer from hay fever.' He refers to his working method jokingly as sticking plaster technology. 'I always use anything I can lay my hands on.'

The setup that is here now took a lot of puzzling over. 'The biggest problem is how to prevent condensation,' explains Van Egmond. 'Underground it is not a problem but above ground it is. The solution was to work with two cameras, one above and one below ground. Above ground the plants are not behind glass. A large cone closes off the space between the camera and the plants so that the creatures we put in cannot get away. Those creatures make it a lot trickier.'

Besides the new apparatus are two more installations, one of which records how the vetch plant develops root nodules for nitrogen-binding bacteria. The other installation records the germination and growth of oak trees in forest soil, as well as their underground association with mycorrhiza fungi. The oak experiment has already been running for three months. A glance at the counter shows that the camera has already shot nearly 10,000 pictures.

#### EXPLORATION

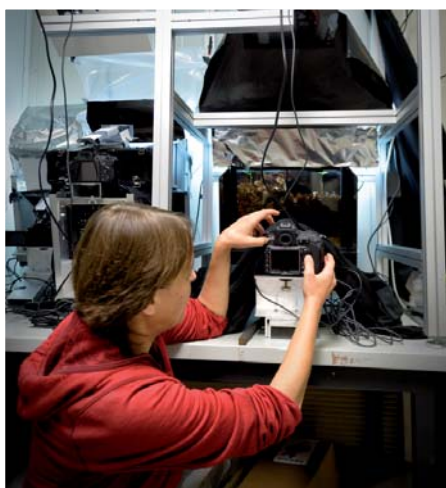
According to De Deyn, the work going on in the Atlas basement is not science. 'It illustrates science. This is a good way of demonstrating botanical and ecological principles. They have never been shown like this before. I am using the images in the MOOC Soil4Life, for instance. This is the best way of showing that the soil is in continuous motion. But you never know, we might see something new. Observa-

tions are often the basis for trailblazing research.'

The project is not art either, says Van Egmond. 'I am not aiming at producing art. I am just inquisitive and I'm interested in science as well as art. My work moves between the two; it stays somewhere in the middle ground between them. Some of the things I make get displayed in galleries, while others are educational. Of course I try to make a beautiful image. I am a photographer and a photographer is an observer. My driving motive is to see how life works. This is an exploration of the soil. You fill a tub with soil, shove a few seeds in and only a month later do you see what has happened. Then you suddenly find that so much has happened that you could watch the film ten times and see something new every time.' 

#### CROWDFUNDING

The University Fund Wageningen launched a platform for crowdfunding at the beginning of this year. Of the five projects two have now successfully been rounded off. Besides the time-lapse film in this story, there is biologist Evert Mul's sperm whale project. Mul raised over 9500 euros to catalogue sperm whale flukes. Then there is Wieger Wamelink's project, whose term ran out this week. He raised half of the targeted 25,000 euros for growing plants on Martian and moon soil. Fundraising for ecologist Arnold van Vliet's mosquito radar app is halfway to the target of 25,000 euros. The student project iGEM, which wants to tackle the bee-killing varroa mite, has reached one third of its target of 30,000 euros, with less than a month to go.



Watch the soil videos  
on [resource-online.nl](http://resource-online.nl).

## Students put circular economy on the agenda

# A world without waste

Master's students with an interest in the circular economy have taken matters into their own hands. They were not impressed by the coverage of this topic on Wageningen programmes and set up a working group to change that. Their activities are already bearing fruit. 'People are really listening to us.'

text Anja Janssen photo Bart de Gouw

**T**hey certainly do not lack ambition. Wageningen University & Research should become an international 'hub' for education and research on the circular economy, says Master's student Felipe Stefano Ingallina of the Circular Economy Wageningen team. 'Preferably with its own Master's programme or track.'

Since it was launched in November 2015, the group has organized various activities to generate interest in their plans among teachers, researchers, organizations and companies. One example was a hackaton, in which students came up with uses for fisheries bycatch. And in round table sessions, they brought together university staff - including education director Tiny van Boekel -, students and representatives of companies and NGOs. They also talked to Gerlinde van Vilteren, director of the Center for Biobased Economy, about the content of the new Master's programme in Biobased Sciences.

### NO WASTE

It all started last year on the course in Closed Cycle Design, taught by agricultural economist Stefano Pascucci, who has since left Wageningen for Exeter University. This

course had a lot of overlap with the concept of the circular economy, an economy with no waste and optimal use of resources, products and waste flows. It inspired the students to make their own contribution to a sustainable society. 'But when we wanted to find out more about the circular economy we discovered that the university did not have anything to offer,' says Ingallina, who is in the

second year of an Environmental Sciences MSc. 'The only chance to go into the subject was in a thesis,' adds Bucci, who is doing Urban Environmental Management. Thomas Thorin, founding father of the working group, discovered to his astonishment that Wageningen still did not have a network or an infrastructure for the circular economy. He therefore decided to develop such a network together with fellow students.

### MOMENTUM

'We had a lot of momentum going,' says Thorin. 'It seems we started just as interest in the circular economy was picking up.' The

student of Management, Economics and Consumer Studies is proudest of the fact that this group of students has been able to make itself a significant stakeholder. 'We managed to make our voice heard, for example on the way in which the degree programmes could focus more on the circular economy. We feel that practical skills are important for organizing a smooth transi-

**'Create a sustainable society to prevent our own extinction'**

tion to a circular economy within companies, organizations and society at large. Both external parties and teachers at the university really wanted to listen to us and valued our input.'

The efforts of the working group have now resulted in an expansion of the number of courses addressing the circular economy. For example, PhD researcher Aglaia Fischer runs an introduction to the circular economy and circular business models as part of the course on Environmental Management and Industry. And the course on Closed Cycle Design has been rechristened Circular Economy: Theory and Practice, as of the new aca-





Stefano Ingallina and Felipe Bucci (fourth and fifth from the left) consult other members of Circular Economy Wageningen on the plans for this academic year

demic year. It now has a broader coverage, says Fischer. She gives two lectures on the course on the circular economy, circular business models and funding. 'I am also closely involved in the group assignment: a case study of a circular business.' There will also be an evening session for students to discuss thesis ideas in the field of the circular economy and review the progress of ongoing thesis projects in the field.

#### NEW PLANS

The future continuity of Circular Economy Wageningen is a cause for concern in the group. The Master's students who make up the group will soon be leaving for internships or thesis research. Thomas Thorin said goodbye back in May when he left for an internship outside Wageningen. 'If we are to survive we need to look for new members and give them an induction every few months,' says Stefano Ingallina. Fortunately interested students keep on coming, with Felipe Bucci as the latest recruit.

In September the students – seven of them at present – met up again to make plans for the new academic year. They would like to introduce themselves to students at relevant lectures and tell them a bit about

circular thinking, says Bucci. They also work in close collaboration with another student group, Ibbess (International BioBased Economy Student SymbioSUM). Ingallina: 'They are interested in the circular economy too and we have decided to join forces. We might merge into a single official student organization.'

#### BIOBASED

A dedicated Master's programme in the circular economy – high on the working group's wishlist – does not look likely in the near future. 'It would overlap too much with the MSc in Biobased Sciences which we are working on submitting for approval,' is the view of Gerlinde van Vilsteren of the Center for Biobased Economy. 'But the Biobased transition track on Biobased Sciences covers a lot of circular economy thinking.' The working group will soon have the chance to discuss this again. What is more, all students on that new Master's – the start of which is planned for the academic year 2018-2019 – take the course on the Circular Economy. Van Vilsteren; 'There we shall lay the foundation for the track in Biobased transition, with circular thinking as the starting point.'

'The biobased economy and the circular economy have a lot in common, and biological processes are a crucial component of a circular economy,' says Ingallina in response to these plans. 'But we do not agree with the way the university exclusively focuses on the green side of a circular economy. Why should they close the door on the technical side such as the reuse of plastics and metals? By doing that they close the door on new possibilities and collaboration.' Thorin adds: 'I think a clear recognition of the circular economy as an overall concept can help with the further integration of the technological and the social science departments at Wageningen University.'

#### EXTINCTION

Although the students regret that a dedicated Master's programme is unlikely, they are continuing their energetic efforts to get the topic of the circular economy on the agenda. Bucci: 'the main thing is for us to create a sustainable society, because that is needed to prevent our extinction. We need to make decisions now so as to realise changes in the coming 50 years. For us it goes way beyond a new Master's programme or making Wageningen University more important.' <sup>®</sup>

# HOW ARE EVENING LECTURES GOING DOWN?

There was a lot of grumbling before the start of the evening lectures pilot scheme on 5 September. Now courses are under way and hundreds of students have had their first evening classes. They are still grumbling, as we see from responses from students in classes in Orion on a Monday evening. But there are some silver linings too.

text Marijn Flipse photo Bart de Gouw

## Mirthe Jansen



**Bachelor's student of Plant Sciences**

**'I do find it tiring. And it makes the evening meal difficult. You either have to eat very early or very late.'**

Last week I didn't eat until after class and I noticed I couldn't concentrate as well. And I have a group

of friends that eat together on a Monday evening, so I can't join them anymore. We can't do it another evening because of other appointments. What we now do is meet for a drink after class. Someone else in the group has a class on Monday evening in this period, and in the next period another friend has a class. I don't understand exactly why they have introduced these evening classes. They know it's not popular so they must have their reasons, but it's not easy.'

## Frank Reijbroek



**Master's student of Biology**

'Even without these evening classes it's hard enough to organize your extracurricular activities properly. It soon gets complicated to balance your studies, your job and other private appointments. **I have a part-**

**time job and my boss often complains that I am not flexible.**

That is only going to get more problematic with evening classes. I think the amount of time that university expects you to be available is beyond what is reasonable. In some cases the evening classes replace afternoon classes, so you have classes in the morning and then again in the evening. The university cannot expect you just to be around all the time.'

## Karlijn Luiken



**Bachelor's student of Plant Sciences**

'When evening lectures were introduced I didn't like it at first, but as time goes on it's not so bad. I thought I wouldn't be able to concentrate, but I do manage. **The main problem with it is that you can't join any activi-**

**ties on a Monday evening.** And the practicals for the lecture I have this evening are done at 8.30 the next morning. So if you can't attend the evening lecture you have to read up on the material as soon as it comes online that evening. That doesn't leave you much time at all. In the next period I also have to be at the university until six pm on two days a week. So I can't join in sports, which start at five thirty. On Friday evening I only finish at six thirty too, and I have to travel home to Den Bosch after that.'





## Hans Linssen



### Master's student of Biology

'I can keep it brief: I think it's a bad business. It is not nice to have to go back to the university in the evening when you are used to having time then to do fun things. And having classes around dinner time is tricky.

You either have to eat quickly before your class, or very late.

**I want to rest in the evening or do something fun. I don't want to work on my courses again at that time.** I think lectures should be during the day and not in the evening.

## Silke Schoenmaker



### Bachelor's student of Plant Sciences

'I am a morning person. In the evening I am more tired and can't concentrate as well. And it is a pity that I can't make appointments in the evenings when I have classes. So if you ask me, I'd rather not have evening classes.

**It's not as bad as I expected though. It's only**

**once a week and I can see one advantage too.** I have changed my OV card from a weekend one to a weekday one. I don't have classes on a Monday morning anymore so I can stay at home longer and only go back to Wageningen on Monday.'

## Doris Kors



### Master's student of Management, economics and consumer studies

**'Now I am taking evening classes, I see the plus sides as well. I have all day to do other things and that's nice too.** It

works out well for me because I have nothing to do on Mondays. I can imagine that it won't be so nice when the days get shorter.

They you go to class in the dark and you go home in the dark. It's a pity these evening classes are necessary, because I do think it's better to have classes during the day. We have nicer things to do in the evening, it's as simple as that. Still, most of the complaints I've heard have come from students who haven't had evening lectures yet. But if you really don't want to go, you can always watch the lecture later.' ①

# STUDENT HOUSE

Some of them have been in the house longer than the oldest human resident. They attend parties or go along to the pub. And thanks to international fans their fame crosses borders. Meet some of Wageningen's distinguished student house cats.

text Linda van der Nat and Ronald van Drie    photos Remo Wormmeester

## Manny



The white lion king is Manny's nickname. The Turkish Angora cat is a familiar part of Wageningen nightlife, as the tom with the blue-green eyes is a regular at De Zaaier café on the Heerenstraat, below the flat where he lives. He often chills out on the terrace too.

Manny came from a cat rescue centre, he loves his food and is always

in for a good party. His picture features on a flyer for a party that graces the wall of many a student house. One of Manny's friends, Daan Rademaker from Bennekom, even has a tattoo of Manny's distinctive head.

## Octopoezzie



She doesn't catch mice and if it rains she has been known to poo indoors because she doesn't want to go outside. Octopoezzie is a lazy cat. She doesn't do anything much except eat and be cuddled by residents of Droevendaal 79. Octopoezzie is well-known to most of the members of ath-

letics club Tartélos. Not that they've ever seen her, but because her name features in an official club song that new members have to sing at the start of the sporting year. The students in the house where she lives are all members of the athletics club and they enjoyed immortalizing her in music.

## Puki




Puki is old. Quite how old, none of the current residents knows, because Puki has been living at Droevendaal 93 longer than any of them. She sleeps most of the day, changing her favourite spot every two weeks. She hardly ever goes out of doors. And yet her fame crosses borders, thanks to the many international residents at

Droef, who have spread the love of this patchwork cat in their home countries. Apparently a Greek band even wrote a song about Puki: *Puki has fleas*. Actually Puki hasn't had fleas for months now, the owners inform us.

## 'Barry' the Haarweg cat



Nearly everyone at the Haarweg knows Barry. The tom cat 'lives' there, although he doesn't belong to anyone. Barry is his own boss. He comes and goes as he pleases and knows the way to the student kitchens where cat food and water are waiting for him. What he likes best is lazing

about on window sills, in the bike shed or in the middle of the road in front of the building. He goes by various names, the best-known of which is Barry, but he started out as Tijgertje. But that was in a previous incarnation when he was alumna Mirjan Tolkamp's cat and lived in the middle of Wageningen. Already then, he used to run away to the Haarweg and after a move in 2009, Tolkamp resigned herself to his preferred choice of 'home'. If you want to know what Barry's up to you can have a look on his own Facebook page: 'Barry de Haarwegkat'. 



# CATS



Manny



Octopoezzie



Puki



'Barry' de Haarwegkat



**NOSE**

In the thousands of languages around the world, the word for nose often starts with an 'n'. And it often includes the sound 'oo' as well. In fact this kind of similarity can be seen in many words, as linguists at Cornell's Cognitive Neurosciences Lab have shown. Round and red, for instance, quite often start with 'r'. The similarity is most often found in words for parts of the body. Seems like they are associated with a certain sound.

**VALENTINE'S (1)**

Couples who got married on Valentine's Day or other specially chosen dates such as 01-02-03 get divorced sooner, discovered economists at the University of Melbourne. They used Dutch marriage statistics on over one million marriages in the last 15 years. After 10 years, 15 percent of the 'Valentine's Day marriages' were on the rocks, as opposed to 16 percent of marriages that started on ordinary dates. So special wedding dates lead to one third more divorces.

**VALENTINE'S (2)**

The explanation lies, say the researchers, not in the date itself but in the kind of couple. Valentine's couples are more likely to have been married before, to have children already, and to be further apart in age and level of education, the data reveal. Valentine's couples are also more often expecting a baby already when they tie the knot.

**BAD BREATH**

Delicious, a Shawarma roll. But what about your breath afterwards? There is something simple you can do about that. Researchers at Ohio State University suggest an apple or a few lettuce leaves. Chew on them for 30 seconds and half the volatile substances causing your breath to smell garlicky will disappear. Which doesn't guarantee that you won't have bad breath, of course. But it might help.



# Students important to city living room Thuis

**A year ago WUR student Tutku Yuksel and co-founder Elsje van de Weg opened city living room Thuis in the centre of Wageningen. It was intended to be a place that revolved around sharing: where people share their services, give things away or swap them.**

Their plan has been successful, confirm the women on their project's first anniversary. 'We see it in action all the time, on both a big and a small scale. The premises were renovated by visitors. Coffee and tea is made my visitors, the cleaning gets done and flex desks are available. And a lot of knowledge is being shared,' tells Elsje. But there is also scope for development, she adds. Thuis needs to become more of a community so that people know each other and can find one another here. 'In future we want more activities take place away from Thuis and we are going to make entrepreneurship a priority.' Much of the work of organizing activities at Thuis is done by students. Some 30 percent of the visitors are students. Every Sun-



Elsje van de Weg (left) and Tutku Yuksel in 'their' city living room Thuis.

day evening, for example, student association NSW holds a potluck dinner. 'The idea is that everyone brings along something to eat and the food is shared. Already this group includes students, refugees, sen-

iors and some regular visitors.' For the future, the women have no shortage of plans. 'A challenge certainly lies ahead in the area of communication; we want to publicize more clearly what Thuis does.' **MF**

## 'Flex student' can pay per course credit

**Students who act as carers, who have young children or who are members of a participation council may soon pay their tuition fee on a credit by credit basis. Last week the Dutch cabinet agreed to just such an experiment.**

Students currently pay their tuition fee year by year, while circumstances sometimes mean they take less than a full quota of courses. In the experiment recently announced, students will be able to plan their education as they see fit. The proposal was made by the VVD and PvdA, who devised the plan together with the student organizations ISO and LSVb. The University of Amsterdam and the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences are both keen to put it into practice. The Education Minister Ms Bussemaker

sees the plan's potential but warns that only a limited group of students will be allowed to participate. 'Because if you want intensive education, it will never be possible to offer everyone an arrangement like this.' She now wants to investigate whether 'flex studying' makes higher education more accessible and whether it reduces student drop-out. Perhaps it also makes students more satisfied and gives them more opportunities for self-development.

The Dutch National Student Union (LSVb) is positive, but has voiced a criticism. 'This wouldn't even be necessary if the tuition fee was lower,' says chair Jarmo Berkhout.

The Lower and Upper Houses will have the opportunity to comment on the experiment and the Council of State will also consider it. **MF**



# Dancing with Humberto Tan in Rio

As tender young athletes they found themselves walking among stars like Usain Bolt and Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce at the Olympic Games last summer. Now Eva Hovenkamp and Nadine Visser are resuming their studies at Wageningen.



Nadine Visser

'Of course it's really cool that someone as young as twenty can be at the world's greatest sporting event,' says Eva Hovenkamp, student of Health and Society. 'All the athletes were walking around in the Olympic Village. We saw Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce. We

asked her if we could take a selfie with her. And during the afterparty in the Holland Heineken House I danced with Humberto Tan to the song *Time of my life* from the film *Dirty Dancing*. At the end of that song, the main character in the film does a lift. And suddenly there I was, hanging in the air above all the other athletes. I let out such a scream!'

Nadine Visser, who is also studying Health and Society, enjoyed herself in the lounge area of the flat where she was staying. 'You could get to know other athletes there. I'm not easily impressed by other top sportspeople. But, yeah, if Usain Bolt walks past, of course I'm going to look up.'

Visser started studying again in September, but does almost all her work at home. 'I won't be attending seminars in Wageningen again until the next period. When I'm in a lecture hall I know nobody. It's a shame, but that's just how my life is.' Hovenkamp, by contrast, is back on the campus in Wageningen. 'I am taking two courses and that is hard work. I missed two sta-

tistics lectures due to training sessions and now I don't understand any of it. After Rio we had some time off, we had no training sessions and could eat everything. Now we are back in a rhythm. That takes some getting used to.' **RMF**



Eva Hovenkamp

Read the interviews in full  
op [resource-online.nl](http://resource-online.nl).

## MEANWHILE IN... GERMANY

### 'People opt for a naturopath themselves'

The Ross affair, about the German naturopath Klaus Ross who became controversial after three of his patients died in suspicious circumstances, has got tongues wagging in Germany. The government wants more stringent certification for naturopaths to protect patients.

'I don't often listen to the news but I heard about this situation. It is not only about the cancer patients who might have died because of the treatment by Ross. A discussion has also started about the certifications of naturopaths. Ross is not a real doctor and cannot treat patients like a real one can. However, the title of naturopath can be obtained by doing a few courses and taking a simple test. The question is whether something should be done about that and if it should be made clearer that a naturopath is not a real doctor.

I personally think that as long as there are clear titles for people with real medical degrees there is no real problem because people themselves choose where they go. It is your own decision to go to a real doctor or a naturopath. If something goes



PHOTO: KLAUS ROSS CENTRE

wrong it is partly your own responsibility.

The strange thing is that some people actually trust naturopaths more than real doctors. They think that naturopaths are real doctors but with a more natural approach. It sounds healthier to be treated naturally than with regular medicines because that weakens the body. They think regular doctors only want to make money. I think it is strange because it is obvious whether someone has a medical degree or not. In the clinic of Ross, for example, there was a lot of information about the fact that he was working with experimental methods. Maybe he should have emphasized this more but most people knew that there were risks. Because of that I am not sure if people can actually sue him. In the end it is also not clear whether people died of his treatment or of the cancer they already had.' **CN**



Linea Muhsal, Master's student of Biotechnology, comments on the news from her country.

# YOU ON CAMPUS

**Most lunch hours, Brend Kemperman (25) can be found between the trees near the Forum. The Master's student of Plant Biotechnology is more than happy to explain what he is doing to curious passers-by. Slacklining.**


Slacklining is a form of tightrope-walking, only the rope is slack so it is quite a job to keep your balance. 'You are so focused on your body and the rope you are balancing on

## 'Slacklining is a form of meditation'

that it's a form of meditation,' says Kemperman. Throughout our interview people keep rolling up and he welcomes them all cheerfully. Anyone wanting to have a go gets expert advice: 'Bend your knees and keep your back straight, like a queen with farmer's knees.' Kemperman learned to slackline at a festival about a year ago. Now he goes to festivals to

teach other people how to do it. He tries to practise during every break, because it helps him relax as well as being a nice way to meet new people. 'There are always inquisitive people who want to have a go. I like that, and everyone is welcome.'

'I haven't taken the most usual route as a student,' says Kemperman. Really he wanted to study medicine but he came to Wageningen in 2009 to do a Bachelor's in Biotechnology. He has graduated meanwhile and has also served on the Unitas board for a year. He has already written his Master's thesis and the only thing left to do is an internship. He hopes he will have completed his Master's by the time he is 26. Kemperman is afraid that slacklining will quietly die out on campus once he goes off

to his internship. But he might take it up again later, as he wants to stay in Wageningen. The idea of doing a PhD in Plant physiology appeals to him. He loves doing research and he sees an added advantage: 'Then I'll be free to manage my time myself, so I can hang up a slackline every lunch hour.'  AvdH



## PARTIES

**In the party mood? Wageningen Party Promotion (WUP) tells you where to find one. See too [www.wageningenup.nl](http://www.wageningenup.nl).**

### CERES - OPEN PARTY

**Thursday 6 October from 23:00 to 05:00**

The second open party at Ceres plans to resurrect the Flower Power era. Pull on your flared trousers and join the party. Some of the evening's takings will go to the refugee organization, VluchtelingOnderdak Wageningen.

### QUIET IS THE NEW LOUD! - DAVID BENJAMIN

**Wednesday 12 October from 21:00**

Singer-songwriter David Benjamin from Den Haag is performing in the BBLTHK in Wageningen. With his laidback vocals – reminiscent of Jack Johnson and Coldplay – and strong melodies, his music is the ideal soundtrack to the summer, say the organizers.

### LUCA - UNITAS: RAGNAROK: THE VIKING APOCALYPSE

**Thursday 13 October from 23:00 to 04:00**


The end and the rebirth of the world in Viking style. That is Ragnarok. Dress up as a Nordic god and throw yourself into the electronic waves. Free drinks for the first 50 guests. 



PHOTO: SVEN MENSCHER

Music sounded from all the cafés in Wageningen during the Popronde on 29 September.



Wageningen Master's students do internships and thesis research all around the world, getting to know their field and other cultures. Here they talk about their adventures.

# 'Our goal was always on our minds'


'Samboja Lestari is an accommodation for traumatized and permanently harmed orangutans rescued from areas that have been destroyed by forest fires. The NGO "BOS foundation" harbours these orang-utans on artificial islands surrounded by water ditches. Our research aim was to find out how the water level of the ditches can be kept at a constant high level throughout the seasons. Additionally, we should figure out whether there is enough water available in the area to create more islands. We were highly motivated to do the research as some of the rescued orangutans still live in cages because there is not enough space on the islands for all of them. As we saw those animals every day, our goal was always on our minds.

## FLAT TIRE

Our Indonesian colleagues were quite shy at first. Luckily we were able to break through this barrier when we found out that we all liked the music of Dido. We were surprised by how helpful and hospitable the local people were. When our scooter had a flat tire a man immediately offered to fix it and invited us over to dinner with his family. The people there just take the time to help others. This is something you do not easily find in the Netherlands. We also found it very striking how polite people in Indonesia were. It was quite challenging to formulate criticism within such an environment.

## FOREST FIRE

During our first month of research the nature reserve experienced regular forest fires which we could observe from our house. The fires came close to the area the orangutans live in.

Once we went to see the result of a forest fire. The heat still lingered in the air and we found a devastated, black landscape where once had been a green forest. We thought it looked very depressing. Eventually, after one and a half months of drought, it started raining more often and the animals in the area became more active. Suddenly we encountered a lot of monkeys, snakes and hogs during our fieldwork. A highlight of our stay on Borneo was seeing a wild orangutan up close. He was only two metres away and was watching us calmly. He looked just like a six-year old boy with a lot of hair.'  JS



## THE WORKS

**Who?** Femke Jansen and Lisanne van Beek, Master's students of Earth and environment  
**What?** Master's thesis on water availability in Samboja Lestari nature reserve  
**Where?** Borneo, Indonesia



Read all interviews on  
on [resource-online.nl](http://resource-online.nl).

# wageningen campus

## Out now: The October Calendar!

With all  
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Campus



For more information  
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### Announcements

#### Join our study and help us discover how our body reacts to different foods and flavours!

To participate in a study of the Marketing and Consumer Behaviour Group, you will be asked to taste different drink samples while your heart rate and skin conductance levels are measured. You will rate your experience and fill in a questionnaire. In return you'll receive a gift voucher of up to €15. Sign up for the session (maximum duration 1.5 hours) by contacting [studymeans@gmail.com](mailto:studymeans@gmail.com). We are curious to hear where you saw our announcement!

#### Writing Lab seeks tutor

Wageningen Writing Lab supports students who want to learn to write better. Due to an increase in demand we are looking for a tutor to join our team of five. The person we are looking for meets the following criteria: a student at WU, available for an average of one day or two half days for a minimum of one year, good communicator, affinity with the writing process and with tutoring, able to read and understand Dutch. Before starting as a tutor you do a training course over four evenings in Nijmegen. Info by email or call 0317-485625. Respond before 18 October to [info.wageningenwritinglab@wur.nl](mailto:info.wageningenwritinglab@wur.nl)

#### New season; Alpha course

Student Alpha Wageningen starts on Monday 24 October. Looking

for the meaning of life together: that is what Alpha is all about. In ten interactive sessions you explore what the Christian faith means. You meet new people and ponder inspiring subjects. An Alpha session starts with a nice meal together followed by a short inspiring story, after which you discuss the topic raised in small groups. We finish off with a drink. If you are interested email [alpha-wageningen@gmail.com](mailto:alpha-wageningen@gmail.com)

[WWW.NAVIGATORSWAGENINGEN.NL/ALPHA](http://WWW.NAVIGATORSWAGENINGEN.NL/ALPHA)

#### Bluesclub XXL needs muscle power

We are looking for two young men between 18 and 30 years of age who would enjoy helping to organize things at the club. The work in question is setting up the stage, positioning speakers, mounting spotlights on stands, and dismantling everything again and tidying up after the concert. Preparation takes about an hour (12.00-13.00), as does dismantling (18.00-19.00). Benefits include a free concert, drinks and a hot meal. Respond to [bluseclubxxl@gmail.com](mailto:bluseclubxxl@gmail.com).

### Agenda

**Monday 10 - Sunday 16 October**  
**SERIOUSLY SUSTAINABLE WEEK**  
Green Office is organizing a week full of sustainable activities all over the campus. The festival will be kicked off by Arthur Mol on Monday 10 October at 12:15 in the Forum. There will be a sustainable market, music, food, workshops and much more. Have you always

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for the latest news

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wanted to take a guided tour of the Lumen gardens, assemble a Fairphone, express your opinion on Meatless Monday or to take a look at vacuum toilets in Axis? This is your chance! Full programme and info: [www.greenofficewageningen.nl](http://www.greenofficewageningen.nl)

**Wednesday 12 October, 12.30-13.15**

### THE SUSTAINABLE SWITCH. WOULD IT WORK?

What do we need to change our behaviour and act in a healthier and more sustainable manner? There are many approaches to behaviour change, with informing at one end of the spectrum and forcing at the other. And of course there is nudging, new kid on the block, rising star. Listen what Kris van Koppen and Eva van den Broek have to say about behaviour change and engage/take part in the discussion with them. And since Emma Holmes will moderate this event, be sure that it will be fun! Small sustainable snack included. Venue: Impulse.

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

**Thursday 13 October, 19.30**  
**HEERENSTRAAT CINEMA IS SHOWING THE DOCUMENTARY**

### 'SILENT LAND: THE FIGHT FOR FAIR FOOD' (IN COLLABORATION WITH THE BOERENGROEP FOUNDATION)

Moon, a young Cambodian woman, sees how a small elite in her country holds all the power and makes a profit on illegal sales of land, how the farmers who live on it are chased away, and how the land is poisoned by sugar plantations. Her antagonist in the film is His Excellency Mong Reththy, a big landowner and one of the richest people in the country. The film makers followed Moon's struggle to keep her land over four years. Before the film is shown director Jan van den Berg will give an introduction. Location: Heerenstraat cinema, Molenstraat 1B, Wageningen.

**Thursday, 20 October, 12.30-13.20**  
**LUNCH WORKSHOP**  
**WAGENINGEN WRITING LAB / WAGENINGEN UR LIBRARY**  
**'CITING AND REFERENCING'**

To avoid plagiarism in academic writing, it is essential to cite and reference the sources you used. But what sources exactly, where to put an in-text citation, and how to make a reference list? These questions will be addressed in this

workshop, together with different citation styles and how tools like EndNote can save you countless hours of formatting reference lists. Be on time, as participant numbers are limited to 20. Admission: free. Venue: C0408 Forum. info: [wageningenwritinglab@wur.nl](mailto:wageningenwritinglab@wur.nl)

**Friday 28 October, 13.30-20.00**  
**WAGENINGEN INDONESIA SCIENTIFIC EXPOSE (WISE)**

WISE is the first general meeting to connect and update research projects by Indonesian PhD candidates and the Indonesia Platform. The aim of the event is to realize continuous scientific exposure. Indonesian PhDs are welcome to describe their expertise on a project. Don't miss out on your chance to expand your network and to promote research and ideas. Venue: Orion.

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

## colophon

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# >>TYPICAL DUTCH




ILLUSTRATION: HENK VAN RUITENBEEK

## Kilos of hair gel

I was on a trip to Valencia in Spain with my Dutch and Chinese friends, to visit our Spanish AID friend and her family. Enjoying the Spanish weather, we decided to walk around a lovely big park in the neighborhood of some iconic Valencian buildings. There we saw some tall people cycling in shorts, which made my Spanish friend's parents ask whether they were Holland people.

For a short moment, we observed the cyclists and tried to analyze them with full attention. Then my Dutch friend said: 'No, they are not Dutch.' 'How do you know that? They really look Dutch, are you sure?' we responded with puzzled looks.

She reasoned: 'Because the guys do not use gel in their hair. Don't you know that Dutch guys use one kilo of hair gel on their heads every day?' Of course we all burst out laughing at her hilarious answer.

After coming back here to Wageningen, I paid more attention to the wet-looking, stiff hair I saw around me and realized that it is probably true! I have been wondering why Dutch guys use so much gel. Perhaps it is because they want to maintain their hairstyle while cycling against the Dutch wind.  Calvin Lo, MSc student of Biotechnology, from Indonesia

**'Perhaps it's because they want to maintain their hairstyle while cycling against the Dutch wind'**

*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.*