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RESOURCE **[EN]**

For everyone at Wageningen University & Research

no 15 – 23 March 2017 – 11th Volume

‘Growth must stay manageable’

Tiny van Boekel says goodbye | **p.12**

**INTERNATIONAL
EDITION**



SAMPLING THE ATMOSPHERE

It was busy on the Wageningen campus during the open day on Saturday 11 March. There were 10 percent more visitors than on the open day in March last year. Most of them were 5th-year high school students and their parents, coming to see what the atmosphere is like. In this greenhouse complex, Radix Serre, for instance.

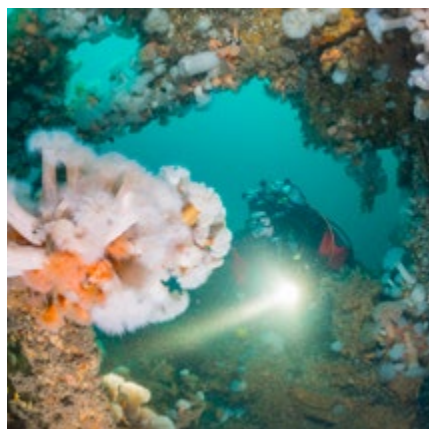
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See the photo series
on resource-online.nl



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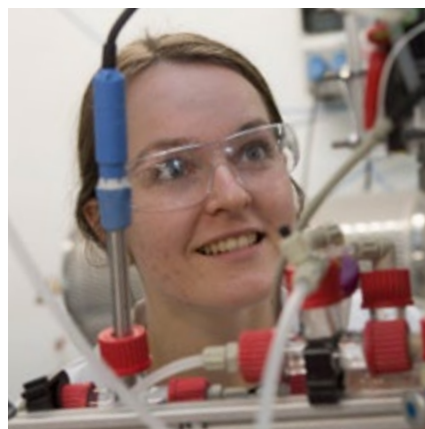
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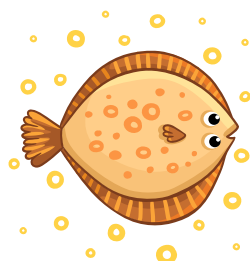
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UMBRELLA

WUR is a century old and that is something to celebrate. Groups of researchers, staff, PhD candidates and students are all busy planning the celebrations for 2018. They are working on the inevitable books, films, photos, symposia – and hopefully some serious international revelry too.

At the 99th *dies natalis* on 9 March, the theme of the centennial was announced: Wisdom & Wonder. Since then I've heard somebody pronouncing their opinion on these words every day. For a pleaser, coming up with that kind of theme is a disaster: you can never keep everybody happy. Besides, it is not in our Calvinist genes to blow our own trumpets. What do you mean, wisdom? What do you mean, wonder? I don't think you need to go on and on about a theme like this. It's just an umbrella under which we shall celebrate our centenary. From now on, the editors of Resource will put a series of photos on our website every two weeks (see too p.11). There'll be all sorts of interesting pictures: of demonstrations, research projects, old buildings. Some of them might give off an aura of wisdom or wonder, but the people in the photos had no idea of that at the time. Just keep those two words at the back of your mind and get on with the job.

Edwin van Laar



>> **Young flatfish don't survive being returned to the sea | p.10**

TEACHER OF THE YEAR: SOME NEW FACES

As an exception to the rule, there are not five but six nominees for the Teacher of the Year Award this year. The student jury could not agree on the 5th person on the shortlist. There are a lot of new names on the list this year.

Resource announced the names of the teachers nominated for University Fund Wageningen's teaching prize last week. Interestingly, four teachers have been nominated who have never reached the top five before: Jessica Duncan, Henry van den Brand, Marleen Buizer and John Beijer. Gert Peek and Fritz Claassen have both won the prize before.

Jessica Duncan teaches in the Rural Sociology group. The jury commends her enthusiasm and boldness. Duncan is not afraid to take a new approach in her classes and she is always open to feedback, says the jury.


Henry van den Brand is associate professor at Animal Sciences and 'extremely approachable'. He gives a lot of priority to education, the jury noted. Van den Brand marked exams over Christmas, for instance, so that students could have their grades within a few days.

Marleen Buizer works at Environmental Sciences. The jury describes her teaching style as 'personal and highly inventive'. She motivates her students with interactive teaching methods, many of which she develops herself.

John Beijer is an aquatic ecologist, lauded

by the jury for his personal and down-to-earth style, and his commitment to his students' wellbeing. 'He makes Wageningen Wageningen.'

Gert Peek, who teaches Soil Science, is no stranger to the Teacher of the Year Award. Students love his enthusiastic, energetic and personal approach to teaching. Frits Claassen, who has received the award before too, has gained a place on the shortlist again thanks to his distinctive teaching style. 'Not modern, exactly, but certainly unique,' says the jury.

The winner of the Teacher of the Year Award will be announced on 6 April. The prize consists of a replica of the statue of a teacher by Jan Praet (the original is in front of the Leeuwenborch), a certificate and the jury report. All the nominees also receive 2500 euros.  LvdN

Watch the videos
on resource-online.nl



The six nominees (from top left):

Gert Peek, Henry van den Brand, Jessica Duncan, John Beijer, Marleen Buizer and Frits Claassen.



ILLUSTRATION: UFW / PAUL GERLACH

INSTITUTES CONSTRAINED BY BUDGET CUTS

Due to years of government budget cuts, Wageningen Research no longer has a sound knowledge base in all its research fields. This conclusion was drawn by the Schaaf committee in an evaluation report for the ministry of Economic Affairs (EZ).

The Schaaf committee evaluated all the applied research institutes – TO2 organizations – in the Netherlands. Besides DLO, these include TNO, Deltares and Marin. The minister of Economic Affairs, Kamp, presented the evaluation report to the lower house of parliament on 8 March without commenting on its contents.

The quality of the research at the TO2 institutions is good to very good, and is highly regarded by stakeholders, says the Schaaf committee. The research is rated good to very good for impact too. The only cause for concern is

the vitality of the institutions. Due to the systematic reduction in government funding, the scope for innovative research is diminishing across the board. The TO2 research institutes have too little scope for addressing societal issues for which the business world provides no direct funding. Nor do they get a clear mandate for innovative research related to societal challenges such as animal welfare and environmental policy. This is leading to a gradual loss of knowledge in the institutes, notes the Schaaf committee.

The budget is shrinking at Wageningen Research too, reports the committee. In 2012 Wageningen institutes were still getting 343 million euros from the government; in 2015 that was 314 million. Staff numbers went down by the equivalent of 274 fulltime jobs (12 percent). In this situation the institutes need to

specialize further, advises the committee, and to focus on a few core competencies with which they can become or remain world leaders. Wageningen Research should identify these core research fields in consultation with the government. The WUR model, in which the institutes and the university collaborate, could serve as an example.

The committee has some advice specifically for Wageningen Research, which it thinks could valorize more of its knowledge through spinoffs, startups and new business models. 'It is essential to make the transition to a more businesslike and market-oriented organization.' The committee sees big differences between the institutions in this respect. The executive board needs to ensure more uniformity and make clearer which research no longer has priority.  AS

CABINET INVESTS IN DIALOGUE CENTRE

The Dutch government is to give Wageningen University & Research 2 million euros to develop a dialogue centre and a startup village on campus. These will go up between Atlas and Unilever's planned new premises.

This was announced by WUR president Louise Fresco on Monday 13 March during a visit to WUR by minister of Finance Jeroen Dijsselbloem. The dialogue centre is intended as a meeting place for students, teachers, entrepreneurs, politicians, managers and civil society organizations. The new centre will also take some of the pressure off the overused

Aula and teaching spaces, which are currently often also used for debates and conferences. The centre for startups will offer the facilities startup companies need in order to develop. These companies can also make use of the dialogue centre.

The government is contributing 1.6 million euros to the dialogue centre and 0.4 million to the startup village. It is not known yet how much the project will cost in total. The cabinet's aim is to stimulate successful innovation regions in the Netherlands. Along with WUR, the water institute Wetsus in Leeuwarden will receive a contribution, said Fresco. **AS**

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Chiffchaff

Bright morning lights shines on my hands. My thoughts are on the introduction to my thesis, but physically I'm walking through a forest. Wait, do I hear that correctly? Yes, a chiffchaff! I beam. This takes me back to my youth.

I must have been about 16, perhaps 17. Nature was without doubt the most important thing in my life (I wasn't in a relationship). I loved flowers, especially if I could identify the species. And whenever I saw a common brimstone butterfly I jumped for joy. But the first chiffchaff of the year: that was the crowning joy!

Through the local nature club I got to know Michiel. He was between 30 and 40, and I felt sorry for him. Because Michiel was a conductor on public transport. Not by choice, because he would have liked to be a forest warden. And he did apply for those kinds of jobs, but he didn't stand a chance. 'If you don't have a qualification in that area they don't even read your letter,' he complained. So nature became something to enjoy at the weekend.

I won't let that happen to me, I thought. I understood at that age that to get a job working with nature you had to be dedicated and get a relevant qualification. And lo and behold: it has all worked out. Before long I shall even be a Doctor of Ecology. Beaming with satisfaction with my life I listen to the loud chiffchaffchiffchaffchiffchaffchiffchaff...

Then I reach involuntarily for my phone. 22 March, it says on the screen. Shit! So these birds have been in the country in large numbers for at least a week before I noticed anything. Of course, how could it be otherwise? All I do these days is sit at my computer.

This takes me back to my youth. I think enviously of Michiel. He could enjoy nature at the weekend. **B**

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

>> POST-FOSSIL CITY WUR team takes part

In the city of the future, pavement cafes, carparks, sports fields and motorways will be roofed over with transparent solar panels. With this idea a WUR team got through to the final round of Utrecht University's Post-Fossil City competition. The idea was the brainchild of Wageningen landscape architect Tom van Heeswijk, who graduated last year. He developed the plan for his Master's thesis and further elaborated on it in collaboration with two WUR researchers and an artist. According to the jury, it is one of the ten best of a total of 250 entries from 40 countries. The final is in June. **RK**



ILLUSTRATION: WUR

This Wageningen idea for transparent solar panels above the city is competing for the Post-Fossil City prize.

>> CENTENARY THEME Wisdom & wonder

The theme of the centenary celebrations at Wageningen University & Research in 2018 will be Wisdom & Wonder. This was announced on 9 March at the 99th *dies natalis* (founders day) ceremony. The theme is illustrated by four logos developed by the Utrecht bureau Bril&Baard. The logos consist of simple patterns inspired by nature: a thumbprint, a feather, a colony of bacteria and tree rings. The main logo is the feather. Read more about the centenary celebrations on page 11. **RK**



>> BIOPLASTICS Better production process

Researchers at the Food & Biobased Research institute and Total oil company have developed a new process for the sustainable production of lactic acid, an ingredient in biodegradable plastic. The current production process using bacteria is costly and produces gypsum as a by-product. The researchers developed a genetically modified fungus which efficiently converts biomass into lactic acid without creating gypsum in the process. **AS**

**Read the whole story
on resource-online.nl.**

WUR WANTS A GREEN CHALLENGE FOR STUDENTS

Wageningen University & Research wants to set up its own green student competition. A working group is now making plans for an innovation-oriented green challenge. One of the ideas is to get student teams designing urban greenhouses which make smart use of energy.

Universities around the world stimulate teams of students to do things like designing cars that run on solar energy (Solar Challenge), or solving problems with the help of synthetic biology (iGEM). WUR is coming up for its centenary and wants an annual or biennial student challenge of its own as an anniversary present.

Students from all disciplines, including the social sciences, could play a role in the

student teams. The working group has a sweeping vision: 'Interdisciplinary dreamteams of passionate students who tackle an ambitious project together, working on it fulltime for a year.'

Two groups of Wageningen honours students are currently both working on a potential assignment for the competition. The two provisional ideas are urban greenhouses linked to a smart energy grid, and the automated harvesting and processing of several crops on one field (mixed cropping). The working group hopes the Wageningen competition can be launched in 2018 with the first idea.

According to Gert Spaargaren, who chairs the working group, the results of a life sciences challenge can speed up developments and

lead to social innovation. 'It would also be enriching for our teaching: a creative, out-of-the-box and hands-on project.'

There is plenty of enthusiasm for the initiative, says Spaargaren and the other working group members. They are now studying the feasibility and costs of the competition. There will need to be a location where students can work on their projects. This 'innovation space' should not just be a workplace, says the working group, but a meeting place as well.

The working group will present a proposal to the executive board soon. The expectation is that the board will take a decision in April.

Interested students can get in touch with Rio Pals, secretary of the working group. (rio.pals@wur.nl). **AvdH**

SOIL MUSEUM IS GIVING VIRTUAL TOURS

You no longer have to leave home for a tour of the ISRIC World Soil Museum as the museum is now also offering Skype tours. A class of Vietnamese schoolchildren recently set the ball rolling.

The entire collection of the museum on Wageningen campus has been accessible online (at wsm.isric.org) for some time. But you still had to actually come to Wageningen for a proper guided tour by the museum director, Stephan Mantel. Now you can spare yourself the effort of that journey. 'The idea of doing online guided tours had been around for a while,' says Mantel. 'But we just never got round to it.'

Until they received a request from the Concordia International School in Hanoi, Vietnam. 'A class was working on a science project about soil and the teacher asked whether the children could get a remote tour. That was a nice opportunity to play around with the technology.'

Mantel's daughter recommended using a smartphone with a selfie stick. That turned out to be the perfect solution. 'It lets me walk freely around the museum and show all kinds of things, just like in a normal guided tour. For example, I can get details of the soils magnified on the screen for the class to see, such as plant roots or a layer of ash from a volcanic eruption.' Mantel got the exact degree of interaction he was looking for by switching between the standard camera setting and the selfie setting.

On a Friday afternoon – Vietnamese time –



Schoolchildren in Hanoi get a guided tour via Skype of the ISRIC World Soil Museum in Wageningen.

Mantel took a group of 10-year-olds in a classroom 8862 kilometres away on his first Skype tour. Afterwards, the schoolchildren were able to ask questions via a laptop. 'For example, they asked how many layers does soil consist of, how do you make one of those soil profiles on the wall and is garbage harmful for the soil?'

Mantel wants the virtual guided tours to be a standard option. For a fee of course, because live guided tours cost money too. The soil museum currently has between 2200 and 2600 visitors a year. **RK**

APP SHOWS DEVELOPMENT OF NATURE

Not many people know exactly how the tree in their garden changes in the course of a week. The new GrowApp, developed with input from WUR biologist Arnold van Vliet, enables them to see that, and to send the information directly on to scientists.

The GrowApp is primarily intended for time-lapse photography: series of photos following each other which make slow movements and developments visible. Of a tree in the app user's back garden, for instance, or a beautiful weeping willow on a favourite walk. What is special about the app is the 'overlay'. When someone takes a new photo of a tree, the earlier photo appears like a kind of see-through shadow over the new photo. And that is useful, says Van Vliet. 'You can stand on the

same spot every time and photograph the tree from the same angle. Once you've taken several photos, the app sets to work for you and automatically makes a nice animation.' And it is not just the photographer who can see these animations, but also other users of the app, including scientists.

The GrowApp could turn into a textbook example of citizen science, says Van Vliet. The idea is that eventually thousands of people will use the app to provide data which scientists can use.

Secondary school students and scientists will be the first, obvious users. But it won't stay there, thinks Van Vliet: 'Don't underestimate the addictiveness of this for "ordinary" people. Personally, I can't pass a tree that I've taken a picture of earlier without getting my smartphone out of my coat pocket.'



PHOTO: VINCENT KOPERRAAT

The GrowApp for Android can be downloaded from the Google Play Store. An app for iPhones is still under development. VK

Watch the video
on resource-online.nl



IN THE NEWS

Who? Marianne Bosman, Master's student of Earth and Environment
What? Argues for better and stricter environmental policy in the Netherlands
Where? On the NOS website and on Radio 3FM

'Expressing your opinion on the radio is not easy'

Why were you approached?

'In the Christmas holiday the NOS conducted a survey about the approaching general election. I filled it in and explained some of my answers. Then I got an email from the NOS asking if I'd like to defend a couple of propositions. I did that and then two people from the channel came to see me to make a video. In that I explain why the Netherlands should take the

lead in protecting the climate. The film went online one week before the elections. Radio 3FM picked up on it and invited me to defend my views on the radio.'

Did you say what you wanted to say?

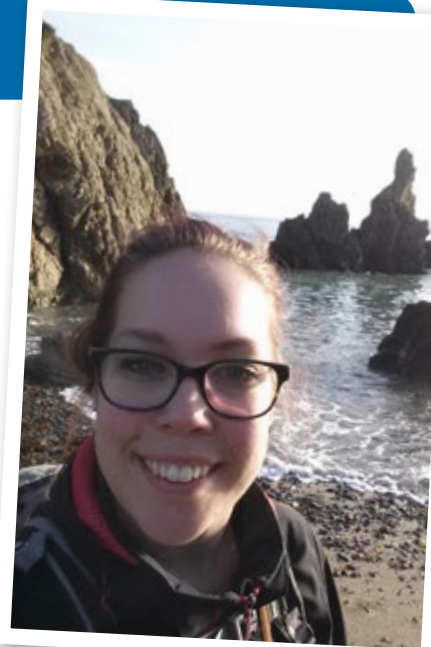
'I did in the NOS film, which I could do again several times. On the radio I could have defended my opinion better but it

all had to be done live and spontaneously. That is not easy. Luckily the studio told me it had gone very well. After the programme I got a lot of messages from friends who had heard me.'

What effect does all that media attention have?

'It was totally geared to young people, an important target group to get involved in politics.

Hopefully it will have helped to get young people to go and vote. For me it was a nice experience too; I would do it again any time.' DdV



MUSSELS NEED BETTER DISPERSAL

Only five percent of the juvenile mussels that farmers spread around plots in the sea eventually end up as mussels on your plate. Researcher Jacob Capelle of Wageningen Marine Research discovered that this yield can be increased by getting a better dispersal of the ‘mussel seed’.

Every spring, millions of mussel larvae float in the waters of the Wadden Sea, looking for a place where they can attach themselves and grow. Juvenile mussels that are one to two centimetres in size are known as ‘mussel seed’. The mussel seed cluster together and form seed beds. In the past, the mussel farmers would fish out the seed and transport it to their plots where they would disperse the mussels.

But you can no longer cultivate mussels using the same methods as in the olden days, explains Capelle. ‘There is a lot of uncertainty about the effects of traditional mussel cultivation on wild mussel beds, which is why mussel seed now has to be collected using mussel seed catching equipment rather than taken from wild beds.’ It is more expensive and labour intensive to use this equipment, which consists of ropes and nets suspended in the water. That is why the yield has become more important for mussel farmers.

UNDERWATER FARMING

Cultivating mussels is really underwater farming, explains Capelle. He investigated the effect of various factors on the growth and survival of mussels. ‘For a long time, it was not clear what exactly happens to the mussels after the seeds have been dispersed. If we have a better understanding of this, growers will be able to act accordingly.’

Dispersing the mussels turns out to be an important step in the cultivation process. The farmers drive a boat in circles around their plot and flush the mussel seed through holes in the hold. ‘If they drop the mussels close to one another, the shellfish lie there like a kind of mat and start fighting and competing for food,’ says Capelle. Three quarters of the mussels in areas with the highest seed density die within four weeks. ‘If the mussels are dispersed evenly across the plot, they organize themselves into groups and survive better.’ However, spreading them too thinly is not good either. ‘That is because they have to cling to one another to prevent themselves from being washed away.’

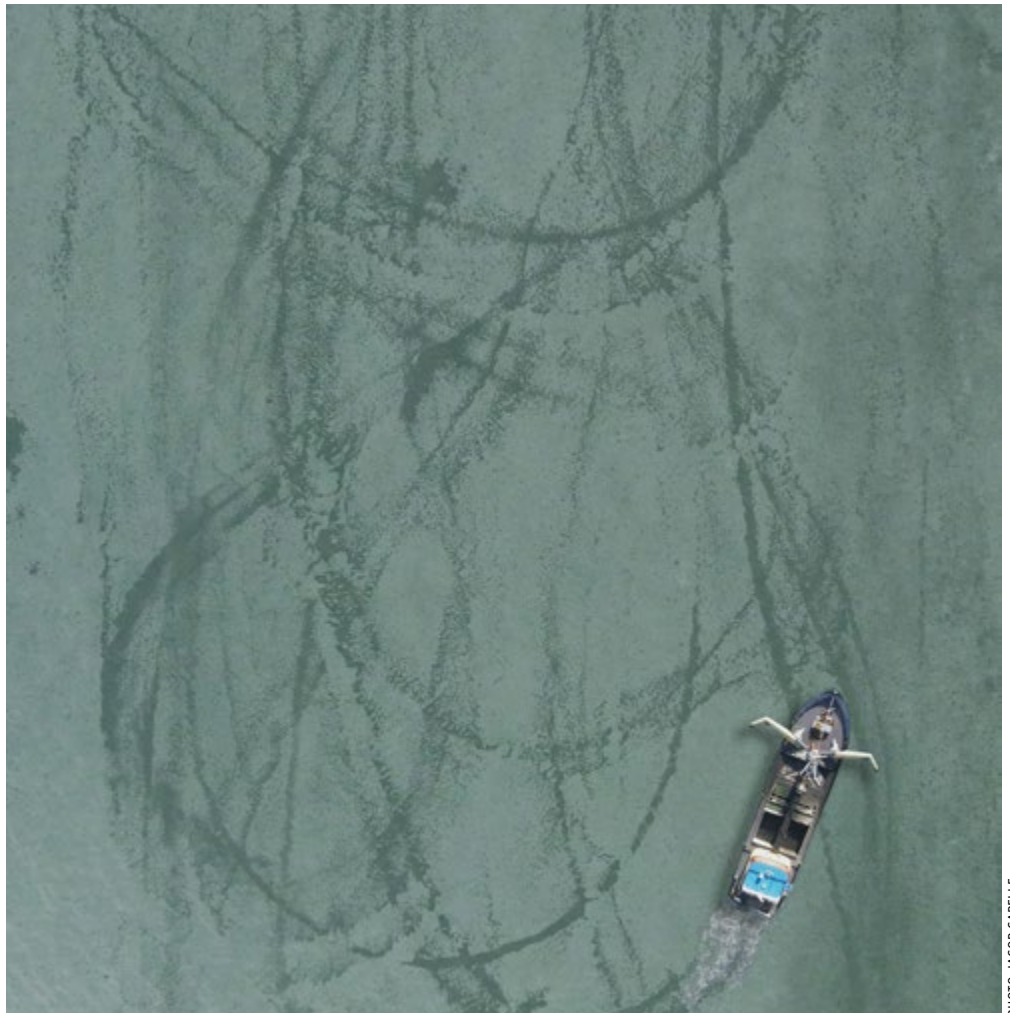


PHOTO: JACOB CAPELLE

A mussel farmer flushes mussel seed through holes in the hold as he steers his boat in circles around his plot.

CRAB BANQUET

Competition among one another is not the only problem for young mussels —predators are also lurking in the wings. Beach crabs adore them, for example. Capelle: ‘The process of dispersing the mussel seed attracts lots of crabs and the mussels are still easy prey because they have yet to attach themselves to something.’ The researcher discovered that this crab banquet is responsible for about one third of the losses in the first five weeks after the seed is dispersed. The seed density had no effect. ‘Crabs are territorial, so they claim a section of sea bed. It doesn’t matter whether you dump one kilo of mussels or ten.’

STARFISH

Capelle also compared survival rates on mussel farm plots with those on wild mussel beds.

‘Wild beds have a better survival rate in fresh water, despite the poorer quality of the food in fresh water. That is because there are more starfish in saltier water and they eat the mussels.’ Mussel farm plots are located in places with higher salt concentrations as that is where the mussels grow better. To protect them against starfish, the mussel farmers regularly clean their plots with a special starfish mop. This underwater pest control method is effective, says Capelle.

He concludes that a better spread of the mussel seed and moving mussels to protected cultivation plots can help increase the mussel population in the Wadden Sea. This is important not just for mussel farmers, says the researcher; it can also benefit birds such as the common eider, which needs about five million kilos of mussels every year to get through the winter. **® TL**

MEASURING METHANE EMISSIONS IN COWS' BURPS

A cow's genes affect its methane emissions. This means that dairy farmers can bring about lasting reductions in emissions by selective breeding. But in practice it is not easy to find the one cow among hundreds that breathes out the least methane, says researcher Yvette de Haas of Wageningen Livestock Research in the *Journal of Dairy Science*.

Cows convert grass into animal proteins. This process produces the greenhouse gas methane. The cows burp to get rid of the methane, as a result of which it ends up in the air. A method does exist for accurately measuring emissions by individual animals: a respiration chamber — a measurement chamber in which one cow is kept for an entire day — gives a precise reading, but this is too expensive and labour intensive for many dairy farmers.

An alternative is the methane sniffer, a small sensor that registers methane. Livestock farmers can place them in feed troughs, for example, and measure the methane concentration in a cow's breath while it is eating. But these measurements are not representative for other times of the day. Despite this, the measurements can still be used, says De Haas.

'Cows are creatures of habit, but they rarely eat at exactly the same times every day. If you take measurements on a large number of days and calculate the averages, that will give you a sufficiently accurate value.'

But that is not all, as agreement has yet to be reached on which specific breeding criterion to use, says De Haas. Possible options are methane emissions per litre of milk, per kilogram of animal feed or in relation to the cow's weight. It is common practice worldwide to choose a unit related to production, for instance per litre of milk or in relation to the total quantity of protein produced (from both milk and meat).

De Haas expects to see guidelines on methane emissions from cattle within the next ten years. 'I expect to see this first in countries where agriculture is responsible for most of the methane emissions, such as New Zealand. That is not the case in the Netherlands, but it will have a knock-on effect here too.' Food cooperatives and companies also play a role as they increasingly require their suppliers to provide sustainably produced ingredients. If they make similar demands for milk, breeding cooperatives will need to be able to find cows that burp less methane. **© DdV**



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

VISION <<

'Geese policy is not implemented consistently'

The Dutch policy on wild geese is a failure. Keeping geese to designated areas does not work: geese decide for themselves where they want to forage. This conclusion has been drawn in an article in the journal *Ambio* by researchers from NIOO-KNAW, Sovon and elsewhere. According to Dick Melman of Wageningen Environmental Research, however, to call it a failure is too simplistic.

The hypothesis was that by scaring them off you could teach geese to use designated areas. Are geese unteachable?

'It was thought that you could steer geese by scaring them off 'no go' areas. But then you do have to be consistent about where and when you scare them. And that was lacking. Farmers and hunters do not scare them off the same fields consistently, but do it here today and there tomorrow. What is more, you have to tailor your approach. Species of geese are all different.'

Were the designated areas well chosen?

'The choice of areas is unfortunate. There are too many straggly borders and even enclaves within the designated foraging areas where the geese were not allowed. And the areas vary from year to year and do not border each other. In that case it stops working. We have a lot to learn about this. We didn't go about it the right way.'

So it is possible, but only if we do it better?

'Yes, that's what I think. The approach has now been delegated to the provinces. I think there are three options for tackling the problem. One: do what we are already doing but then scaring the geese off damage-prone plots more effectively. Two: create good, large and linked designated foraging areas for them. Three: cull geese more effectively so you can maintain a decent population while keeping damage within acceptable limits.'

Hunting to scare geese: does that work at all?

'At present volunteer hunters shoot around the edges of the designated areas, because that's where their chances are greatest. But that sends a confusing signal to the geese, that they are not allowed to be there. Perhaps you should just employ hunters and task them with only hunting well outside the designated areas, in places where geese cause the most damage.' **© RK**



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

CRUNCHY BISCUITS WITHOUT BAD FAT

Wageningen scientists have developed a new technique for solidifying liquid fats using proteins. This enables them to replace the unhealthy fats in biscuits, for example, with healthier fats.

Hard margarines and butter contain a lot of saturated and trans fats. These increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases, but they also ensure that biscuits stay crunchy, sausages are firm, and chocolate does not melt at room temperature. Fat which is soft or liquid at room temperature, such as vegetable oil, is full of unsaturated fat. This is healthier, but not much good for making biscuits, sausages or chocolate. So scientists are eagerly looking for ways of creating solid unsaturated fats.

As a PhD candidate, Auke de Vries of the Physics and Physical Chemistry of Food chair group managed to create a gel made of vegetable oil without saturated fats. He got his PhD on 8 March. 'This is the first time anyone has succeeded in making these 'oleogels' using proteins,' says one of his supervisors, Elke Scholten.

Before this could be achieved there was a major obstacle to overcome. 'In water, proteins easily form gels, as happens in yoghurt and cheese,' explains Scholten. 'But they don't mix into oil well. The same thing happens as when you add water to oil.' The researchers adjusted the structure of the proteins, so they dissolved better in oil.

The researchers have already tested the

oleogels in biscuits and sausages, and a small tasting panel tasted the results. 'They thought the sausages were just as tasty as regular ones. The biscuits were not as crunchy so not everyone thought they were as nice as a biscuit made with butter.' Scholten wants to offer the biscuits and sausages to a bigger tasting panel and if the response is positive, she thinks the products could be marketed soon.

In future Scholten would like to find out which other kinds of proteins lend themselves to this technique. 'For this study whey proteins were used, which are a by-product of the cheese industry. But we are currently looking at plant proteins from potatoes. That would make the product suitable for vegans too.' **TL**



MOST FLATFISH DON'T SURVIVE BEING RETURNED

Most undersized sole and plaice that are caught in the North Sea do not survive after they have been returned to the sea, according to a study from Wageningen Marine Research.

European rules now ban fishers from throwing undersized fish back into the sea. This 'landing obligation' applies to fish species subject to a catch quota, such as sole and plaice. But the legislative body can make an exception if a large proportion of the fish survive after being returned to the sea. The study by Marine Research, which was published this month in *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, gives an initial indication for this.

The researchers assessed the survival rates of fish caught by two commercial fishing boats.

They concluded that 29 percent of the undersized sole and 15 percent of the young plaice survived after being returned to the sea. Mortality was influenced by the water temperature: the warmer the water, the higher the mortality rate. The conditions on board the boats also had an effect. Most of the fish died during the first few days after they had been hauled on board, from a lack of oxygen and from injuries. Mortality also increased if it took a long time to sort the fish.

Researcher Karin van der Reijden prefers not to talk of 'low' survival rates. 'The fishers will say that it's more than the 0 percent that survive if you land the fish.' In her opinion the EU, which introduced the landing obligation, should decide what survival rate is acceptable for an ex-



PHOTO SHUTTERSTOCK

ception to be made. She also thinks the acceptable percentage depends on the species. She says more research is needed. 'You re-

ally need to know whether the rates of 29 and 15 percent have an effect on how sole and plaice populations develop.' **AS**

MEANWHILE ON...

RESOURCE-ONLINE.NL



PHOTO: ROB RIETVELT

100 YEARS...

Wageningen University & Research will be celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2018. Resource is delving into the archives and unearthing special photos. They can be viewed on our website over the coming year, in the thematic series such as '100 years of... laughter', '100 years of... discovery', and '100 years of ... VIP guests'.

In this photo from the series '100 years of... workplaces' you see a soil sciences trial plot in Nicaragua. Maybe you've got a nice story about this, or another photo from the online series will evoke special memories. Let us know! Pop into our newsroom (Atlas, room B119) or email vincent.koperdraat@wur.nl

See the photo series
'100 years of... workplaces'
on resource-online.nl

SURVIVOR

Melindy Dirks was only four when she came up with her life's goal: to be on Dutch TV programme *Expeditie Robinson* (similar to *Survivor* in other countries). 'I want to swing from a pole too,' says the second-year student of Plant Sciences. She has signed up for the latest series of the TV programme, in which a group of people have to figure out how to survive on a desert island. It's doubtful whether her dream will come true this year, though: she got too few viewers' votes to get through to the selection round. Read the interview on the website

SUGAR-FREE SPRITE

Since 13 March only sugar-free Sprite has been for sale in Dutch shops. The Netherlands is the first country in the world where producer Coca-Cola has taken this step. A good thing, says Professor of Nutrition Edith Feskens. 'Overweight is less of a problem in the Netherlands than somewhere like Mexico, but even here young people drink an average of two cans of soft drinks a day.' Read the interview on resource-online.nl

LEFTIST UNI

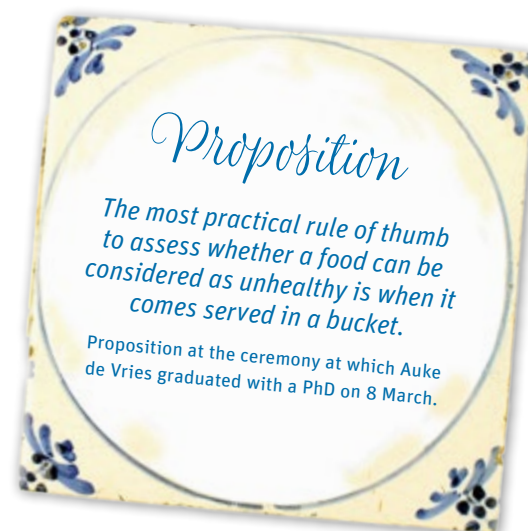
Wageningen University is a left-wing one, if the voting in the Forum in the parliamentary election is anything to go by. At the polling station on campus on 15 March, 2447 votes were cast, of which 798 went to D66 and 797 to GroenLinks. The other parties were much less popular with the Forum voters. *Resource* gauged the mood among students and staff on election day.

See the video
on resource-online.nl



TRICKY DECISION

It's not easy to make sensible use of your right to vote, discovered blogger Jan-Willem. In his latest blog he writes: 'It turns out to be trickier than I thought. Reading those party manifestos is complex and, in most cases, time-consuming. Once you've read a few you can't even remember who wrote what.' Read the whole blog online.





**‘Growth is not bad,
but it must stay
manageable’**

‘This university takes education very seriously’

He has been director of the Education Institute for five years. Now Tiny van Boekel is due to retire. He says innovations in education will not be enough to let Wageningen keep pace with the growing student numbers. ‘Some form of evening teaching is unavoidable.’

text Linda van der Nat & Albert Sikkema *photos* Sven Menschel

The total Wageningen student population grew by 43 percent in five years. Is Wageningen's model of small class sizes starting to show cracks?

‘We’re doing well, despite the growing student numbers. We don’t have many dropouts. Other universities have dropout rates of up to 40 percent, whereas we have less than 15 percent. We have highly motivated students and we still get positive assessments in student surveys. The individual treatment, the contact between students and teachers, is still the defining feature of Wageningen. I do often hear that we are at bursting point and I think that’s right. I am full of admiration for the effort and dedication of our staff, who always manage to deliver despite the incredibly high workload. But eventually cracks will start to appear and we need to take action before that happens.’

What do you feel is the best way to accommodate this growth? There are degree programmes with an enrolment limit, the university is experimenting with classes in the evening and it is also investing in online education.

‘In Wageningen, three degree programmes have opted

for an enrolment limit. Personally I’m not keen on enrolment limits but I can see it was necessary for Nutrition and Health as they were unable to cope with the student numbers. The same applies for Biotechnology and Molecular Life Sciences. The practicals in those programmes are the main bottleneck in terms of the available space. We can’t accommodate all the students we have now in the practicals and there are not enough thesis places. But I see enrolment limits as a temporary solution.

One aspect of our education philosophy is that we want students to be much more active, and online teaching is one way of achieving that. If I compare us to life sciences universities in other countries, we are very much in the vanguard when it comes to online education. Here, lecturers are contributing their own ideas. The Food Technology degree programme is a good example. The practicals for this degree now incorporate computer support. Students are given computer-based assignments and are only able to progress to the practical experiments once they have understood why they have to do something. In the past, the lecturer explained everything but this is far

more efficient. However, the key benefit is that it improves the learning effect. In my day, you would go to a practical and only read the manual when you got there. That's much more structured now.

Concepts such as the 'flipped classroom' — in which students watch informational clips in their own time and can then ask questions and discuss issues during lectures — are also innovations that can really enhance teaching. I don't believe in telling degree programmes that they have to use a certain approach but we do try to steer lecturers and programmes in a particular direction when they come up with proposals for innovations.'

There is a lot of resistance to evening classes. Students and teachers think the classrooms could be used more efficiently. What is your position on evening teaching?

'We can certainly make better use of the classrooms. We have carried out Wi-Fi measurements to check whether the rooms that have been reserved by teachers are actually being used. This showed that between 10 and 15 percent of the reserved classrooms were vacant. Teachers are now more aware that they shouldn't book rooms that they don't need. But I think some form of evening teaching in addition to this will be unavoidable. It's not the nicest of measures so I can understand the resistance.'

'Some groups currently make more from education than from research'

The only alternative is to invest in new teaching buildings and that would be at the expense of education. I would prefer to use part of the evening and make better use of the existing buildings. Unless we grow so big that we say: let's put up an additional building. I think it will be a combination of more efficient timetables and evening teaching.'

Classes in the evening also affect the quality of the teaching. Students say they are less able to concentrate in the evening.

'That is indeed one of the findings from the survey among participants in the evening teaching pilot, that people are less motivated in the evening and attendance is slightly lower. Even so, the exam results are no worse so there is no reason to worry about that. I also think it's a fear of the unknown to a certain extent. International students have much less of a problem with classes in the evening as they are already used to it. And the new cohort of first-years won't know any different, they will just accept it. Student events will simply start a bit later.'

In your view, what is more important to the university, education or research?

'This university takes education very seriously. Education is one of the criteria in the tenure track: what contribution do you make to education, what ideas do you have about this, how do you deal with new insights, how do you incorporate them in your teaching? And it's also

important to note that teaching is paid well. You see that some chair groups make more from education than research. That's not ideal either, though, as it means they use teaching funds to keep the research up to standard.

At present, it is very difficult to acquire new research projects so I can understand if people are looking at options that will let them continue doing research. So I'm not saying it's wrong but it is a sign of the times. It is actually very important for education to have research being carried out.'

Do you intervene if teaching funds are being used for research?

'I don't think you should be too quick to take action in such cases. I was a professor holding a chair once myself so I know how it would feel if we were to say: you must spend all the teaching money on education. Then we would be depriving professors of their responsibility. I do feel I can hold them to account for their educational performance, though. If they manage to acquire research contracts with teaching money and still deliver high-quality education, that's OK with me. But if they let the quality of the teaching slide, I take action.'

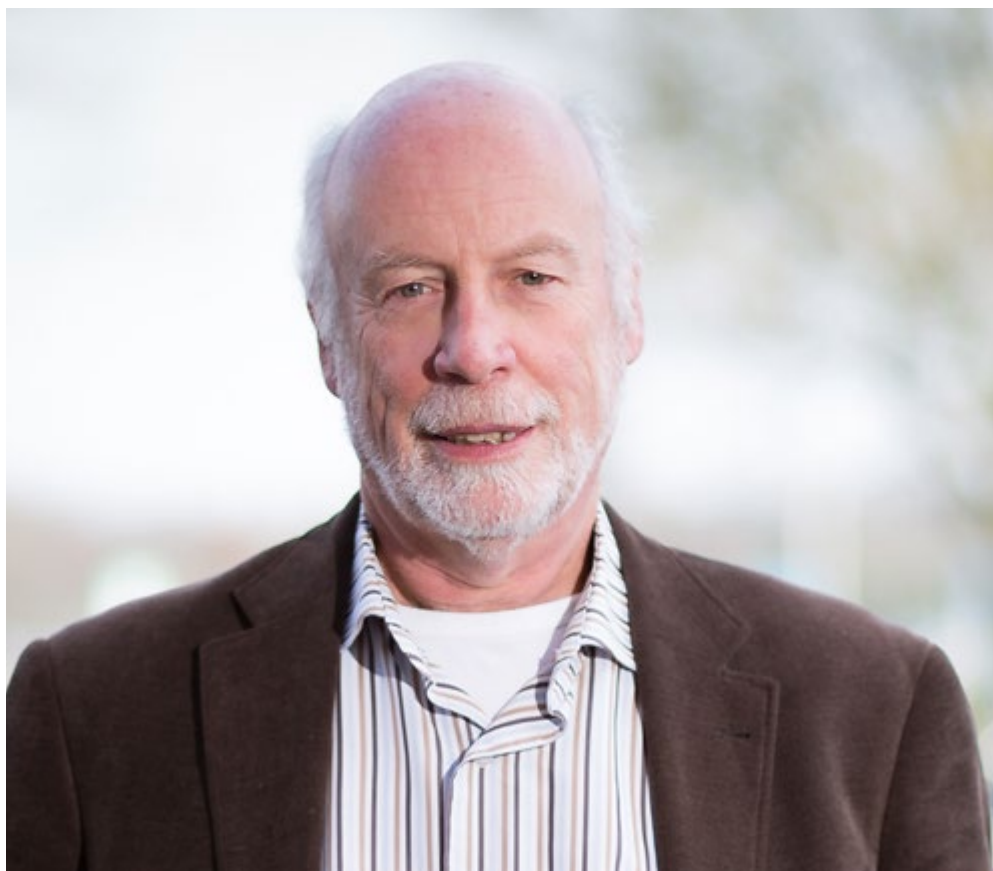
Are you actually saying that research is suffering more from the growth than teaching?

'Yes, in the case of groups with growing student numbers. It's a complex issue. If a chair group has more students doing its modules, it receives more money and is able to appoint more lecturers. But the new employees also have to do research because of the tenure track. And if it starts to become very difficult to find the money for that, we have a problem. So I can understand that chair groups are reluctant to use the teaching funds to appoint tenure-track staff. Now you also hear PhD candidates complaining that they are having to do too much teaching. Graduation projects are often supervised by PhD candidates. I have the impression that the number of PhD candidates is declining, or at any rate that it's becoming more difficult to acquire those projects. If their numbers are decreasing, that is at odds with the increasing student numbers.'

I think we need to be a bit more flexible in our tenure track policy to free up more room for teaching. But we need to keep a proper link between teaching and research. The goal of having teachers who are also researchers is a very important one. Our philosophy is still that our teaching should follow our research.'

What is the biggest challenge for WUR in the next few years?

'Growth is not bad, far from it, but it must stay manageable. At present, it is perhaps a little too fast. The disaster scenario is that people become so overworked that they are no longer able to pay proper attention to the students — whom they need. If we grow too fast, we won't be able to take the necessary measures in time to get all hands on deck. If government funding improves and the two-percent rule [which determines that the education budget cannot rise or fall by more than two percent a year, ed.] is abolished, I think we can resolve this issue. But if there is an impasse in national politics and we no longer get



Outgoing director of the Educational Institute Tiny van Boekel: 'Students get actively involved if they are given the opportunity. That is why I listen to them.'

enough funding, we will have to take action. Then things will go wrong.'

What action should WUR take then?


'Selection on admission would be one option. I am somewhat hesitant about this because I think people who have the necessary prior qualifications have the right to carry on, even if they were graded as an unimpressive seven rather than a brilliant nine. At the very least I would want selection based on motivation because my fear with selection based on grades is that you ignore other valuable qualities such as social skills and creativity. I would find it a shame if the selection process rejected people who used to be lazy and never worked hard or the late developers. But it is an option and I think we should give it serious consideration. I think there are still unexplored opportunities for redistributing the workload, perhaps by sticking less rigidly to your own programme. Instead of each professor defending their personal fiefdom, people should talk to one another at the departmental level. This is not an accusation — the system tends to encourage that. So I would prefer to have a system that gave more room for cooperation.'

Is that possible?

'Yes, if we are a little more flexible when dealing with the individual chair groups. As

far as I'm concerned it is fine if one group is slightly in the red if they compensate for that in other areas, for example by doing more research if a fellow chair group does a bit more teaching. But that is up to the science group directors.'

As the director of the Education Institute, you had frequent contact with student committee members. How did that cooperation go?

'The role students play in our education, as we have organized that, is really fantastic. I think it's great to see how motivated they are and how much effort they put into the committee work in the Student Council, the Education Institute and the programme committees. I've seen students achieving breakthroughs there on several occasions; they are not fooled by games the chair groups play. They can see when something is not in the interest of the education. I would see it as a real shame if they were to be given less influence at that level. Students have a sense of responsibility, they are critical and I think much of our innovation in teaching is supported by them. They are not mere consumers. If they are given the opportunity, they get actively involved. That is why I listen to what they have to say. I think we can learn a lot from our students. It is not just them learning from us; we all learn together.' 

INVOLVED AND APPROACHABLE

Students have always found outgoing director of the Education Institute Tiny van Boekel very approachable, says Student Council member Anne Swank. 'He likes feisty students who have critical minds and broach problems. He is not at all set in his ways when it comes to education — quite the opposite in fact. My nicest memory of him is when he had a beer with us at a student party after an education conference in Vienna. Show me a student who can say she's danced to Bohemian Rhapsody with the Dean of Education. That's how involved he is with students.' René Kwakkel, programme director at Animal Sciences, sees Van Boekel as a modest man. 'Almost a bit shy even, and not someone who jumps in and says what he thinks about an issue straightaway. Sometimes I think: express your view a bit sooner. But Tiny listens first. He makes very good use of the knowledge of his staff and students. But he certainly has views of his own all the while. He is a strong advocate of digitalization in education, for instance.'



ELLY WILL DO IT


Elly Eugelink doesn't have one fixed workplace. She has six. As a receptionist she goes from one reception desk to another. 'There are weeks in which I'm at all six: Helix, Axis, the Leeuwenborch, Actio, Gaia-Lumen and Rikilkt.' And she likes it

that way. 'I'm very flexible. That's why they always call me: Elly will do it,' she jokes. That flexible workplace doesn't leave her much space for a personal touch. In the photo she is at the reception in Helix. 'I'm always here on Fridays. Lovely and qui-

et. I'm more of a hostess here than a receptionist, and I don't have as many duties here as elsewhere. A chance to recover from a busy week.' In front of her lies her glasses case, and to the left her blue diary. 'That's my bible. I take it every-



where I go. It's full of reminders and the duties at each workplace.' Eugelink has only been a receptionist for three years. For 23 years before that she looked after new mothers and babies as a maternity assistant. Due to a shoulder injury she had to

retrain and switch careers. 'And not a day has gone past that I didn't enjoy. It's quite different, and yet not entirely. Both jobs are service-oriented. I like working with people. And having fun. Being flexible.'  RK, photo Margriet van Vianen

Debris houses reefs

Drilling platforms, wind turbines and shipwrecks in the North Sea are generally seen as unnatural features which disturb the ecology. But it turns out that this debris from human activity also provides nurseries for lovely, species-rich reefs.

text Roelof Kleis *photo* Udo van Dongen

Frilled anemones cover the wreckage of the bow of the Biarritz, a Norwegian cargo ship which sank in the North Sea in 1940.

The bare sandy bed of the North Sea is not a place you expect to find reefs full of colourful marine life. But that was not always the case. Until roughly the end of the 19th century, the North Sea was more like one big reef than one big sandbank, says marine biologist Joop Coolen, who graduated with a PhD last week for a study of the biodiversity on reefs in the North Sea. Coolen shows me a Danish map from 1883 and points out a vast oyster bed to the north of the Wadden Sea. 'A reef of 27,000 square kilometres. That is half of the Dutch part of the North Sea. But it's all gone. The last oysters were fished there in the 1960s.'

But this gloomy picture needs some adjusting now too. The North Sea is not as bare and lifeless as it might sound. And not all human activities have been negative; the sea has received a 'helping hand' now and then too. Drilling platforms for oil and gas, wind turbines, buoys and shipwrecks are increasingly providing artificial environments for marine life to thrive in. Coolen studied these new reefs, the wealth of species on them, and the way these species colonize the sea.

FRILLED ANEMONES

As a reference point, Coolen takes the Borkumse Stenen, a large rocky expanse of sea to the north of the island of Schiermonnikoog. This is one of the few remaining stretches of natural reef in the North Sea. Coolen found as many as 193 different species there, including frilled anemones and reefs of sand mason worms. He then listed the species on the pillars of five gas platforms at various distances from the coast using video footage taken for technical inspections. This revealed the presence of 30 different species.

The distribution of the species on the pillars is interesting: the most species are found half way down the pillars. Coolen; 'Each species lives at a particular depth. Anemones, for instance, live much deeper than mussels. That is because of the waves. Many species cannot cope with being constantly battered by the

water like that. The exceptions are species with a strong shell and species with a strong grip, such as barnacles.' The species diversity increases up to a depth of 15 metres, and then it drops off. 'At 20 metres all you find are frilled anemones. These are anemones which grow so fast they suffocate other species.'

STEPPING STONES

The question is how all these species colonize the North Sea and what the role of drilling platforms and wind turbines is. One popular suggestion is that these 'artworks' facilitate the propagation of species by functioning as stepping stones. 'A lot of species eject their eggs straight into the water, where they float around for a while, metamorphose into larvae and then attach themselves to a base,' explains Coolen. 'Sandy sea beds like that of the North Sea are not suitable for the larvae of reef species; there is nothing for them to hold on to. If the larva stage goes on longer than the time it

'Many species that grow on artificial bases are also found on natural reefs'

takes to float from one platform to another, it survives.' And so, goes the theory, species spread by hopping their way around the North Sea.

Coolen demonstrated this phenomenon rather elegantly using mussels. He collected a lot of mussels and used genetic techniques to map out the relationships between populations. He compared that map with a distribution model of particles which are transported by the prevailing currents in the North Sea. Coolen: 'The current model matched the genetic data. So mussels make use of offshore installations to spread out through the North Sea. Further than would be possible naturally.'

JAPANESE SKELETON SHRIMP

Coolen's stepping-stone evidence could have important implications for the question of whether disused drilling platforms and wind turbines should be dismantled. This is currently still compulsory but it costs billions and is, we now know, a retrograde step ecologically. Coolen would rather see these installations

stay in place. He sees their potential for extending natural reefs. 'Many species that grow on artificial bases are also found on natural reefs such as the Borkumse Stenen. And for those natural habitats a duty of protection applies.'

The researcher would make one proviso, however. Drilling platforms and wind turbines provide stepping stones for exotic species such as the Japanese skeleton shrimp too. This creature thrives in tidal zones, and that includes installations out at sea, which are subject to tidal ebb and flow. 'I think we should aim for as natural a situation as possible. Coastal zones out at sea are not natural.'

The emergence of these tidal zones can be prevented, says Coolen, by only leaving the underwater parts of platforms and wind turbines standing. 'They are not natural either, of course, but at least they lead to an ecology which strongly resembles a natural one.' He also suggests supporting the establishment of species on the pillars of drilling platforms and wind turbines by making them out of concrete rather than steel. Stone supports a greater biodiversity than steel, his study reveals. For existing installations he is thinking in terms of a coating of gravelly material.

Whether any of this will materialize has yet to be seen, but the first step has been taken. There are plans to leave several disused platforms standing for 15 years to facilitate further research. **R**

27,000 WRECKS

The North Sea is full of what is known as hard substrate, or artificial material that reefs can grow on. Such as the estimated 27,000 shipwrecks on the sea bed. 'An awful lot of ships were sunk here, especially during the two world wars,' says researcher Joop Coolen. 'Wherever you dive, there is always a wreck within a radius of a few kilometres.' There are also about 1400 oil and gas platforms and 1500 wind turbines in the North Sea, with hundreds more of the latter being added every year. Marine life attaches itself to these bases. Not in the form of the hard corals which live in warm tropical waters, though: the North Sea is only home to soft, leathery corals.

Look at the photo series
on resource-online.nl

WUR Council looks back

In May, students and staff at Wageningen University & Research will elect a new WUR Council. What topics do students and staff in this central representative body actually work on? Here are the top three from last year.

text Albert Sikkema photos Guy Ackermans

1 THE POSITION OF WAGENINGEN MARINE RESEARCH

Wageningen Marine Research is currently an independent research institute within WUR, like Rikilt, but the Executive Board wants it to become part of one of the science groups. In 2016 the board proposed making Marine Research part of the Animal Sciences Group (ASG). But WUR Council has its doubts. 'We feel the Executive Board didn't put enough thought into that proposal,' says council member Marco Otte. 'You could just as easily make Wageningen Marine Research part of the Environmental Sciences Group (ESG), or leave it as an independent entity. We want better arguments.'

The representative bodies in the individual institutes — Wageningen Marine Research, ASG and ESG — differ in their opinions on the matter and WUR Council does not want to have the casting vote as the central council, says Otte. 'It's up to the board to review all the options. We can give them much better advice if we have an overview of the most realistic options with all the pros and cons. We want the board to take its time and consider the alternatives carefully. We will then look at the options together with the three individual councils and decide which one is best for the staff and the continuity of the institute.'

Otte can see that the board is taking this input into account. 'Louise Fresco recently vis-

ited Marine Research to talk to the people working there about the institute's future. I don't think she would have done that if we hadn't initiated that debate.' The final decision on the position of Marine Research will probably be taken in May or June.

2 GROWTH IN STUDENT NUMBERS

Wageningen University is popular among both Dutch and international students. The constantly growing numbers are putting pressure on staff and on teaching facilities. The question is how WUR should deal with this. Should it put up a third education building on campus or can we make more efficient use of the existing buildings by having classes in the

▼ These staff and students are on the current WUR Council.



evening and smarter timetables?

'We have not yet issued our formal advice on how we would like to deal with the growth,' says Joost van Opheusden of WUR Council. 'That's because the Executive Board wanted to run the trial with evening classes first. The board didn't need our approval for that. WUR Council did give some informal advice. For example, we recommended having a better spread of the modules over the terms so that more modules can be scheduled. WUR Council also didn't want any evening classes for first-years as they are still in the process of building up a student life. The board didn't follow that recommendation.'


The students on WUR Council are opposed to evening classes while staff only want them if there is no alternative, says Van Opheusden. 'We are in favour of building additional teaching facilities on campus.'

Things will get interesting over the next few months. Van Opheusden: 'We are due to discuss the report on the pilot with the rector, Arthur Mol, this month. As far as I'm concerned, this should be an open discussion. The priority for WUR Council is to maintain the high quality of the teaching and make sure students and staff don't end up with even more pressure from work.'

3 SPENDING EXTRA TEACHING FUNDS
A few years ago, the council acquired the formal right of consent to the university's budget. That was why WUR Council was able to attach conditions to its approval of Wageningen Uni-

versity's budget for 2017. As a result, an investigation is due to take place into expenditure of the extra funds that the Executive Board has made available for education in recent years.

This year, the university is allocating an additional 4.2 million euros for teaching in order to cope with rising student numbers. Additional investments were made in previous years too, but WUR Council doubts whether teaching genuinely benefits from this money. Council member Guido Camps: 'We are getting a lot of signals from students that they don't get enough supervision in the Master's phase and that there aren't enough workplaces. As a PhD candidate, I also notice that we're getting busier and busier supervising students, because the number of students is growing but not the number of PhD candidates.'

The investigation requested by WUR Council into the use of the extra funds should show whether enough additional lecturers have been appointed. Camps: 'Suppose the number of students for the modules in a particular chair group grows by 10 per cent and that gives the group enough cash for 1.2 lecturers. What happens then? I think the money for the 0.2 lecturer gets put in the general kitty. If that happens several years in a row, things may go wrong. That's why we want to know what's happening at the chair group level. The aim is to maintain the high quality of teaching while still growing.' 

Read too Point of View: WUR Council not visible enough

WUR COUNCIL

WUR Council is the central employee and student representative body at Wageningen University & Research, representing all parts of the organization. The council is formed through a two-tiered system. Staff in each part of the organization elect their own council once every three years. Those councils send a total of 16 staff representatives to WUR Council. Students elect a Student Council every year and eight members of that Student Council then sit on WUR Council. A further two university staff members and two PhD candidates are elected directly to WUR Council. You end up with a WUR Council with 28 members. The elections for the new representative body will be held from 29 May to 6 June. Students and staff will be sent an invitation to vote by email. You have until 18 April to register as a candidate by contacting your own council or sending an email to secretariaat.cor-gv@wur.nl.

IN THE RED

WUR Council almost never gives its advice on WUR organizational units that are in the red and have to downsize, as is currently the case with Wageningen Environmental Research. That is because this is a matter for the individual council in that science group. The central council only gives its advice if cut-backs at one WUR unit have knock-on effects on other units. In such situations, it consults with the individual organization's council. Furthermore, all the individual councils collaborate in the WUR-wide working group 'From work to work'. It has drawn up a guide for managers on how to deal appropriately with staff who have become surplus to requirements.



WUR COUNCIL NOT VISIBLE ENOUGH

Wageningen has representative bodies for students, university staff and institute staff. And they are all represented on the WUR Council. This week the council explains in *Resource* what it has achieved in the past year (see p.20). But how well-known is the WUR Council, actually? Not very, as it turns out.

text Yvonne de Hilster illustration Henk van Ruitenbeek

Matthijs van der Ham



First-year Master's student of Biotechnology

'I know the WUR Council exists but I don't know what it does; it's invisible.' I know more about the Student

Council and its advisory and monitoring role. As a member of a student society you mostly hear about VeSte, because they go around the societies. It is important, for instance, that they concern themselves with the issue of evening lectures, which are not good for your development as a student. And it would be good if the WUR Council talked to the Executive Board about how to encourage students to join in extracurricular activities, so they can develop outside their studies. My advice is to make the WUR Council more visible, in any case. Use social media and organize things like informal lunches downstairs in the Forum.'

Katell Hamon



Researcher at Wageningen Economic Research

'I have more idea what our own Works Council does than what the WUR Council does. Our location in The Hague and our lack of direct involvement with students may be factors there. Presumably an issue like the evening classes is discussed by the WUR Council. Our Works Council keeps us updated on what is going on in our institute, with a newsletter every two to three months. **Something I feel the WUR Council would do well to place high on its agenda is the implementation of the One Wageningen vision.** In practice, with all the red tape and separate budgets, the organization still isn't geared to better collaboration between institutes, let alone with the university.'



Hugo Besemer



Information and data specialist at the WUR library

'What the WUR Council does, I have no idea actually. Although, I guess one thing they look at is the tenure track system, because we were asked to provide data on that. During the period when I shared an

office with someone from the WUR Council, I sometimes heard something about what was going on, but I don't anymore. I only hear something occasionally from the Works Council at Facilities & Services. **If the WUR Council wants to play its part properly as a representative body, it will have to improve on its visibility by reaching out to people.** One factor is the way WUR has changed from a village to an agglomeration. With the WUR Council you are more likely to shrug and leave them to it. It might be an idea for them to give some thought to how to prevent people feeling lost in this organization?'

Rob Schouten



University teacher at Horticulture and Product Physiology

'What the WUR Council is and what it does for me, I have no idea. **Is it the central representative body? If so, why don't they make that clear from the name?** By the same token, it could be a group of outsiders who advise WUR. To have a representative body with both

students and staff seems useful to me. One of the issues I would want them to address is improving the collaboration between Wageningen Research and the university. At a personal level people have contact, and interesting ideas get developed, but joint research often gets stranded for lack of funding. There must be another way of going about it. And then there is tenure track and the rules that sometimes get changed without warning. I see colleagues struggling with the pressure they are put under, and the insecurity about contracts.'

Diane Bosch



Advisor at the Centre for Development Innovation

'I know of the existence of a WUR Council, and because I have been on the Works Council of another organization myself, I know what a Works Council can do in theory. But the consultative bodies here proba-

bly do different things than we imagine. **Because of your question I made a point of looking on the intranet, but I couldn't find much that was recent – which is an indication of its visibility.** But I think that's just as much of a problem in the various parts of the organization. In the newsletters of the Works Council of the SSG I saw a "last call for new people". But if you don't know what you are being asked to do, and what the issues are, you are not going to sign up. And yet I think it's terrible, actually, that I know so little about it. It is not called a representative body for nothing.'

Ward Koehler



Third-year Bachelor's student of Biology

'Whether you know anything about the representative bodies depends on how involved you are yourself, I think. I am on the programme committee for Biology. So last year I attended an evening for students involved in degree programmes, which was organized by VeSte. Through those sorts of activities you automatically end up talking to Student Council members.

But I have never heard of the WUR Council. To make themselves more visible the members should get out and about more, like politicians do, and the media – in our case *Resource* – could report on their activities better.'

Beatrice Landoni



Second-year Master's student of Plant Sciences

'I consider myself quite an active student but I've never heard of the WUR Council. I have heard of the Student Council, but I don't know what they do exactly. Perhaps the Student Council could seek more contact with students and emphasize the links with the other representative bodies? **For the sake of visibility a regular feature in**

Resource might be an idea, or a newsletter.'



Brilliant theses

Justin Tauber, who graduated in Molecular Life Sciences, was given a 9 for his thesis *'Dopant dynamics in weak crystals'*

'At parties, I say that I do computer simulations with a model system and that my research may help the battery in your phone last longer. It's highly fundamental research and difficult to explain in a couple of minutes. A common method for strengthening metals or making batteries is to add small quantities of a different element, also termed *dopants*. The speed at which the *dopants* move determines the efficiency of the battery. However you can't observe the movement of atoms under a microscope. In the Physical Chemistry and

Soft Matter department, they have developed a model system with tiny balls that move just like the atoms in a battery in certain circumstances. I simulated this particle system using computer software. That let me discover a relationship between temperature and the behaviour of the *dopants*. The research has also been published in the leading journal *PNAS*, which is quite unusual for a student. There wasn't much experience with simulations within the group so I had to find out quite a lot myself. I was kind of a pioneer, together with my supervisor. I took to it like a duck to water. Now I'm a PhD candidate in the same chair group; the thesis convinced me that I wanted to continue in research.'



'My research was published in PNAS'

Annemerel Mol, who graduated in Environmental Technology, received a 9 for her thesis *'Bioelectrochemical battery'*

'I did the research for my thesis at Wet-sus, the research centre for water technology in Leeuwarden. It is an inspiring place with lovely lab facilities, and it attracts researchers and students from all over the world. Every day, I felt so happy to be able to work there. I conducted research on the sustainable storage of renewable energy, such as wind power and solar power. If you are going to store sustainably generated energy in batteries containing lead and lithium, then that undermines the whole principle. Our department is the first in the world to develop a battery where a group of batteries converts electricity and CO₂

into acetic acid when charging and another group of batteries converts the acetic acid back into CO₂ and electricity when discharging. Exactly how a rechargeable battery works. We connected the battery up to a small propeller. We did have a small celebration when it started to rotate. There are many aspects to successful thesis research. You have to be motivated, quite bright and prepared to work hard. But I'm also convinced you need some luck. I regularly went for a walk in the afternoon to get some daylight because it was the middle of the winter. I often found four-leafed clovers; as a scientist you are not allowed to be superstitious but I do believe there is always a small element of luck in experimental research: everything has to go right at the right moment.'



'There is always an element of luck in research'

Of course they had their moments of frustration, but the four winners of the Thesis Award 2017 generally enjoyed their graduation projects. 'I never thought I would achieve this.'

text Linda van der Nat

Joëlle Janssen, Master's student in Nutrition and Health, received a 9.5 for her thesis 'A new immune regulatory role of isoleucine and valine: Shaping macrophage polarization states'

'I discovered a love of research in the lab of the Human and Animal Physiology group. I did a lot of lab work during my Bachelor's in Pharmacy but the explanation was often not very clear so I usually didn't have a clue what I was doing. As a result, I wasn't very confident when I started my thesis. But it went incredibly well thanks to my supervisor; I got great training from him and other teachers. What I enjoyed most was the daily challenge of an idea, an experiment, failure, improvements, failure again, more

improvements and sometimes a nice result. I investigated the effect of the nutrients isoleucine and valine – two of the amino acids that make up proteins – on the response of macrophages. Macrophages are immune cells that are also sometimes called omnivores. If a pathogen enters your body, they are one of the first to see the pathogen and actively get rid of it. I wanted to know whether isoleucine and valine could influence the macrophage response, which could be promising for the use of food to prevent and/or treat immune diseases. I will spend the next six months on an internship in Cambridge, after which I will start on a PhD project here in Wageningen. When I started on my thesis a year ago, I never thought I would achieve all this.'



PHOTO: REMO WORMMEESTER

'I discovered a love of research'



FOTO: SYEN MENSCHER

'I had a nice subject and loads of freedom'

Jorieke Vaanhold, who graduated in Economics, Environment and Governance, received a 9 for her thesis 'Price determination in the electricity imbalance market'

'Students often find writing their thesis an awful experience. They toil away in the library from eight thirty to five. I decided from day one that I didn't want that. I had a nice subject and loads of freedom, and I wanted to make use of that. I usually started working on my thesis at around eight thirty. If I was on a roll, I'd just carry on working but if I ran out of energy, I'd treat myself to an afternoon off. I also liked to go on a walk around campus or in the Arboretum after a morning of working hard. You often get different ideas outdoors than when you are sitting at your computer in the Lebo basement. My research was about determining prices in the energy imbalance market. The

imbalance market ensures that the production of electricity matches the consumption at all times. That is becoming increasingly complex with the arrival of renewable energy because it is more difficult to plan the energy production of solar cells and wind turbines. I used a method that had not been applied before to predict the prices in the imbalance market. My research was very applied, which was important to me. If I had had the feeling while I was writing it up that it would end up in the back of a drawer, I would never have got a 9.'

Watch the video with golden thesis tips on resource-online.nl





SPIDERS

Spiders are nature's cleaners. Swiss scientists at the University of Basle have estimated how much spiders eat: between 400 and 800 millions tons per year. Is that a lot? Judge for yourself. The entire human race eats 400 million tons of meat and fish per year. So the world's spiders eat more meat between them than humans do.

SEX AND WORK

Sex is good for productivity, suggests a study by the University of Oregon. Employees who have had sex during their time off perform better at work. They are tidier, more committed and more satisfied with their jobs. The effect continues for up to 24 hours after intercourse and applies to both men and women. The study has nothing to say about sex during working hours.

BROCCOLI

Broccoli helps prevent prostate cancer. Researchers from Oregon State University think this is due to sulforaphane. This substance in broccoli regulates the formation of noncoding RNA, which was once considered a kind of 'junk DNA': genetic material with no function. Wrong. Everything in nature has a function. Even broccoli. Unfortunately.

NOSE

The shape of a nose depends on climate. Broad, flat noses developed in hot, humid climates; long, narrow noses in cold and moderate climates. So say researchers at Pennsylvania State University. Noses warm up the air, and long narrow noses do that best, shows their study. They also mention that sexual selection may have played a role.

A good meal for a good cause

Happietaria will be open from 29 March for one month again in Wageningen. This pop-up restaurant will let you eat out with a clear conscience as the proceeds go to an aid organization in India. What is more, you can take part in Happietaria's cake-baking competition, *The Great Wageningen Bake Off*.

Happietaria, an initiative of the national organization Happy Gift, works exclusively with volunteers and gets many of its ingredients free from local companies. As a result, the temporary restaurant makes a relatively high profit. That money goes to a good cause chosen by the local Happietaria group from a list of charities.

This year, the Wageningen volunteers have chosen the aid organization Tear, which runs projects in northern India around the city of Robertsganj. It gives local people training in educating others about healthcare issues. The aim is to make people aware of their rights and options. 'This aid will lead to lasting, sustainable development, and the sustainability aspect fits well with Wageningen,' says Gerdine Bakker, a WUR student and member of the Happietaria Wageningen committee.

The Indian theme is also reflected in this year's Happietaria menu, with various Indian dishes on offer. The restaurant is open from Monday to Saturday for a three-course evening meal and on Thursday morning for breakfast. A special Easter brunch will be available on Easter Monday.

The initiative for Happietaria Wageningen came from students, but anyone can eat there, work as a volunteer or make a donation, says Bakker. She and the other volunteers hope to serve around 2000 guests during the month and earn about 25,000 euros for Tear.

To generate more publicity, Happietaria is also holding a



The last pop-up Happietaria in Wageningen was in 2015, when volunteers raised over 23,000 euros for a project in Kenya.

baking competition — *The Great Wageningen Bake Off* — on 1 April. The jury will include participants from the popular Dutch TV bakery programme *Heel Holland bakt*, including the winner Annemarie Pronk. Anyone who registers by the deadline of 25 March can submit their cake for the competition on 1 April. Visitors can eat as much cake as they want for five

euros, after which the winner will be announced. The Happietaria volunteers will reproduce the winning cake and serve it for one week as a dessert option in the restaurant.

Happietaria, located at Rustenburg 5 in Wageningen town centre, will be officially opened on 29 March by the mayor. More information: happietariawageningen.nl.

AvdH

MOOC on feeding the world sustainably

Wageningen is working on a special MOOC (massive open online course) on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This new series of online classes will include contributions by renowned international experts, including two Wageningen professors.

The MOOC was developed by the SDG Academy, an initiative of former secretary general of the United Nations Ban Ki-Moon to apply scientific and technical knowhow in the interests of sustainable development. The online course is about the question of how we can provide the growing world population with sufficient, and healthy, food. Eight scientists from six different universities and research institutes are contributing to the

MOOC. Besides the Wageningen professors Ken Giller of Plant Production Systems and Johan Verreth of Aquaculture and Fisheries, there are professors from institutes including Rothamsted Research, Cornell University and Columbia University. This is the first time the SDG Academy has worked with WUR.

The MOOC, entitled Feeding a Hungry Planet: Agriculture, Nutrition and Sustainability, is a worthwhile one for Wageningen students to take, says project manager Anne de Valena, because it uniquely complements the Wageningen curriculum. 'For students who are working on the theme of sustainable food supplies or are interested in it, this MOOC provides a very nice, interdisciplinary overview of the complexity of the prob-

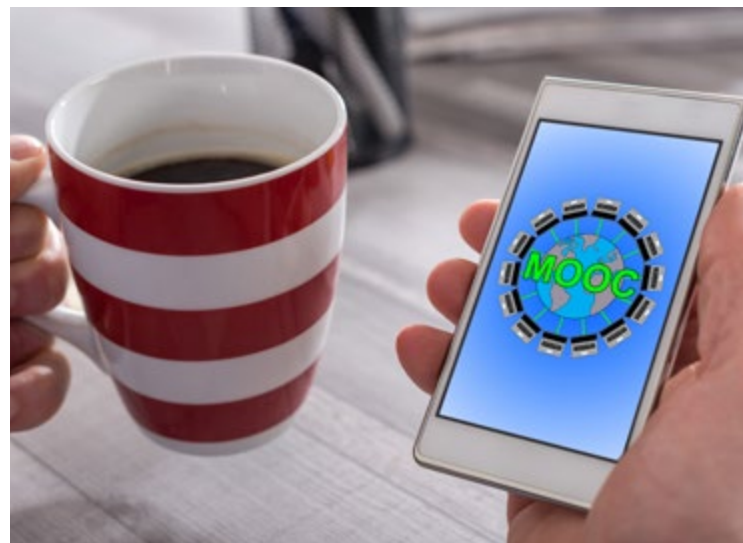


PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

lem and possible solutions,' says De Valena. 'There are courses in Wageningen on the themes of the SDGs, such as nutrition, sustainable intensification and rural development, but these are brought together for the first time in this MOOC.'

And the teachers are worth mentioning too. De Valena: 'The course will be taught by the very best teachers in the field: they are all prominent scientists and good lecturers.'

The new MOOC will be available online from 20 March. LvdN

MEANWHILE IN... NIGERIA

'The media portrayal of the famine is incomplete'

The United Nations recently issued a warning of the biggest humanitarian crisis since the Second World War this summer. Over 16 million people are about to face starvation in Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and Nigeria. According to MSc student Luqman Jinadu the severe drought is not the only cause of the food shortage.

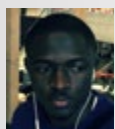
'My family is from North Central Nigeria, but I went on national youth service to the northern Binnamun region, where the drought is severe. A drought has so much impact in this region, because the Fulani herdsmen are not able to feed their cattle on the regular grasslands and they move to regions with more agriculture. There they sometimes get into conflict with local farmers. During this youth service, I was teaching beef and dairy cattle production. We visited this village where people had nothing at all to eat. I was struck by the situation and adapted my lessons to teach people to

improve the current situation: how they can have more bargaining power if they sell their crops in bulk instead of in small quantities. I believe that climate change



PHOTO: MWIB

is worsening the droughts in Nigeria, but the media image that the drought is causing a record famine is incomplete. Firstly, the livestock breeds and plant species in these regions are drought-tolerant and farmers have in-depth knowledge. But farmers who utilize improved varieties are very vulnerable. For instance, over-dependence for seeds on corporate organizations increases prices, and military insecurity has made it difficult for farmers to bring their crops to the markets. Secondly, the land degradation and tremendous water pollution caused by the activities of oil and gas companies have denied millions of people access to farmland in the Niger Delta regions of the country. To improve their situation on the long term, farmers need to unite and to have good storage facilities.' TF



Luqman Adeiza Jinadu, Master's student of Animal Breeding and Genetics, explains the current situation in his home country Nigeria.

YOU ON CAMPUS

The first lovely sunny days of the year lured all the students outside in the lunch hour last week. Even those who are slogging away at their theses, like Master's student of Earth and Environment Niels Kijm (23). He savoured a moment of freedom outside on the grass before closeting himself away again with his work.

Luckily Niels has something to look forward to once he has finished his thesis. 'Then I can do my internship and my idea is to go to Australia for it.' His study advisor suggested this country once, and the idea has stuck in Niels' mind ever since. Not only is Australia a hot-spot for scientists in his field – geomorphology – but it also strikes him as a fascinating country. 'I am keen to travel for a year after graduating, preferably in Asia. If I can do my internship in Australia, I can simply stay in that part of the world.'

Niels loves travelling, and especially enjoys hitch-hiking. 'In the past couple of summers I've hitch-hiked to France and Norway, among other places.' He's got a radical idea for his trip to Asia: 'Maybe I can hitch all the way back to Europe from there.' But he is not sure he will manage it. 'It is more fun to hitch-hike together with someone else. I'm definitely not going to do that trip on my own.'

'I want to go to Australia for my internship'

With the weekend committee of Pyros study association, Niels is organizing a hitch-hiking competition through Europe this year. He also belongs to badminton association the Lobbers, and to KSV Franciscus student society. Last year he was on the catering committee at KSV too. That was particularly

nice during the AID, when the committee had to feed a lot of students. 'The quantities were bizarre: 35 kilos of mince were delivered in plastic bags. Just try and get that properly cooked in your pan.' That it was totally out of proportion amused Niels. 'Try cooking half a salmon. That is quite a different matter to your 5-euro piece of meat.'

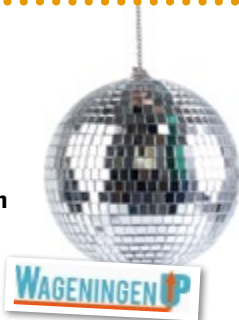
Unfortunately for Niels, neither cooking nor travelling is what is on his mind right now. He's got to finish his thesis first. And that means getting up off the grass and saying goodbye to the nice weather, because he'll be spending the rest of the day at his computer. **AvdH**



PHOTO: ANNE VAN DER HEIJDEN

PARTIES

In the party mood? Wageningen Party Promotion (WUP) tells you where to find one. See too www.wageningenup.nl.



KSV FRANCISCUS – THE GREAT T3 PARTY 2017

Thursday 30 March from 23:00 to 05:00

Nine Wageningen study associations are jointly organizing the great T3 party. Come dressed like an Egyptian to dance the night away and see the other people on your course in a new light. Don't forget your ID and WUR card.

ICA - BOHIMIO COSMOPOLITAN BASH

Friday 31 March from 23:00 to 05:00

The International Club is taking part in WUR's One World Week. Music from all over the world will be blasting through the speakers, from Latin to techno and pop. If you're not sure how to dance to some of the music, there's bound to be someone willing to teach you.

JUNUSHOFF - PHD PARTY 2017

Friday 7 April from 22:00 to 04:00

Once a year, the PhD Council organizes a party for PhD candidates. Junushoff will once again be the scene of some serious merrymaking. Register in advance so that you can be sure of getting in. You can bring students as guests. **AvdH**



PHOTO: SVEN MENSCHER

On 11 March, the Brazilian band Que Beleza gave a farewell concert in café Loburg.

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.

Circumcision and Coca-Cola

'I was in Uganda for two weeks for research on innovation among coffee farmers. A fellow WUR student Martina Mordini and I were in eastern Uganda with the Gisu tribe. This is one of Uganda's 52 tribes, all with their own language and culture. There was a team there to support us, with two local people acting as interpreters. My task was to interview people and collect data.

FROM YOUTH TO MANHOOD

I had no expectations when I went to Uganda, really, but we were given such a warm and open welcome by people there. Little children come up to you and want to hold your hand or sit on your lap. The high point of my Ugandan adventure was being allowed to attend a circumcision ceremony. It was circumcision time among the Gisu and as we travelled around we saw a lot of groups of people out walking. Three days before the ritual, members of the tribe travel on foot from village to village to visit friends and family.

The nephew of one of the interpreters in our

research team was going to be circumcised and we were allowed to attend the ceremony. We didn't know what to expect. The village where it was to happen was completely full. There was a jolly atmosphere and food was served. You could feel that it was a positive event for the Gisu. To them it stands for the transition from youth to manhood. And they were proud to be able to share this piece of their culture with outsiders.

BANANA LEAF

We were allowed to join in everything. I drank local beer and when some people started to sing and took hold of a stick or leaf, I grabbed a banana leaf and joined in. The circumcision itself was done quickly and neatly. The boys didn't flinch at all when a man cut off their foreskins with a small, sharp knife. Straightaway the boys were handed bottles of Coca-Cola and a mobile phone with which to call distant family. That was a remarkable contrast with the ancient tradition which had just taken place. It was definitely a moment I won't forget in a hurry. Normally you spend your day in

THE WORKS



Who? Twan van der Slikke, Master's student of Management, Economics and Consumer Studies
What? Data collection for a Master's thesis on innovation in coffee farming
Where? Manafwa, Uganda

front of a computer screen in the Leeuwenborch, and there I was, all of a sudden, in a Ugandan village witnessing a circumcision. Not something every student gets to experience.' CN

Read all interviews
on resource-online.nl



Leeuwenborch Irregular Opening Hours April 2017

	2017	The Building	Coffee Bar/ Restaurant	The Library
Good Friday	14 April	7 am - 6 pm	9.30 am - 3 pm	Closed
Saturday	15 April	8 am - 5.30 pm	Closed	Closed
Easter Sunday	16 April	Closed	Closed	Closed
Easter Monday	17 April	Closed	Closed	Closed
Monday	24 April	7 am - 10.30 pm	8 am - 5 pm	8.30 am - 6 pm
Tuesday	25 April	7 am - 10.30 pm	8 am - 5 pm	8.30 am - 6 pm
Wednesday	26 April	7 am - 10.30 pm	8 am - 5 pm	8.30 am - 6 pm
Thursday King's Day	27 April	Closed	Closed	Closed
Friday	28 April	7 am - 10.30 pm	8 am - 5 pm	Closed
Saturday	29 April	8 am - 5.30 pm	Closed	Closed
Sunday	30 April	Closed	Closed	Closed

After 6 pm entrance is only possible after registration at the reception desk.



Orion Irregular Opening Hours April 2017

	2017	The Building	Bike basement	Restaurant	The Spot
Good Friday	14 April	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Saturday	15 April	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Easter Sunday	16 April	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Easter Monday	17 April	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Monday	24 April	8 am - 6 pm	8 am - 8 pm	11.30 am - 1.30 pm	8 am - 8 pm
Tuesday	25 April	8 am - 6 pm	8 am - 8 pm	11.30 am - 1.30 pm	8 am - 8 pm
Wednesday	26 April	8 am - 6 pm	8 am - 8 pm	11.30 am - 1.30 pm	8 am - 8 pm
Thursday King's Day	27 April	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Friday	28 April	8 am - 6 pm	8 am - 8 pm	11.30 am - 1.30 pm	8 am - 8 pm
Saturday	29 April	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Sunday	30 April	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed



Forum Irregular Opening Hours April 2017

	2017	The Building	The Library	Student Desk	IT Service Point	WURshop	Restaurant	Grand Café	Wageningen in'to Languages
Good Friday	14 April	8 am - 11 pm	8.30 am - 5.30 pm	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Saturday	15 April	10 am - 6 pm	10 am - 6 pm	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Easter Sunday	16 April	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Easter Monday	17 April	10 am - 6 pm	10 am - 6 pm	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Monday	24 April	8 am - 11 pm	8 am - 10 pm	11 am - 2 pm	9 am - 4 pm	9 am - 4.30 pm	8 am - 7 pm	8 am - 5 pm	9 am - 5 pm
Tuesday	25 April	8 am - 11 pm	8 am - 10 pm	11 am - 2 pm	9 am - 4 pm	9 am - 4.30 pm	8 am - 7 pm	8 am - 5 pm	9 am - 5 pm
Wednesday	26 April	8 am - 11 pm	8 am - 10 pm	11 am - 2 pm	9 am - 4 pm	9 am - 4.30 pm	8 am - 7 pm	8 am - 5 pm	9 am - 5 pm
Thursday King's Day	27 April	10 am - 6 pm	10 am - 6 pm	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Friday	28 April	8 am - 11 pm	8.30 am - 5.30 pm	Closed	Closed	Closed	8 am - 2 pm	8 am - 5 pm	9 am - 5 pm
Saturday	29 April	10 am - 6 pm	8 am - 10 pm	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Sunday	30 April	10 am - 6 pm	8 am - 10 pm	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed



announcements

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS SUMMIT (ISS)

Every BSc student at Wageningen University is invited to apply. The ISS is jointly organized by the National Chung Hsing University (NCHU) and Tokyo University of Agriculture (TUA) at NCHU's campus in

Taiwan, September 21-27. The theme is: 'Students taking action to address inequality through greater access to resources and knowledge in order to promote sustainable agriculture'. Interested? All costs of participation will be covered. Send an application letter including the abstract of your intended paper (max 400 words) to wim.heijman@wur.nl before April 15th.

CineMec

Laan der Verenigde Naties 150, Ede
www.cinemec.nl / 0900 - 321 0 321

FILM



NOW SHOWING

Life

Exciting drama about life on Mars, starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Ryan Reynolds.

DOCU



MARCH 23

Life, Animated

Movie about autism. Winner of the Sundance Filmfestival.

FILM



FROM MARCH 29

Beauty and the Beast 3D

Beautiful live-action version starring Emma Watson.

€2 STUDENT DISCOUNT ON FILMS & EVENTS

agenda

Thursday 23 March to Wednesday 5 April

4 FILMS FOR STUDENTS

The Handmaiden: a romantic thriller about a young woman hired as a servant for a Japanese heir. *Paterson*: a poetic, dry comedy about the daily life of a (poetry-writing) bus driver. *Burma Storybook*: a creative documentary full of poetry about modern Myanmar. *Zaatari Djinn*: a portrait of the resilience of children in refugee camps. WWW.MOVIE-W.NL

Saturday 25 March, 10.00 (departure)

EXCURSION ST. BOERENGROEP: ORGANIC FARM DE BEEKHOEVE, A FAMILY DAIRY FARM

For those of you who heard a passionate farmer speaking at the farewell of Jan Douwe van der Ploeg: that was Monique van der Laan! We will visit her farm, an organic dairy farm with 60 cows. Sign up via: www.boerengroep.nl/excursions2017.

Monday 27 to Wednesday 29 March

PASSION WEEK WAGENINGEN

Lunchtime lectures will be held at 12.30 in Forum C31-34, on the theme: 'A purpose in life?' In the evenings from 20.00 there will be an opportunity to meet and discuss this theme in café Loburg. Info: passionweekwageningen@mail.com or via Facebook.

Thursday 30 March, 12.30-13.20

LUNCH WORKSHOP WAGENINGEN WRITING LAB 'CITING AND REFERENCING'.

To avoid plagiarism in academic writing, it's essential to cite and reference the sources you used correctly. Forum, C0106. Info: info.wageningen-writingLab@wur.nl.

Taxi 0317/0318

Schiphol: €89,50 (max 4 pers.)

0317-765555 / 0318-640000

www.taxi0318.nl

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

colophon

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www.sciencecafewageningen.nl

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Dr. Paul Vogt
(Tilburg Centre for Cognition and Communication)

Roy de Kleijn, MSc.
(Leiden University)

Thursday, March 30
19:45 - live music
20:15 - Science Café Loburg
FREE ENTRANCE

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE:
rise of the thinking machines

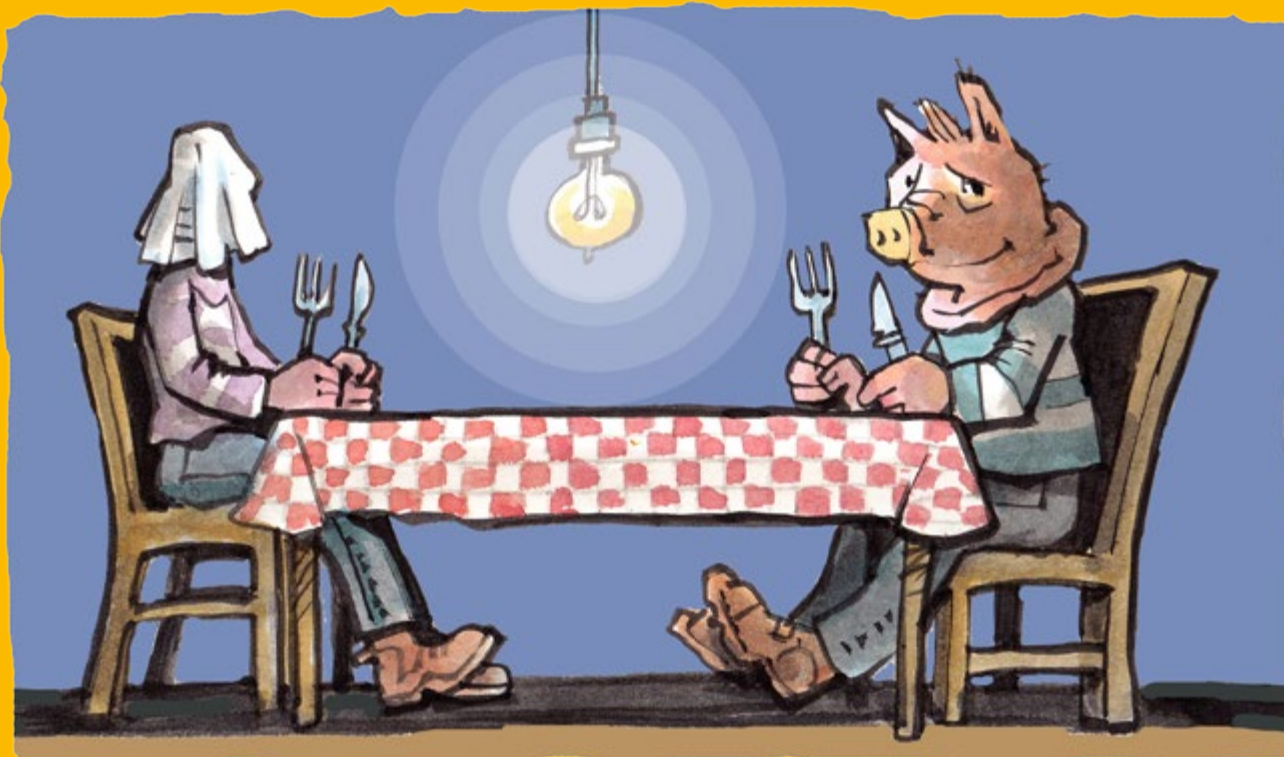
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WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH

RESOURCE

>>TYPICAL DUTCH




The true purpose of napkins

Even though they are highly educated, Dutch people do not have the best manners. They do not wash their hands after using the toilet, they pour the water used to clean the toilet down the kitchen sink, and they eat food that's been dropped on the floor. However, their weird unhygienic behaviour is especially noticeable at the table. It was really funny for me to discover that they do not know the true purpose of napkins.

For me, a Latino person, a napkin is an essential item during lunches and dinners. I live with some Dutch students in my corridor and once I had lunch with my neighbour/friend and I asked her why Dutch people do not use napkins. She exclaimed indignantly: 'Because we are not pigs!' That answer kept me thinking about my 'impertinent' question and for a few seconds I regretted asking it. Until, one minute later, she proved herself wrong: she had a bit of hummus on her mouth and she wiped her mouth with her hand.

A few days later I asked my other roommates the same question, because I wanted a more satisfactory answer. I did indeed get a more serious reply: 'Napkins are an accessory at the table, for example at Christmas. Then we buy them in different designs and colours. They are more of a decorative item.'

So my conclusion is: Dutch people look clean on the outside, but deep down they are a little pig-like.  **Fabián Gálvez**, Master's student of Plant Sciences, from Ecuador

Dutch people do not have the best manners. Napkins are just for decoration

Have you had an interesting encounter with Dutch culture? Send your anecdote (in 250 to 350 words) to resource@wur.nl and earn 25 euros and a jar of Dutch sweets. The editors reserve the right to shorten and edit the contributions before publication.