
Giant beetle

Five-metre-wide artwork in the Forum pond | **p.7** |

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They have shown up in a Wageningen supermarket | **p.27** |

RESOURCE [EN]

For everyone at Wageningen University & Research

no 4 – 28 September 2017 – 12th Volume



**INTERNATIONAL
EDITION**

**A student stood in
the eye of Irma**

p.18

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Veiled faces on 30 billboards in front of Forum and Impulse fix passers-by with a penetrating gaze. The faces of victims of human trafficking. Not in far-off lands but here in the Netherlands. The texts with the photos tell us what happened. 'Open your eyes' is the name of this travelling exhibition by the Dutch committee against human trafficking, CoMensha. The month-long exhibition is the first tangible product of the work of WUR's project group on Modern Slavery. This month the group is also organizing a TED talk, a lunchtime lecture and a film evening on the theme.  RK, photo: Sven Menschel



Read the whole story
on resource-online.nl

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The people behind 10 apps share their experiences



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FRESH FISH

It was 10 years ago that Apple opened the App store, a virtual shop that gave birth to a whole new industry. I was a fanatical app user from the first. I followed my curiosity wherever it went; after all, whatever you come up with, there is sure to be an app for it. One that makes life easy for me is the public library's app, with which I can order books and e-books (the latter vanish automatically after three weeks). I've also got one with which I can virtually make buildings collapse, and I've even got the bubble wrap simulator with which I can compulsively pop bubbles on my screen. Quite calming actually. WUR has dozens of apps of various kinds: for pursuing science, for offering a service and for marketing. The options are so numerous and so diverse that nobody knows exactly how many there are. There are some unusual ones and some lovely ones among them. In this number we aimed for the most out-of-the-ordinary apps. No easy task but thanks to the quest at least I now know whether the fish that will be on my plate tonight is fresh.

Edwin van Laar



>> [It is a good year for mushrooms | p.5](#)

GREEN LIGHT FOR TNO MOVE

The WUR Central Works Council (COR) has agreed under protest to TNO nutrition staff coming to Wageningen Campus. The council feels the ministry of Economic Affairs should have given more money for the new nutrition institute.

On 20 September, the works council considered the move of around 40 TNO nutrition researchers to Wageningen campus. They will be part of Wageningen Food and Biobased Research as of next year.

Over the past few years, WUR, TNO and the ministry of Economic Affairs have been negotiating this nutritional research merger. One issue was the 'transition costs'. TNO's research would have to relocate, new labs would have to be set up in Wageningen and TNO researchers have slightly higher salaries

than scientists at Wageningen Research. WUR wanted the ministry to reimburse those additional costs in full and to commit to giving the new institute research assignments over the next few years. WUR would be prepared to employ the TNO researchers under those conditions.

Wageningen Research's central works council feels the ministry's promises do not go far enough. The council says the transition costs far exceed the money the ministry has promised. 'Economic Affairs should cover all the costs,' says Joost van Opheusden of the works council. The COR has not given any figures because they are confidential. 'Our advice is to go through with the merger but we definitely want to talk to the Executive Board again about the costs.'

The WUR Executive Board is pleased the

works council is not raising an objection to the merger. 'We have the opportunity to create a unique European institute for applied nutritional research that has the support of the ministry, the top sector and the business community,' says spokesman Simon Vink. 'The Executive Board is investing in this institute. Fortunately the works council has also recommended going ahead with the implementation, which means the institute can start up on 1 January and the TNO staff can move to Wageningen as of 1 March 2018.'

Unlike the COR, the Executive Board accepts the commitments made by the ministry of Economic Affairs. Vink: 'The board has spent a long time negotiating with TNO and the ministry on the formation of the new institute, financial guarantees and the associated costs.' **AS**

EXERCISING IN THE COFFEE BREAK

Twelve WUR staff members joined in the first PauseXpress in the Leeuwenborch on Monday. Initial reactions to the coffee break gymnastics were positive.

The idea behind PauseXpress is simple: with a few colleagues you do two or three exercises taking eight minutes in all during your coffee or tea break. Before you know it, you've had a workout, but without working up a sweat. The concept is very popular in Germany, but is starting to catch on in the Netherlands too, says Ingi Alofs, sports instructor at the Bongerd Sports Centre. 'PauseXpress has already been introduced at the University of Maastricht, where it is wildly popular.' The first workout in the basement of the Leeuwenborch already attracted more participants than Alofs had expected. She gets them exercising with Xcos, which are like long thermos flasks which get your muscles working hard when you wave them about.

Dea Schneider, secretary at Wageningen Economic Research, thinks it is a pity the workout only lasts eight minutes. 'I wouldn't have minded going on longer. And it is true that I'm not sweating now I'm done, which is an advantage.' Schneider had signed up out of curiosity. 'This is really fun. I'm going to try and persuade the people working near me to come along.' Bob Mulder, who teaches strategic communication, enjoyed PauseXpress more than he expect-



During PauseXpress in the basement of the Leeuwenborch, staff did exercises for eight minutes.

ed. 'It refreshes you and livens you up.'

Sports instructor Ingi Alofs will come along twice a week – until the summer at least – to demonstrate new exercises. On the other days

it is up to several 'captains' to motivate their colleagues and help them do the exercises. The captains will receive instruction from Alofs. **VK**

MINISTER OF FOOD IN NEW CABINET

The incoming cabinet will appoint a minister of Food, reports weekly magazine *Boerderij* (Farm), based on 'sources within the likely coalition parties' (the conservative VVD, the Christian democratic CDA, the centrist liberal D66 and the Christian Union).

Boerderij talks of a 'minister of Agriculture' but other sources in The Hague talk of a minister of Food and Agriculture. The four coalition parties agree on the need for a separate minister, report *Boerderij*

and *Resource's* sources in The Hague. It is not known who will be the new minister of Food, or which party he or she will be from.

Three of the four coalition parties, the CDA, the Christian Union and D66, voiced their support for a minister of Food before the elections. The new minister's task will be to integrate issues related to agriculture, nature and environment, public health, and animal welfare in a coherent Food Policy. Agriculture is currently dealt with by a state secretary for Agriculture under the ministry of

Economic Affairs. Many parties feel Economic Affairs leaves the agriculture sector too much to the market, while not doing enough to promote the sustainable modernization of food production.

The new minister of Food would not have a separate ministry but would be responsible for agricultural and nature policy, and for the Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA) at the ministry of Economic Affairs. Food research would come under this minister's portfolio too. **AS**

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Independent

The man falls silent for a moment and there is no need for me to fill the silence. My thoughts wander. Secretly, yesterday's ceremony was lovely. Almost surrealistic. I hadn't felt the need for a PhD ceremony but somehow it is nice to be a doctor. It gives some peace of mind.

Today I'm feeling a bit dazed. Luckily that's not a problem. This new client has already decided I can write for him. He's not worried about my having a PhD. Who knows, I might end up being proud of my title. After all, it implies a capacity for independent thinking based on facts, for a critical attitude to society, wary of anything so trivial as your organization's interests. There's something admirable about that.

The man asks about any additional activities. Do I have any dubious sidelines? 'Well, I'm a guest lecturer at WUR.' In exchange for a WUR account I'll be giving the odd free lecture. That reduces education costs for WUR and I love teaching. Perhaps my love of science is not completely over, after all.

The man laughs. That was obviously not the sort of sideline he meant. 'Of course, but a university is not an interest group,' he says. I nod. Guest researcher or not, I set my own course. Even if it goes right against WUR's interests. In fact, I consider that my duty as a doctor. Anything less would be unworthy of a scientist.

Back home I leaf through the documentation of my new life. My eye suddenly falls on line 3 of the 'Declaration by external workers', a 'little formality' I was quickly signing.

I blink and look again. It's still there: 'Undersigned will avoid any action which could harm the interests of WUR, directly or indirectly.' I swallow. Really? Is this my university? **B**

Stijn van Gils (30) is doing doctoral research on ecosystem services in agriculture. Every month he describes his struggles with the scientific system.



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NEW COLUMNISTS?
EMAIL YOUR TRIAL COLUMN OF 250 WORDS
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in brief

>> MUSHROOMS

A good year

It has been a good year for mushrooms and that is abundantly clear on Wageningen Campus. Wherever you look, you see mushrooms. The shaggy ink cap (or lawyer's wig) is particularly prominent, sticking its head up above the grass. According to Thom Kuyper, personal professor of Soil Quality and known for his mushroom expertise, this has everything to do with the weather. 'Moisture and high temperatures are the decisive factors.' Kuyper has counted 120 different species on campus in the past four years. They

do not all come up every year. 'It varies. I've seen some of them just once, and others reappear every year. That's the nice thing about it.'

RK

Shaggy ink caps on campus.



PHOTO: ROELOF KLEIS

Read the whole story
on resource-online.nl

>> ERIC SMALING

Back at WUR

Eric Smaling, until recently MP for the Socialist Party (SP), is coming back to work at WUR. He will be supporting international research projects in the field of food security and soil fertility at Wageningen Environmental Research. In the parliamentary elections last year, Smaling was in 15th place for the SP. The party got 14 seats. Before going into politics, Smaling worked for years for the Staring centre, a forerunner of Wageningen Environmental Research. He then became professor of Soil Inventory and Land Evaluation, and coordinator of the North-South programme at WUR. **AS**

>> ENGLISH-TAUGHT BACHELOR'S

The Netherlands almost frontrunner

The explosive growth in the number of English-taught Bachelor's degree programmes in mainland Europe – from 0 to 2900 in eight years – is partly thanks to the Netherlands. With 317 English-taught Bachelor's degree programmes, the Netherlands is in second place, after Turkey (545) and before Spain (241). Wageningen University currently has just one English-taught Bachelor's degree (Tourism) and will be introducing five more in September 2018: Animal Sciences, International Land and Water Management, Food Technology, Environmental Sciences, and Soil, Water, Atmosphere. **LVDN**

CALL FOR CHANGES TO OPENING OF ACADEMIC YEAR

Some people feel the need for the Opening of the Academic Year to be organized differently, with more of a chance to enter into debate with the main speaker. Director Marc Lamers of Corporate Communication is willing to consider the idea.

This is the outcome of a follow-up discussion about the controversy that blew up at the beginning of this month around the keynote speech by British author and 'climate optimist' Matt Ridley at the Opening ceremony. The meeting took place in Impulse on Wednesday afternoon. A handful of students and one member of staff, assistant professor Ynte van Dam, came to meet a delegation from Corporate Communication. None of the signatories to the letter of protest against Ridley's presence were present.

The problem, in the eyes of those attending the discussion, was not the fact that Ridley was given a platform. It was that there was little or no chance to respond. You could definitely give some thought to a different approach in that regard, creating more scope for debate, says communication director Lamers. In the case of Ridley, the opportunity to counter his arguments may still come. WUR spokesman Simon Vink and Lamers embraced Van Dam's idea of devoting a special issue of a journal – Vork or NJAS for instance – to Ridley's speech. Wageningen scientists could reflect in such as issue on Ridley's claims. **✉ RK**

'ART OFFERS A FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON BIOTECHNOLOGY'

During Syncity Days on 5 and 6 October, the WUR community will be invited to look with new eyes at synthetic biology. Organizer Huib de Vriend hopes the planned lectures, videos and films will give people a fresh perspective on the life sciences and technology.

Synthetic biology is a new scientific discipline in which researchers design (or redesign) biological systems. There is a lot to say about this topic, but the last thing De Vriend wants is a 'deadly boring' discussion of the pros and cons of new biotechnology. 'Because with that question you know you will get stuck in the same old conflict of interests. Art can help us to take a fresh look at the potential of technology.'

De Vriend, whose work used to involve a lot of projects on the social impact of biotechnology, was invited to organize a festival by Vitor Martins dos Santos, WUR professor of Systems and Synthetic Biology. They got to know each other through a shared interest in film, and films dominate the programme. De Vriend is screening 20 films from the BioFiction festival held in Vienna.

One of the short films is by an Austrian artist who makes textiles from moulds. The moulds react to moisture and temperature, making the clothing adapt to the environment and expose it to view at the same time. Also on



One scene from the science fiction film *Gattaca*, which will be screened during Syncity Days.

the programme is a talk by the Danish researcher Steen Rasmussen. He formulates protocols for building primitive cells. De Vriend: 'He says we are on the brink of a revolution now that we can combine knowledge of genetics, bio-informatics, robotics and systems biology.'

De Vriend wants to invite visitors to experience through film and art the effect this theme has on them. 'I hope they will be prompted to think about the question: 'Imagine you could use synthetic biology. What would you want to do with it?'

The Syncity programme can be found on wur.nl/syncity. **✉ AS**

FOOD SYMPOSIUM

The debate got going and the microphone flew around the room at the Food Symposium on Saturday 23 September. The event was organized by the Nicolas Appert study association in honour of its 55th anniversary. The theme was transition: how do we achieve a healthy, fair and sustainable food chain? To do so, must we stop eating meat? Do we need to produce more food or above all, waste less? Are we going to emphasize local production or just the opposite: global production? The lectures were followed by an hour for discussion with representatives of industry, politics and the scientific world. **✉ TL**



PHOTO: MARCO MEGA

FORUM POND TO GET STRIKING ARTWORK

Professor of Aquatic Ecology Marten Scheffer and Danish artist Vagn Iversen have jointly designed a large artwork entitled *Must Leave*. The idea is that it will rise up out of the Forum pond.

The huge yellow-edged water beetle, on the point of flying off, will have a wingspan of over five metres. It will light up in the dark through a combination of lighting that uses solar energy and light-emitting fibres and minerals. A crowdfunding campaign is due to start this month to find the remaining financing.

Scheffer first saw works by Iversen in 1993 in Denmark's AQUA Aquarium & Zoo in Silkeborg. He was impressed by the artist's massive water creatures. 'I've spent hours studying water creatures with a magnifying glass. In Silkeborg, those creatures were suddenly huge and bursting into space. That surprises and disorients you, like a painting or a book can do.' Because he thinks such a sculpture can be a good symbol for WUR and because the organization will be




ILLUSTRATION: VAGN IVERSEN

The plan is to have a water beetle with a wingspan of five metres in the Forum pond.

celebrating its centenary in 2018, Scheffer decided to contact Iversen. 'I want everyone on Wageningen Campus to experience that shock effect.'

The artwork's symbolism operates at different levels, explains Scheffer. For instance, Darwin worked out why you find the same

freshwater creatures all over the world: sooner or later a pool dries out and the animals have to move on. In the same way, students and knowledge also spread across the world. He also sees connections with human migration. That creates tensions, but sparks off innovation too.

Once the water beetle is there, Scheffer wants people to take lots of photos, share them on social media and then look for the underlying message. 'So that this message travels the world over.'  YdH

COW LECTURE

WUR is almost 100 years old. In anticipation of that milestone, *Resource* is resurrecting some unusual photos from the archives. Like this one in which the author Koos van Zomeren (left) and Professor Jan Douwe van der Ploeg (right) listen to the artist Marleen Felius. 'Cow lecture', it says on the back of the photo. A succinct reference to the fact that Felius exclusively paints cattle. The date is 1996, as you might have more or less guessed from the Apple logo on the wall. Guy Ackermans has not recorded the location but we suspect Kniphorst bookshop in Wageningen. Were you at the lecture? Or do you have a story about another photo in the series? If so, drop in on the *Resource* editors or send an email to vincent.koperdraat@wur.nl.

**Look up the 100 years of...
listening photo series
on resource-online.nl**



PHOTO: GUY ACKERMANS

'SPORT SHOULD BE SAFE FOR VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE'

Sport is often seen as a way of helping vulnerable young people in their personal development. But that only works if they don't feel too much pressure to perform, concludes PhD candidate Sabina Super in the Health and Society chair group, who will receive her doctorate on 5 October.

Super was expecting her research to show how good sport is for young people from disadvantaged families who have learning or behavioural problems. But she now says there are two sides to the coin: 'These young people often have low self-esteem and little self-confidence. They easily feel rejected. Sport can reinforce these feelings.'

Super asked young people and sport coaches to fill in questionnaires. The results show that vulnerable young people who play sport more than three times a week are more cooperative, perform better at school and feel healthier. They are also less likely to demonstrate problematic behaviour and are better at dealing with setbacks than young people who don't play sports. Super: 'However, we can't say whether this was caused by playing sports because it is also possible that young people who already had these skills are more likely to choose sport.'

She conducted in-depth interviews in which the youngsters talked about the role sport had in their lives. Super: 'Many see the sport club as a safe haven where they can forget their worries for a while. Others mainly see it as a place



PHOTO: KNOWLEDGE CENTRE FOR SPORT NETHER-

where they can learn things and achieve goals.' This equilibrium between safety and challenge is very fragile for vulnerable young people, says Super. 'Sometimes you can give someone more of a challenge to motivate them, but if the challenge is too big and they are not up to it, that can be very discouraging. Vulnerable youngsters are particularly susceptible to this.'

According to Super, coaches have a huge influence on how young people experience sport. 'But the problem is that these coaches are of-

ten volunteers with no teacher training.' She says it is important for coaches to make sure that the young people feel supported and experience success. On the other hand, the young players must not get the impression that the sport club is a therapy centre. 'Playing sports should be fun first and foremost.'

Super has incorporated her research results in a booklet with practical tips for policymakers, youth support organizations, sports coaches and care professionals. **TL**

FREE SALE OF SEED IN ETHIOPIA HAS STALLED

Trials show that the provision of food in Ethiopia benefits if plant breeding companies can sell their seed directly to farmers rather than to the state. Yet this 'direct seed marketing' has not taken off. PhD candidate Mohammed Hassena Beko investigated which groups are obstructing this liberalization.

Ethiopian farmers are virtually only able to order their seed from the state. This is because seed is part of the government's development agenda aimed at ending

hunger and poverty and ensuring the loyalty of the farmers. But the growing demand for food and high-quality seed means that the ex-Communist regime's centralized distribution system is reaching the limits of what it can cope with. The government therefore decided a few years ago that it would liberalize distribution: plant breeding companies would now be able to sell seed directly to farmers. WUR was involved in preparing for this transition between 2011 and 2015.

The idea was that opening up

the Ethiopian seed market and allowing international seed companies access too would increase both the quantity and quality of the seed. Trials were run with groups of farmers. Evaluations showed that the direct sale of seed to farmers led to higher yields.

However, the Ethiopian government has still not given its approval for the liberalization. Beko says this is because the government is wavering between two lines of reasoning: on the one hand it wants to improve seed quality and food production, but on the other hand it

wants to stay in control of seed distribution to keep farmers in a dependency relationship and maintain an equitable distribution of the seed. What is more, about 60,000 agricultural advisors are involved in the distribution of seed and they want to keep their jobs.

The result is that the government is failing to take a decision. The civil servants in Addis Ababa and the regional government officials are pointing to one other. Everyone wants a decision to be taken but no one wants to be part of it, concludes Beko. **AS**

DIFFERENT APPROACH FOR BACTERIA THAT COLLABORATE

Bacteria that cause bladder inflammation form ecosystems in which they protect one another from antibiotics, as Marjon de Vos and colleagues discovered. Their research opens the way for new treatments and a reduction in the use of antibiotics.

Older people with a bladder inflammation often have a mixed infection, meaning that several different species of bacteria are involved at the same time. Such infections are difficult to treat and respond less well to antibiotics. 'Our results show that you perhaps shouldn't approach mixed infections of the bladder in the same way as a standard bladder inflammation,' says De Vos, a researcher at the Laboratory of Genetics.

De Vos studied more than 70 bacterial samples from seniors with a mixed bladder inflammation. She followed the growth of the different bacterial species in the presence or absence of antibiotics. Based on these measurements, she worked with scientists at IST Austria and the university of Cologne to develop a computer model that predicts how the composition of bacterial colonies changes under different conditions. De Vos: 'Normally, you mainly see the bacte-

ria competing with one another but if antibiotics are added, they suddenly start collaborating more in order to survive. Because the bacteria are able to protect one another against antibiotics, this can make treatment difficult.'

The research may be highly fundamental but De Vos says it can still lead to practical applications. That starts with the diagnostics, which should be geared to bacterial communities rather than a single bacterial species. According to De Vos, the ecosystem approach also offers new perspectives for treatment. 'For instance, we are thinking of new, non-pathogenic bacteria that disrupt the ecosystem, making it easier to tackle the pathogenic bacteria.'

De Vos would also like to know whether this really works in patients. 'So far, we have only tested it in the lab and with computer models. You don't know for certain whether it also works in the same way in someone's bladder. The composition of the urine may have an effect too, for example, and that varies over time and between people.' She would also like to investigate which substances exactly are produced by the bacteria that play a role in bacterial interactions. **TL**

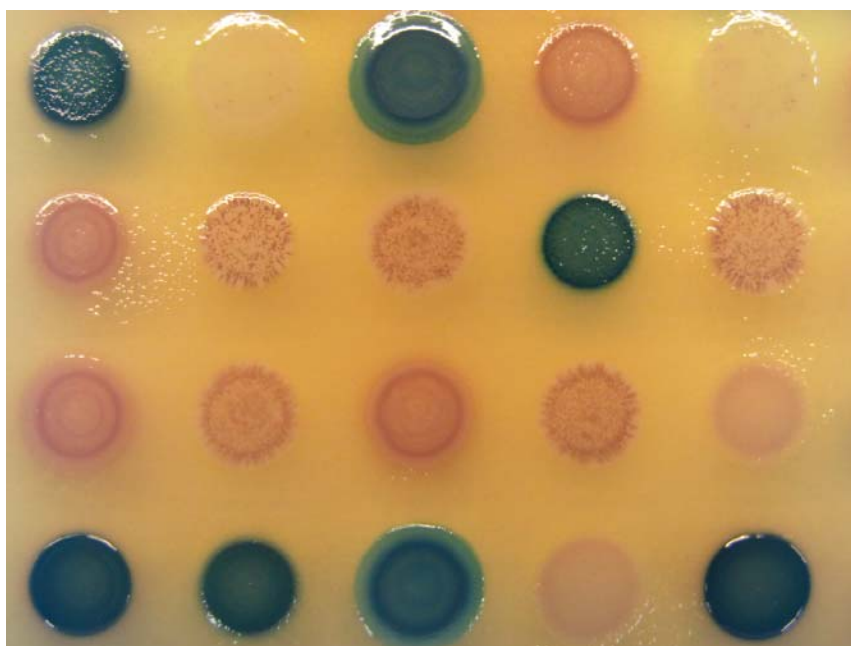


PHOTO: MARION DE VOS

The researchers took samples from elderly patients with a mixed bladder inflammation and tracked the development of the bacterial communities.

VISION

'Dutch milk is already pretty sustainable'

The Dutch environmental lobby organization Milieudefensie has launched a major campaign drawing attention to milk production. The organization wants supermarkets to sell only sustainable milk. But according to Maarten Vrolijk of Wageningen Livestock Research, it is too simplistic to call the milk that is now in the supermarkets unsustainable.

How sustainable is Dutch milk?

'There is more than one definition of sustainable. For me it means sustainable milk production which does not harm the environment, and with which the dairy farmer can make a good living as well. The sustainable dairy chain monitors the sustainability of the whole production process annually, and dairy farmers use the Annual Nutrient Cycle Assessment to calculate and demonstrate their environmental performance. The use of this Assessment tool has been compulsory since January 2016.'

Isn't rain forest felled for the soya in livestock feeds?

'No. The soya which Dutch dairy farmers use is 100 percent environmentally friendly. Some of it does come from South America but is grown in regions where no rain forest is felled for it. It is good to stand up for sustainable production, but only on a factual basis.'

Do cows graze in the fields less and less?

'Currently 81.2 percent of the cows go outside and that is a slight increase: in 2016 it was 78.9 percent. This is stimulated too because farmers who produce for the dairy companies get a premium for putting the cows out to pasture.'

Is it feasible to have only sustainable milk in the supermarkets?

'I think it is too simplistic to call the milk that is in the supermarkets now unsustainable. Imagine if we now all came to an agreement: organic, that is what we mean by sustainable. Even then it would be impossible to arrange that from one day to the next there is only organic milk in the supermarket fridges. We are working nonstop at making production more sustainable. In the last 10 years we have made great strides in the Netherlands. And it is noticeable that the group of consumers who are able and willing to pay for that is growing.' **TL**



FOREST IS REPLACED BY OTHER NATURAL LANDSCAPES

The Netherlands is losing forest cover – at a rate of 1350 hectares a year over the past four years. But the main reason is that forest is being replaced by other types of natural landscape, shows an analysis by Wageningen researchers.

The study is the work of Eric Arets, Mart-Jan Schelhaas and Henk Kramer at Wageningen Environmental Research. They compared topographical maps of the Netherlands from four years ago with current ones. This revealed a net loss of forest (deforestation minus new plantation), say the group in an article in the Dutch journal *Natuur Bos Landschap* (Nature Forest Landscape).

The most significant proportion of the vanished forest – 38 percent – was apparently felled to make way for other natural vegetation such as heathland or sand dunes. Eleven percent of the forest made way for agriculture, particularly in the provinces of Groningen and Dren-

the. The forests in question here were temporary ones created with a government subsidy in the 1980s to cater for an expected shortage of wood. Much of the timber in those temporary woods on farmland has been harvested in recent years once the subsidy period had elapsed. A further nine percent of the forest was felled to build homes and roads. At least 40 percent of the lost forest turned out to be the result, not of changed land use but of imprecise maps and inaccuracies in the method applied. So the real rate of deforestation was lower and the researchers adjusted their data for that.

Nevertheless, there has been a net loss of 1350 hectares of forest for four years in a row. That is nearly 0.4 percent per year, enough to matter for the forest's function of storing carbon. The calculation rules dictate that these trees count as direct CO₂ emissions. That brings Dutch forest as a whole close to the point of changing from a carbon sink to a source of carbon.



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

But Arets does not think that tipping point will be reached, partly because the last contracts for temporary forests on farmland end in 2020.

But the forest experts do want their research to serve as a warning. 'We don't want to be alarmist but we do note that this does not

contribute to solving the climate problem.' Arets rejects the suggestion that it is only a question of a little bit less forest. 'In absolute terms, that is right, but we are talking about 0.4 percent per year for the last four years. That is comparable with the rate of deforestation in the Amazon.' **R RK**

LESS BULLYING IN GREEN SCHOOL PLAYGROUND

Schoolchildren believe there is less bullying when their school playground is greener and stimulates them to be more active. This finding comes from a study by Sjerp de Vries and Martin Goossen of Wageningen Environmental Research.

For their study, Goossen and De Vries visited four primary schools in Geleen, Haarlem, Sneek and Vleuten. These are four of the 70 schools in the Netherlands which have given their playgrounds a facelift with the aid of a 'Healthy School' grant from the ministry of Public Health. Paved surfaces made way for shrubs, tree trunks, play corners and play apparatus.

Goossen and De Vries questioned the children about the peri-

ods before and after the renovation. Also, some of the children wore a movement tracker and a GPS for a week. This revealed that the children spending their breaks in two of the most radically renovated playgrounds were slightly more active.

That is a good thing in itself, says de Vries. But even more important in his eyes is the finding that the social atmosphere improves in a greener playground. In their answers, the children indicate that they see fewer quarrels and bullying in the renovated playground. 'Thanks to the variety of places for both activity and rest, there is probably something to appeal to every child. We think this variety explains why there is less bullying. And the great thing is: we



PHOTO: SUSANNE VAN RIJN

This primary school in Vleuten renovated its playground according to the guidelines of the government's Healthy School programme.

have evidence that suggests that the atmosphere and work attitude in the classroom is improved by the upgraded playgrounds too.'

De Vries and Goossen's results

are in line with those of other studies. De Vries: 'So we can state with greater certainty that upgrading a playground can be a valuable tool in dealing with bullying.' **R VK**

Resource publishes daily news for and about staff and students at WUR. There is often so much that we can't fit it all in the magazine. Here is a sample of what's on offer online.

SURVIVING A FIRE



Forest fire expert Cathelijne Stoof was the first scientist to appear in a

new YouTube series of Het Lab (The Lab). This is the shorter, snappier version of the University of the Netherlands lectures in which top scientists answer everyday questions. Stoof kicked off with her tips on how to survive a wildfire.

LOCK THE DOOR!



Sita Hes, security advisor at Wageningen municipality, has appealed to students to lock all their doors and win-

dows carefully. Otherwise it is all too easy for thieves to walk in and make off with laptops, phones and purses. This happened at Droevendaal recently. Hes: 'Don't make it easy for burglars. Break-ins cause distress and create a sense of insecurity.'

TWITTER TREE IS GROWING



The twitter tree has grown two centimetres in diameter. The tree, a poplar on

the square in front of Orion, tweets daily about the volume of its sap flow and how fast it is growing. And that is fast, concludes forest ecologist Ute Sass-Klaassen after studying the first season's measurements.

NEW PRIZE



Scientists have an opportunity to win a new prize for applied research.

The Stevin prize, like the famous Spinoza prize, is worth 2.5 million euros. The prize money is to be spent on 'further research and/or knowledge exchange and impact.'

MEANWHILE ONLINE

TIE



If you had told blogger Leonardo Medina Santa Cruz a year ago that he would wear a tie during his internship, he would have laughed, as would his

Wageningen friends. But the time has come. And it's not so bad. He is the only 'Wageningian' among the 'serious capitalists', but they turn out to be pretty nice guys.

Check them all out at resource-online.nl

PROPOSITION

'I kept thinking: I must stay focused'

The propositions PhD students append to their theses quite often reflect personal experience. And that is the case with this proposition chosen by Ilse Remmers. In the second half of her doctoral research period she hardly did anything but work. Not very sensible, she now realizes.

'When I started my PhD I was relaxed. I spent time on my hobbies and often did sport or went for a walk in the lunch hour. But in the third year I started to feel the clock was ticking. I took less and less time off for a chat or some distraction. At some point I dropped too many things that weren't work-related.

Only later did I realize that this only made me less efficient. I kept thinking: I must stay focused. But you stay more focused precisely when you regularly stand back from your work, especially while



Ilse Remmers graduated with a PhD on 15 September, with a thesis on optimizing oil production in algae for use as biofuel.

writing your thesis. If you don't, you can get stuck on the same problem for a long time. I only realized this in retrospect myself. And it certainly isn't easy to go on taking time for relaxation when you feel the pressure of having to finish such a big project. To some extent the pressure comes from society: the pressure to achieve. But mostly you generate the pressure yourself. After all, it is nice if the project is finished within the deadline.

I am definitely not the only one to have struggled with this. So this proposition is a message to others, too. Make sure you carry on doing the things you have always enjoyed and which energize you. Then the rest will go a lot more smoothly too.' LdK

*Leisure
on a daily basis
is essential*

Wageningen apps

Apps are the new holy grail, in Wageningen as elsewhere. There are education apps, harvest apps, pig apps, nature apps, nutrition apps, growth apps and fish apps. Resource took a trip through the forest of WUR apps and selected 10 which are accessible to a wider audience. The creators of these apps discuss their strengths and weaknesses.

text Tessa Louwerens en Didi de Vies *illustration* Pascal Tieman

GrowApp

Provided by Nature Today
Number of downloads: 1000-5000
Latest update: May 2017

This app provides a window into the growth of plants. Using your smartphone, you can take photos of trees, plants and landscapes at different moments. The GrowApp collects all the photos and makes time-lapse videos which reveal changes. Fun to do, and you help scientists who study the effect of climate change on nature and landscapes.



Biologist Arnold van Vliet: 'By now more than 15,000 photos have been uploaded with the GrowApp. We already had snapshots and satellite images, but through the app we now get new insights, about the start and length of the growing season, for instance. Like this, we researchers can collect a lot more data. It is nice for users too to see the environment change and to be able to contribute to scientific research. As an app maker, you do have to keep on informing and encouraging your audience. However fantastic your app, if nobody knows of its existence, it is no use to you.'

Hapsnapp

Provided by WUR
Number of downloads: 1000-5000
Last update: September 2015

Hapsnapp shares nutritional facts and figures with you which are based on scientific knowledge at WUR. Users indicate what they are eating and the app tells them interesting facts about their food.

Communication advisor Susanne Laven: 'We developed Hapsnapp because we wanted more online interaction with the wider community, as part of Wageningen Dialogues. The app provides ways of sharing scientific facts, but you can't really interact with users. From surveys we learn that people do use the information in their conversations with others though. We aimed at a young target group, but it turns out the app is mainly used by older people. The app was quite popular at first and still gets downloaded now, but we are not going to update it again. It will probably be

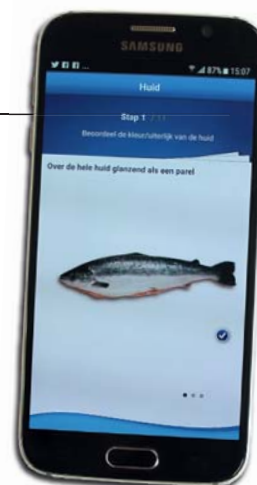


withdrawn next year. We have learned a lot from it. In communication it is important to think about your aim and the best channel for achieving it. Sometimes that is an app, but there are other possibilities too, such as a good mobile version of your website and an online dialogue.'

How fresh is your fish?

Provided by Relectus
Number of downloads: 1000-5000
Last update: 16 August 2013

This app helps you determine how fresh your fish is. The app asks questions such as 'is the skin shiny', 'what do the eyes look like' and 'how firm is the fish?' It also shows you photos which you can compare with the fish in front of you. The fish's shelf life can then be determined using the internationally recognized Quality Index Method (QIM). The app also estimates how long the fish will keep.



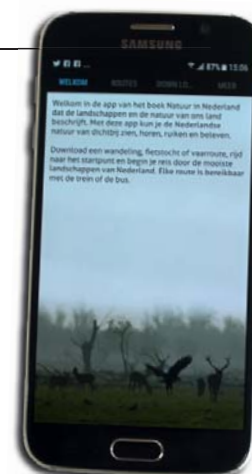
Rian Schelvis-Smit of Wageningen Marine Research: 'The app is part of a study on new methods for the industry for reliably determining how fresh fish is throughout Europe. At first we only had the method on paper, but in that form it didn't reach the industry. Consumers can use the app too, but it is quite a long process so I can't see people going to go through all those steps standing in the supermarket.'

Nature in the Netherlands

Provided by Shoudio
Number of downloads: 10,000-50,000
Last update: January 2015

With this app you can download walking, cycling or sailing routes. The app uses GPS to guide you from one lovely spot to another. At a location it offers brief information, sometimes supplemented with bird calls or pictures of the main animal and plants species to be found here.

Frank Berendse, professor of Nature Management and Plant Ecology: 'The app was based on my book *Natuur in Nederland*. The nice thing is that people with the app really do go out and experience what is described in the book. I've travelled all the routes in it



myself and at several points along the route either my wife or I say something about what there is to see at that spot. I would like to add more routes, but it is important to keep the routes up to date too, because the landscape changes. So I need to check them at least once a year. It's hard to keep up with that so we are setting up a network of volunteers to help us.'

FoodProfiler

Provided by WUR

Number of downloads: 5000-10,000

Last update: December 2016



Curious what kind of eater you are? The FoodProfiler gives you an insight into your eating habits, without you having to keep a detailed food diary. Once a day you get a reminder to fill in what you have eaten in the last couple of hours. The app then responds with scientific facts about nutrition.

Marleen Onwezen, Consumer Behaviour researcher at Wageningen Economic Research: 'We launched the app because we wanted to see how we could use new techniques to get more insight into consumption patterns. The advantage of the smartphone is that you can spring questions on people at random moments instead of asking them to recall what they ate last week, for instance. This produces more reliable data. We use the app for studies with representative sample groups, but people can also use it on a voluntary basis. It's nice for consumers to get more of an idea about their eating habits, but the app also gives government bodies, companies and researchers new insights in things like when people eat and what combinations of foods they eat.'

APPDESK

Many of the WUR apps are made externally, but there is also an AppDesk in Wageningen. It is part of the GeoDesk at Wageningen Environmental Research. 'At some point project teams started showing more and more interest in developing apps,' explains Jappe Franke, developer at the Earth Informatics team. 'It is difficult for researchers to create apps themselves because they often don't know what's involved. AppDesk facilitates the whole process of formulating ideas, developing, building and eventually publishing mobile apps. We build some of the apps ourselves; others we commission elsewhere, since building apps is not our core business.'

Weather experience

Provided by SWLA

Number of downloads: 5000-10,000

Last update: May 2016

The sun is shining and the sky is blue. You put on shorts and a shirt, but as soon as you get outside you regret it: the bitter wind soon gives you goose pimples. You can avoid these kinds of nasty surprises with the *Weerbeleving* app. Instead of the current weather forecast, the app tells you how the weather feels.

Bert Heusinkveld of the Meteorology and Air Quality chair group on *Weerbeleving*: 'We developed the app because research showed that traditional weather forecasts are not enough for people to know how hot or cold it actually feels. A planned development of the *Weerbeleving* app is an inbuilt feedback option, with which users can report straightaway whether they feel warmer or colder than the app suggests. That gives the app up-to-the-minute information with which to fine-tune its information on users' weather experience.'



Ambrosia Alert

Provided by WUR

Number of downloads: 1000-5000

Last update: August 2014

With this app you can see how close you are to a pollen-producing ambrosia plant. Handy for hay fever sufferers. If you come across this plant, you can report it using the app, which passes it on to the *Natuurkalender*, a website with an online database which is used for scientific research on the impact of climate change on nature. The map in the app shows all the sites where ambrosia has been seen since 2006.

Biologist Arnold van Vliet on the Ambrosia Alert: 'This app is not kept up to date. The topic might be a bit too obscure and ambrosia grows in too few places. There is only a small group of people that use the app and it costs too much time and money to keep them involved and informed all the time.'



Natura 2000

Provided by the ministry of Economic Affairs
 Number of downloads: unknown
 Last update: unknown



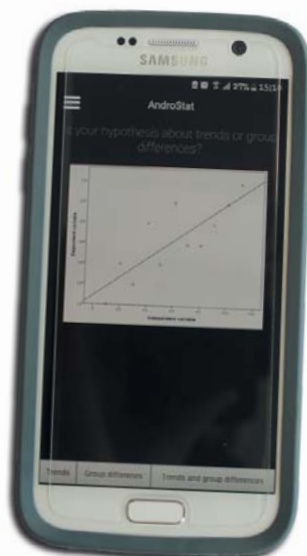
Natura 2000 is a network of EU-designated conservation areas where important plant and animal species are found. Wageningen Environmental Research developed the Natura 2000 app at the behest of the ministry of Economic Affairs (EZ). In it you can see the size and boundaries of a conservation area, and watch videos about the various Natura 2000 areas. Users can also add their own films and photos, and share them on social media. Natura 2000 is a separate section of the Layar app, and works with augmented reality, which means that an extra layer of images is added to create a virtual world.

Stephan Hennekens, researcher in Vegetation, Forest and Landscape Ecology at Wageningen Environmental Research:

‘The Layar app can still be downloaded, but the Natura 2000 part of it isn’t working at present. As soon as EZ is willing to invest in it, I can update the app. Because the app works with augmented reality, you can see in a virtual world how far the Natura 2000 area extends in all directions.’

Statistical Support

Provided by WUR
 Number of downloads: 100-500
 Last update: February 2014



Feeling a bit out of your depth with statistics? Use this app to find out which statistical test you should use. By going through a list of questions, you arrive at precisely which test you need to apply to your data. There is also an extensive dictionary of statistical terms.

Fred de Boer, of the Resource Ecology chair group; ‘Statistical Support was developed for Ecological Methods 1. It is an extra, a memory aid. Not all students who take the course actually use the app. So it is not an overwhelming success; we won’t take the world by storm with it. Statistics is boring, but with little extras like this app we try and make it just a bit more appealing.’

NEW: WAGENINGEN CAMPUS APP

The Wageningen Campus App was launched this week. This app helps students, staff and visitors find their way around the campus. You can use it to locate buildings, restaurants, carparks and bus stops, and it has the latest news and forthcoming events. ‘With this app people have up-to-date information to hand wherever they are,’ says Sil Traas of Corporate Communications & Marketing. Read more about the Campus App on resource-online.nl.



W’App or Welcome App

Provided by WUR
 Number of downloads: 100-500
 Last update: July 2017

The W’App, or Welcome App, was specially designed to help international students find their way around Wageningen in their first few weeks. The app provides information about the town, Dutch culture, public transport, healthcare and much more.

Debby Los of International Students Advice: ‘The same questions keep coming up in emails from international students, so we thought it would be helpful to collect the answers somewhere. Then prospective students have access to this information before they start their degree programmes. And we shall update the information a couple of times a year, and perhaps in future add a community function so that people can get in touch with each other already.’



Arnold van Vliet gives tips for app builders in the video on resource-online.nl



SWEATING BUCKETS

Ingi Alofs has more than one workplace. The list of sports she teaches is long. From fitness to indoor biking and from balance and stability training to climbing. 'You could say: In and around the Bongerd,' she suggests. It is

precisely that variety in her work and her contact with the sportspeople that makes her work so enjoyable. Alofs has been working at the Bongerd as a sports instructor since 2003. Sport is work to her. But that goes both ways.

She enjoys nothing more than 'sweating buckets' on an exercise bike. 'That really boosts my mood. It saves my day. It gives you a kind of energy. And by going all out yourself, you activate and enthuse the group as well. The



Read all the instalments
of Workplace
on resource-online.nl.

energy is catching: they think, hey, I want that too!' As well as her 'normal' work as a sports instructor, Alofs also coordinates WUR's health programme. Making sure staff stay healthy at work by offering them exercise programmes, for

instance. 'Your body reflects your lifestyle,' is her conviction. 'People come along with physical symptoms and then it turns out there's something else going on.' Of course Alofs exercises outside her work as well. 'But not in

the gym. Running in the forest, lovely.'  RK,
photo Margriet van Vianen

In the eye of Hurricane Irma

Bachelor's student Melody Sturm is a storm chaser. At the beginning of September, as many people fled the Caribbean ahead of hurricane Irma, she flew in. In the eye of the hurricane she experienced her finest moment. So far, that is.

text Roelof Kleis photos Melody Sturm

Melody Sturm is sitting on a bench outside Impulse. The sun is shining; the sky is blue, flecked with the odd little cloud. Dull weather, really, for a storm chaser. But she does enjoy it, as long as it doesn't go on too long. She recently spent four months in Malaga to learn Spanish. Clear blue skies day in, day out. That makes her restless. Not surprising perhaps, with a surname like hers. 'Yes, Sturm is an apt surname. But no one else in my family is the slightest bit interested in the weather. I'm the only one,' explains the BSc student of Soil, Water, Atmosphere. Her fascination with wind and weather goes back a long time. 'My mother says that as a baby I could stare at the trees for hours. My cot was in the bay window. I didn't make a sound but just gazed at the movement of the leaves. That's when it all went wrong.' She laughs.

TWISTER

The fascination didn't go away. As a toddler, Sturm watched documentaries on the National Geographic and Discovery channels. 'About volcanoes and hurricanes, and those kinds of extreme events. I was fascinated by the effects of natural phenomena on people: the destruction, the suffering. That's when I saw my first tornadoes too.' But the decisive moment came in 1996. She was just six years old, but she remembers it well. *Twister* came out, the famous film about tornado chasers, starring Helen Hunt. 'That film made a huge impression on me. Hey, there are people who chase after those things. I want to do that too!'

From that point on, Melody Sturm's career was pretty much decided. To chase after storms you need to know a lot about weather. To learn a lot about weather, you need to study meteorology. 'And then there are two options in this country: Utrecht or Wageningen. I chose Wageningen because the approach here is more practical. I did have to look up on the map first, though.'

SINT MAARTEN OR FLORIDA

Irma was not the first hurricane Sturm had experienced. When she was 14 she stayed with relatives in Florida and experienced two hurricanes, evacuation and all. But when she was home in the Netherlands and about to miss a category 4 hurricane, she was so disappointed that her parents put her on a plane again. And in May, Sturm went storm-chasing in Oklahoma for the first time, with a group of Dutch storm chasers.

This month, when hurricane Irma began to grow into the monster she eventually became, Sturm was on an outing to celebrate an anniversary of her mother's. She realized immediately that this was her big chance. 'I had always wanted to be in the eye of a hurricane like that. I cut the trip short and thanks to the kindness of my colleagues at MeteoGroup, I was on a plane to Florida a few days later.'

By that time Irma had calmed down from category 5 to 4. 'Sint Maarten was not an option. Even if the plane had been able to land, there would have been no way out afterwards. I had more chance in Florida. And besides, I know my way around there.'

DEATH AND DESTRUCTION

The inevitable question is why, of course. Why would anyone want to be in the eye of a hurricane that sows death and destruction? 'I want to understand it, to experience it,' says Sturm after a brief pause. 'This is what fascinates me. How can nature create such a monster? A cloud that develops a will of its own and starts rotating on its own axis. Thanks to my work I understand how it works, but experiencing it yourself is something else again.'

And yes, the excitement and the kick are part of the attraction. 'I like looking for that. But it's safety first. I weigh up the risks carefully, and whether it's worth it to me. And you never go out alone but with at least two or


'How can nature create such a monster? A cloud with a will of its own that rotates on its own axis'

three others. You need a driver, a navigator and someone who keeps an eye on the meteorology.' In Florida, Sturm was with a fellow Dutch storm chaser and an experienced American. And indirectly with a lot of others. Storm chasing is popular. 'In Oklahoma, part of Tornado Alley in the US, it is getting problematic. So many people go chasing after storms that there can be traffic jams on the country roads.'

SUDDENLY STILL

After precise calculations, Sturm and her colleagues installed themselves in the city of Naples. Irma, now weakened to category 3, was expected to pass directly over the city. At the moment they'd all been waiting for, Sturm made a selfie film, which is online. She looks childlike in her delight – almost ecstatic, in fact. In the

background there is hardly any wind. Nothing is happening. 'You have to see this in the light of what went on beforehand,' she explains. 'The closer the eye comes, the stronger the wind. Gusts were measured of 142 miles an hour, which is 229 kilometres an hour. We had put the car in a solid-looking multi-storey carpark. We ourselves were at a safe spot out of doors. Sometimes we walked around but at some point you don't dare do that anymore. You can see all sorts of objects flying through the air. Palm trees almost flattened. You feel very vulnerable. And then, in no more than half an hour, it falls still. I was completely overwhelmed. It was a huge dream of mine to stand in the eye like that. And then suddenly, there you are. After all the travelling, all your efforts.'

If anyone thinks Sturm's hunger must be satisfied now, they can think again. 'No, I've just got new dreams now. In the end, this was only a category 3. If I get the chance to experience a 5, I'll take it. And in this eye, I only saw a small patch of blue sky above me. It's most beautiful when the sky is totally blue, as if there is nothing going on at all. I'd like to see that. I'm not done yet, by any means.' 

In Naples, Florida, Melody Sturm holds up a wind meter to measure the force of hurricane Irma.



Sturm (left) and two fellow storm chasers watch the violent storm from a safe vantage point.



In the eye of the storm, when the wind suddenly drops, a delighted Sturm makes a selfie film.

Watch Melody Sturm's video on resource-online.nl



Provincial plans provide for a ring road between Noordwest neighbourhood (left) and the campus (right), running through the small wood known as the Dassenbos. The view from the Dijkgraaf block of student flats.

Ring road going nowhere yet

After years of wavering, Wageningen municipality has taken a decision about a ring road around the campus. But Gelderland provincial council is not satisfied with the plan and is likely to take over the reins. Which doesn't mean the road will get built any time soon. Here's the current state of play.

text Roelof Kleis *photo* Guy Ackermans

Why does the Gelderland provincial executive (GS) want to take control?

This move was prompted by the municipal council's latest decision. Just before the summer the council rejected a ring road that went through the small wood called the Dassenbos and past Noordwest neighbourhood. The council opted for an alternative route they came up with themselves, further away from Noordwest and east of the Dassenbos. By doing so they thrust aside years of consultation with all stakeholders, including the province. And that did not go down well with GS. The executive does not think the proposed option is viable because the landowner, WUR, has serious objections. That's why GS suggested to the provincial council that they should take over the reins on the accessibility dossier (see inset).

What would it mean if the province took control?

The province can override municipalities' spatial planning. This is done by means of a provincial land use plan called an integration plan. This pushes the municipality out of the policymaking process. It is only allowed if

there are clearly interests at stake beyond the local level. According to GS, the future accessibility of Wageningen – and Wageningen Campus in particular – is important enough to justify provincial intervention.

What will happen next?

GS wants a ring road that affects the campus as little as possible. Their starting point is then the route to the west of the Dassenbos, or straight through it, which was shot down by Wageningen council. But a decision in favour of this route is not a foregone conclusion. An environmental impact assessment will be carried out first, to identify how this road would affect the area. As a gesture to the municipality, Wageningen council's variant will be considered too. GS wants to look for the best route for the road in a 'broad zone around the edges of the campus' (see map).

Why is there opposition to a ring road?

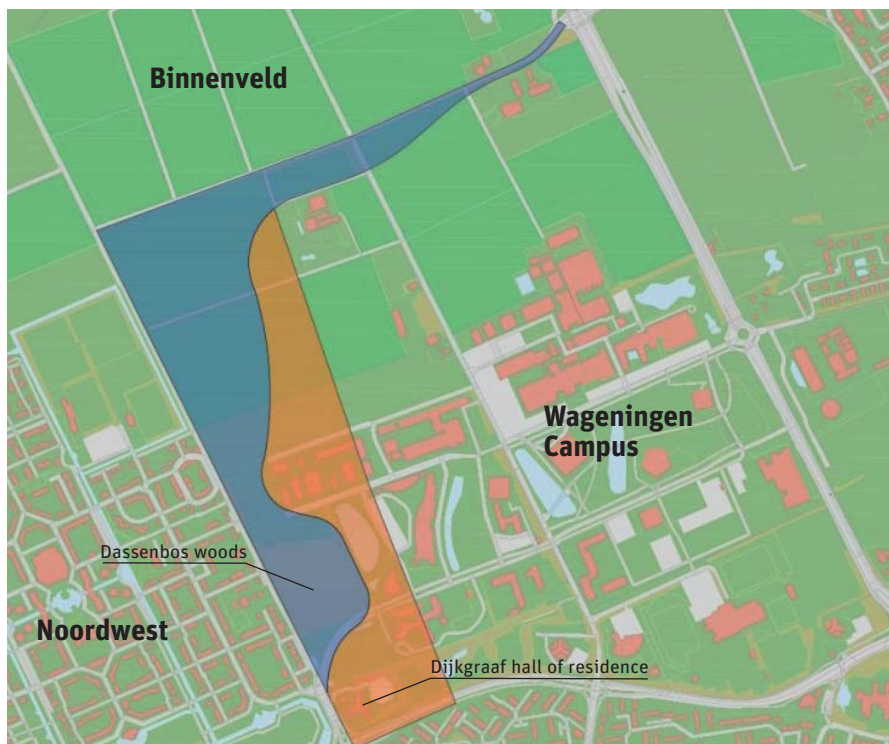
The residents of Noordwest are opposed to a road running so close to their neighbourhood; it will affect the openness and peace of the surroundings. Nature organizations are against anything that will affect the Binnenveld and the Dassenbos. They are also afraid that the campus bypass is just a prelude to a bigger ring road around the whole of Noordwest. Some of the opponents think more asphalt won't solve the problem. They think less far-reaching measures would also help to relieve the pressure, and support an approach that reduces car use. And some of the opponents reckon Wageningen doesn't even have an accessibility problem.

Won't a ring road attract additional through traffic?

The route along the Mansholtlaan, the Diedenweg and the N225 is a shortcut for traffic between the A12 and the A50. A number plate survey in May revealed that nine percent of the daily traffic on the Mansholtlaan is through traffic. That percentage doubles when there is a traffic jam on the A12 in the direction of Arnhem. Opponents see this as an argument against a ring road, because that would attract even more drivers looking for a shortcut. There is something in that argument, although any improvement to traffic flow tends to create shortcuts. To prevent this, Wageningen council wants signs on the motorways telling drivers that the alternative route is hardly any faster. In off-peak hours it takes 14 minutes to go between the A12 and the A50, but in the rush hour it can take up to 40 minutes.

How special is the Dassenbos?

The Dassenbos is an old patch of plantation woodland that began to feature on maps almost three centuries ago. According to opponents of the ring road, it is of unique natural and cultural value. For supporters of the ring road it is just a rather inaccessible brushwood thicket. WUR makes limited use of the oak and birch thicket for research and education. An environmental impact assessment should determine the true value of the Dassenbos, and how much of that will be left if a road runs through or past it.



The provincial council of Gelderland wants to build a road through the blue zone, but will also consider the options in the orange zone, in line with the wishes of Wageningen municipal council.

What does WUR want?

WUR wants to collaborate on a ring road, as long as it doesn't overly affect the development of the campus. A road running east of the Dassenbos is therefore ruled out by the Executive Board. That would mean demolishing the Carus stables. A road there would also mean losing trial fields and it conflicts with plans for new teaching accommodation opposite Rikilt, where the StartHub is now.

Will the province soon have a free hand?

No. An integration plan comes with the same opportunities for participation, lodging objections and appealing as a municipal land use plan. The difference is that at the end of the day, it is not the municipality but the provincial council which makes the decision. The executive has already said it will consult the Wageningen interest groups which were involved in previous planning rounds. This pretty much means the whole circus will start up again.

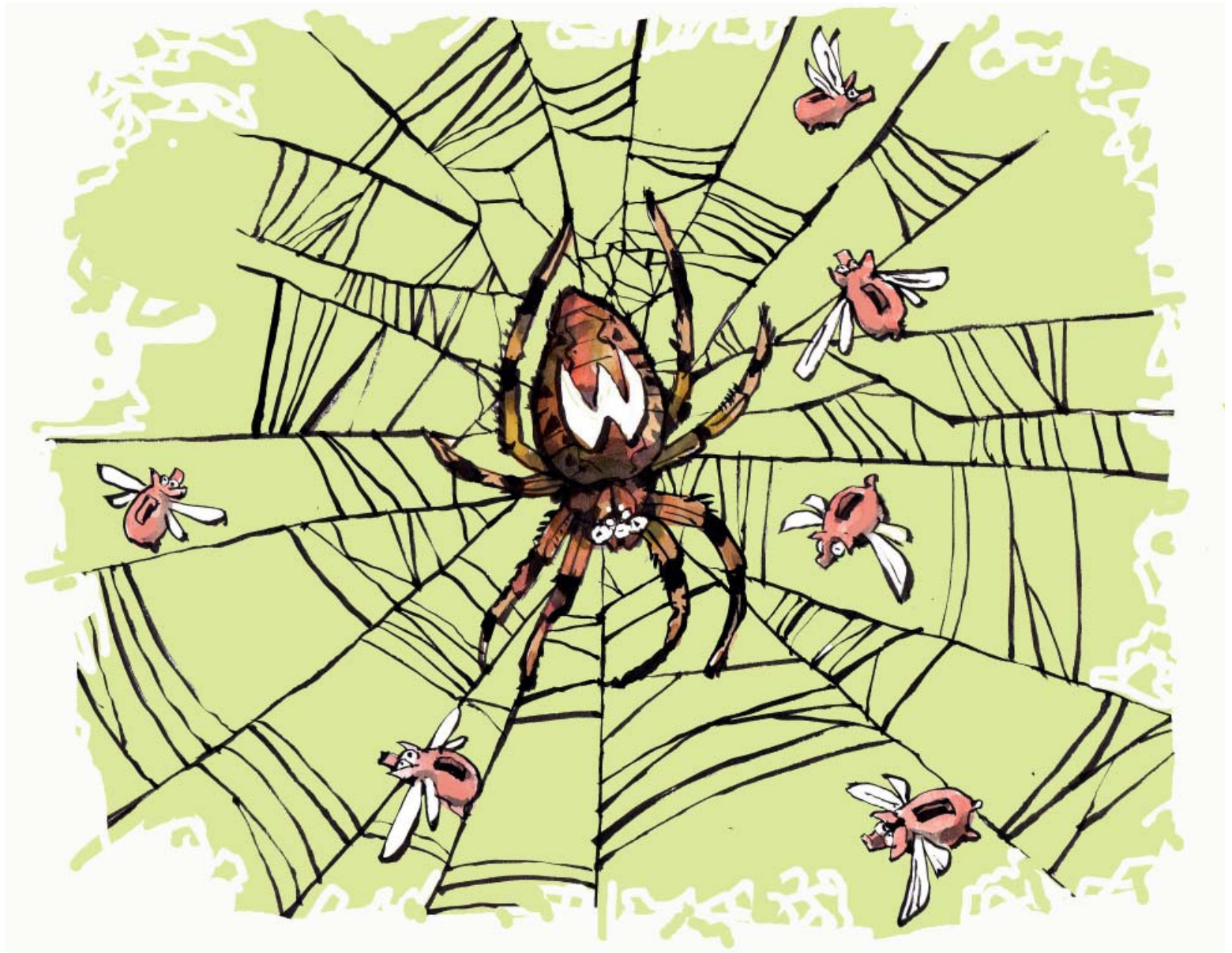
If the province takes over is the ring road inevitable?

Not entirely. Three of the four coalition parties in the province, VVD, CDA and PvdA, are in favour of a ring road. For the fourth, D66, the usefulness and necessity of such a road is not so obvious. And a lot depends on the outcome of the environmental income assessment. What is more, local interest groups and nature organizations are more than likely to exhaust all the legal options for blocking or delaying the arrival of the ring road. **R**

Follow the latest news on the ring road
on resource-online.nl

DECISION BY PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

On the afternoon of Wednesday 27 September, Gelderland provincial council voted on a proposal by its executive to take control from Wageningen municipality over the accessibility dossier. The decision was not yet known when this magazine went to press, but has since been published on resource-online.nl.



A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS FOR WAGENINGEN RESEARCH?

Wageningen Research needs to reinvent itself now that government research assignments are drying up and the institutes increasingly get short jobs to do instead. Time to tap into new markets. The question is, how? Six members of staff talk about what they see as the recipe for success.

text Albert Sikkema *illustration* Henk van Ruitenbeek

Monice van Dongen



Business development manager at Wageningen Livestock Research

'It is important that we have a better sense of our clients' priorities. To do that we need to really en-

quire into their priorities and the challenges they face, what they consider the most relevant features of a solution, and why. Researchers tend to think from the outset in terms of solutions based on their expertise. It is better to find out what the client has in mind, especially when it comes to abstract concepts such as "sustainability" and "circular". Secondly, we need to learn to understand how the client makes decisions. That can be learned on a sales training course, which is simply a good communication training course. **Many staff don't do any acquisition because they are too busy with research. Often that is a choice: research seems more appealing than acquisition.** We've got to make acquisition nicer, so that it's enjoyable to get to know new clients and their R&D needs, and to add value in that area.'

Tanja de Koeijer



Researcher at Wageningen Economic Research

'I work on two themes: the effects of the manure policy on farms and the manure market. For the

first theme there is a four-year programme with annual EU reporting. This continuity enables you to invest in expertise that is important for central government and the provinces, so you generate new assignments. For the other theme the long-term funding has stopped, so the research is becoming piecemeal and you have to do a lot of ad hoc assignments and rushed jobs. It is either all go, or there's nothing to do. We are trying to do something about that by bringing people together from different sciences groups. **Everyone has partial solutions; together we can offer integral solutions.** That collaboration is time-consuming but we hope in due course it will help us to get bigger long-term research assignments.'

Derk Rademaker



Team leader, Water&Food and Climate Change at Wageningen Environmental Research

'Firstly we need to get better at applying our expertise to address the needs

of new clients. For example: the climate researchers are now working on risk assessment tools for insurers, banks and food producers. They seek to give as full a picture as possible of the risks of climate change, so their clients can make policy decisions. We could get a lot more out of new markets. And secondly, we need to make much better use of each other's networks. A lot of researchers respond to tenders and calls, but do not actively look up potential clients. They should use each other's networks more often, pay visits, listen, and see whether they can package their expertise in a good product or sound advice for a new client. **We've got to find new avenues; the beaten tracks are dead ends.** Another example is charities with social objectives. Biodiversity, ecosystems and climate change are the issues that are attracting the most funding. We could play much more of a role there too.'

Ernst van den Ende



Director of the Plant Sciences Group and chair of the working group on the Future of Wageningen Research

'**The main thing is to get better at making the outside world our starting point, rather than ourselves. Listening to clients better so as to be able to serve them optimally.**

For that you often need several disciplines. Imagine I'm a client who wants to improve his grass. What is that grass for? If it's for cows, the Animal Sciences Group should be on board. We think it's enough to have experts who know all about grass, but often that is not enough. We shouldn't be talking about demand-driven research, but about problem-oriented research. Someone has a problem and you've got to figure out what research question underlies it. Then you'll know right away which research disciplines are relevant and who you should collaborate with. To come across those problems and questions, you've got to interact with the outside world continuously.'

Arnold van Vliet



Biologist at the Environmental System Analysis chair group

'I do a lot with citizen science: research projects with input from volunteers. I think citizen science


should be part of Wageningen Research's recipe for success. It enables you to get a feel for what is going on in society. You link people up with your organization and that can produce interesting contacts, cooperation, data and assignments. Communication is crucial for recruiting, inspiring and keeping volunteers. If you communicate with the outside world, people start contributing to the thinking process. **There are still lots of ways staff at Wageningen Research could raise their profile. Fifty five percent of them haven't published anything on the WUR website for the past two years.** That way you become hard to find on Google. Do you want clients to find you in this fragmented society? Then you've got to be communicating all the time. We often get into the news with our news website naturetoday.com. But if I give a talk to birdwatchers, 60 percent of them haven't heard of us. That motivates me to keep working away at upscaling our communication.'

Josien Steenberg



Researcher at Wageningen Marine Research in IJmuiden

'We should pay more attention to our existing clients, give clients more chance to give feedback,

and visit them more often, so as to know what the issues are for them. Get on the same page as your client, and come up with smart proposals by, for instance, sub-contracting other parties to do some of the work, thus saving the client money. Currently acquisition too often leads to heavy work pressure. You are either run off your feet or at a standstill. One year there's so much work we have no time for acquisition and don't know who can do the extra work. And then the next year we haven't got enough work because we haven't done enough acquisition. **We are not on top of things and we've got to change that.** You can do that if you are well-organized internally, with the management team responsible for planning the work and hiring staff. Get your staff enjoying acquisition again.' 

All I want is a room somewhere

All the students who had priority because they live far away now have a roof over their heads in Wageningen, but many others are still looking for rooms. Some are camping; some are sharing small rooms. Or spending hours on public transport every day. 'I'm afraid my results are going to suffer.'

text Stijn van Gils photos Guy Ackermans

There is a relaxed atmosphere at the Wielerbaan campsite on the Zoomweg in Wageningen. Merel van Moorst, first-year student of Communication and Life Sciences, is sitting in her caravan. Her door is open, making it easy for three other first-years who pass by to greet her. Actually, Merel is quite enjoying her temporary home. 'I've got my own space and that's very nice.'

Merel is not the only student camping at the Wielerbaan for want of a room. Exactly how many students there are, the campsite staff are not sure. 'When we get a booking we don't

know whether the guest is a student,' says staff member Birgit Fransen in an email. The best guess is that there are currently about 20 students camping there. They are not allowed to stay very long: a maximum of two or three months. 'We don't want our holidaymakers being inconvenienced by people staying at the campsite longer term.'

SHEER LUCK

If it's up to Merel, though, she won't be here long. She hopes to find a room soon, before it gets really cold. 'New rooms show up on Facebook regularly. Actually I should respond to them much more often, but on the other hand,

there are already so many people doing so.'

In the first few weeks of the academic year, it is the survival of the fittest in the Wageningen student housing market. Certainly for Dutch students, there was little point just knocking on student housing provider Idealis's door. Idealis was struggling to accommodate even the priority students from far away – all international students and Dutch students living more than 130 kilometres from the campus. No, this year finding a room in Wageningen right from the start was a matter of sheer luck. An attic room found through friends of friends, a lucky match on Facebook, or a parent who could afford to buy an apartment.



This caravan is first-year BSc student Merel van Moorst's temporary home.



MSc student Dewy Verhoeven and his girlfriend are sharing this little room, rented from a landlady.

APARTMENTS

Buying an apartment is nothing new, but it is a growing trend. 'We are seeing more parents buying something for their student son or daughter, as a result of which there is much less low-cost housing on the market now,' says Glenn Muller of Jeldes ten Hoor estate agents. The figures he emails bear this out. A year ago about 90 apartments in the 90,000 to 175,000 euro price range had been sold in the previous year (August to August). This year, 150 such apartments changed hands in the same period. So apartments at the lower end of the market are very hard to come by now.

For Simone – not her real name – this buying up of low-cost housing is a problem. She graduated one and a half years ago and is now working near Wageningen. Because she can't find an alternative, she is still living in her Idealis room. 'There is hardly anything available for graduates. Houses on the Funda real estate website get bought or rented within a day. The housing corporation has a long waiting list. There are very few home-sharing groups and it is not easy to get into the few there are.'

HANGING ON

Out of necessity, Simone is hanging on to her Idealis room a bit longer. That is not allowed, officially, but Idealis often doesn't notice who is overstaying their welcome. To stay off the radar, 'Simone' prefers to remain anonymous and not to say where she lives. 'I do feel guilty sometimes but I can't see any other option. And I'm certainly not the only one.'

Idealis doesn't know how many graduates are hanging on to their rooms. 'We don't get the impression that it is happening systematically,' says spokesperson Hellen Albers. 'We usually know when someone is graduating.' Yet this summer Idealis offered 100 euros to anyone who voluntarily gave up their room. And the housing provider is now asking students to send in a copy of their WUR registration for 2017-2018. Because the number of rooms vacated this year is lower than expected, says Albers.

Which is unfortunate, because the room shortage due to the continued growth in student numbers is bigger than in previous years. 'Mainly because the more than 300 rooms planned at Kortenoord are not ready yet.'

In spite of all this, the level of response to Idealis rooms has gone down a bit, says Albers, because students have found other options, whether temporary or longer term. Albers: 'We have provided all international students with rooms. We are now working on accommodating all the others who have registered with us.'

A ROOM AT LAST


And indeed, several of the room-hunting first-years who filled in the Resource survey on the room shortage now report that they have since found decent accommodation. One of them is Dewy Verhoeven from Landgraaf in South Limburg. The new MSc student of Environmental Sciences and his girlfriend are still sharing a small room at the moment but they have found an apartment in Ede which they can move into

on 1 November. 'It is one of the few places where they accept students in ordinary apartments, as long as the parents act as guarantors. We are very happy with it.'

Job Dirkman is still commuting every day between Voorburg, near the coast, and Wageningen. 'First the bus to Gouda, then the train to Utrecht, change for Ede-Wageningen and then the bus. It's almost impossible to have any social life in Wageningen. But I am super-lucky because soon I can move into an Idealis room on the Marijkeweg.'

COMMUTING STUDENTS

Not everyone has such luck. More students than ever are commuting between their parental homes and Wageningen. The Syntus bus drivers have noticed yet another increase in the number of passengers. 'There are more every year,' says communications advisor Hanneke Ruiters. 'So we are temporarily-permanently running extra-long buses.'

Christian Snik is a commuting student and he is not happy about it. He travels every day from Tilburg to Wageningen via Den Bosch, Arnhem and Ede-Wageningen. 'It takes me at least 2.5 hours. I can read a bit between Tilburg and Arnhem, but the rest of the journey is all short legs. It takes me even longer on the way back. I'm afraid my results are going to suffer. I shudder at the thought of still not having a room during exams week. But I have no immediate prospects and it's not easy to take part in interview dinners in student houses either, because I have to catch the bus.' 



Christian Snik from Tilburg spends at least five hours a day on public transport.

SPEEDY

From now on, speed pedelecs (e-bikes which can go at up to 45 km/hour) will be allowed on the cycle path on the Mansholtlaan. Provincial councillor Bieze unveiled a sign announcing this last week. Gelderland is the first province to allow the pedelec on the cycle path along provincial roads within a built-up area, on condition the cyclist does not go over 30 km/hour.

DEAF

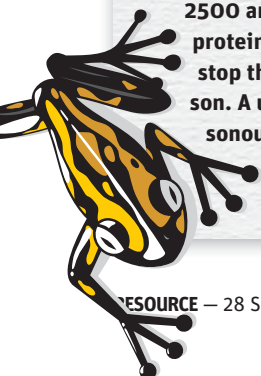
Scientists at the University of South Denmark discovered that the tiny orange pumpkin toadlet from Brazil cannot hear. The males call to attract the females, even though they can't hear a thing. The Danes believe they have found the first case of a species being deaf to its own call. The future of the species depends on the females seeing that their mates are calling. Non-croaking communication.

AWAKE

Sleep therapy helps against depression. To be precise: sleep deprivation. A new meta study by the University of Pennsylvania shows that half of all patients benefit from being forced to stay awake. The therapy entails getting about four hours' sleep and staying awake for 20 hours. The kind of depression makes no difference. It is not clear why lack of sleep cures depression.

POISONOUS

Poisonous frogs are immune to their own poison. Researchers at the University of Austin now know how this works. The receptor protein which the poison latches on to is slightly different in the frog itself than in you and me. In the phantasmal poison frog *Epipedobates anthonyi*, the difference affects three of the 2500 amino acids in the protein, just enough to stop them binding the poison. A useful trait for a poisonous frog.



Argo in the race for sustainability prize

Argo has a chance of adding 500 euros to the club kitty. The student rowing club is in the race for the Social Impact award, a prize organized by Studenten voor Morgen (Students for Tomorrow) for the most sustainable stunt during the introduction week.

Argo committee member Jip Jordaan explains that AID participants could take part in an ergometer competition. During the sports day and at the information market, first-years could use a rowing simulator and see how many watts they could generate by rowing 250 metres. 'We had a board showing how many watts electrical appliances such as coffee machines and TVs use.'

The rowing club hoped this would raise awareness about how much energy certain appliances use. Jordaan: 'Argo is always working on improvements, including in terms of sustainability. For example, we are completely self-sufficient in our electricity with our solar pan-



PHOTO: SVEN WENSCHHEL

During the AID week, Argo let first-years see how much energy they could generate with an ergometer.

els. This competition is just one small part of that, but we want to give students an idea about energy consumption.' Sustainability network Studenten voor Morgen awards three prizes every year for sustainable introduction stunts. The AID commit-

tee has regularly won the jury prize in the past. This year, W.S.R. Argo is in the running for the prize awarded by the general public. Voting is possible via the 'Duurzame Introductie Stunt' Facebook page; polls close on 28 September.

📍 LvdN

Slow start to Wageningen bike-sharing

Only 10 trips were made last week on Ewout Oonk's shared bikes, but the Bachelor's student of Soil, Water and Atmosphere is not about to give up. In fact, he now wants bicycles at stations too.

In the summer, Oonk placed eight bicycles on campus and in Idealis buildings. You can hire these bikes using an app partly developed by him. After use, you return the bike to one of the cycle sheds in the scheme.

Oonk has now increased the number of bikes to 20. He has also introduced a subscription system that makes it cheaper for frequent users and he advertises the scheme on Facebook. Ewout even visited the developers of the com-

panion app in the Slovakian capital Bratislava to swap experiences. But this has not brought much success so far. 'There have been 20 trips in total since 1 September. Although there is growth from week to week.'

Ewout thinks the problem is a lack of awareness, as well as the target group. 'Most people who live here already have a bike.' So he wants to focus more on students and staff who come to Wageningen by public transport or car. That is why he wants to place bikes at Ede-Wageningen station and in the town centre too. 📍 SVG

Go to www.cykl.nl to try out the app.



PHOTO: STIJN VAN GILS

Ewout Oonk with one of his shared bikes.

Worse Life stickers in Wageningen AH

The 'Worse Life' stickers which satirist Arjen Lubach presented in his programme on Sunday 17 September have turned up on meat packaging in the Wageningen Albert Heijn. Master's student Rimke Braakman has ordered some too, and wants to stick them on packets of cheap meat in Lidl.

Lubach's stickers parody the Better Life label awarded to animal-friendly products by animal rights organization Dierenbescherming, and are a response to recent reports of abuses in the food industry. Lubach said the stickers were for animal-unfriendly meat, and could be ordered free online. Apparently that appealed to a lot of people, because the stickers sold out in three days, says broadcast-

ing company VPRO.

The stickers, with pitiful pictures of farm animals and drops of blood instead of stars, are intended to show how bad things are for livestock on factory farms, says Lubach. 'Don't you go secretly sticking them on packets of meat in the supermarket – that's not allowed', he said on his show, with a wink.

Student of Food Technology Rimke Braakman (26) lost no time in ordering the stickers. 'It is easy to take part in this and by doing so I let a few people know about the conditions those animals are kept in.' She plans to put the stickers on meat in Lidl. 'I think a lot of less educated people on low budgets shop there. I also think they are the people most inclined to turn a blind eye.'

Spokespersons for Lidl, Aldi



PHOTO: ANNE VAN DER HEIDEN

and Jumbo in Wageningen say they have not found any stickers on their meat yet. They have turned up in Albert Heijn though. A spokesperson for Albert Heijn Netherlands says the stickers are

removed immediately. But according to a Wageningen student who works at the Wageningen branch – and prefers to remain anonymous – this policy is not always stuck to. 'We just leave them there.' **AVdH**

MEANWHILE ON... SINT MAARTEN

'Luckily I soon had contact again with my parents'

Hurricane Irma rampaged over the Caribbean on 6 September, causing massive damage. Sint Maarten, part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, was one of the affected countries. Michelle Boonstra had just left the island to go to Wageningen. She is worried about the future of the island – and her parents' business.

'My father was still with me in the Netherlands when we realized how big and how disastrous this hurricane was going to be. He had to rush back to Sint Maarten to get the house storm-ready, because my father is the handyman at home. My mother was very worried because she experienced hurricane Luis in 1995. That was comparable with Irma. When hurricane Irma reached the island we had contact, until the eye was above the island. Luckily I got brief contact again relatively fast, after 12 hours. Then I knew they were OK, so I was very lucky. Nevertheless, the days that followed were very stressful because there was a lot of plundering.

The situation was very stressful for me personally. I got a lot of support from people in the Netherlands, but I sometimes felt they couldn't really understand. The images everyone saw of the devastated island were familiar to me as the



Michelle Boonstra is a BSc student of Animal Sciences, and has been living on Sint Maarten for the past 12 years.

place where I grew up and where I lived until very recently. You can only understand what that means if you go through it yourself. Luckily I am also in touch with friends from my secondary school who are in the same boat. I expect it to take years for the economy of Sint Maarten, which is 85 percent reliant on tourism, to recover. A lot of hotels are damaged, of course, and the island no longer looks so attractive. And the coral around the island has been partially destroyed, which is extra damaging for my family's snorkelling company. The business was already affected because numerous boats are badly damaged. It is doubtful whether my parents will be able to carry on with the business.' **TF**



One of the damaged boats of Michelle Boonstra's parents' snorkelling company.

YOU ON CAMPUS

Every Wednesday in the lunch hour, Nutrition and Health student Mark Reijerman (27) can be found on the first floor of the Forum. There, he sits beside a banner of the Connect Wageningen political party he founded, ready to listen to the concerns of his fellow students. The new local party for young people and students is not Mark's only thriving initiative either.

In 2012, Mark and his good friend Aernoud van Kerkhoven set up the sports club Wageningen Beasts. 'People were doing keep-fit individually and we wanted to form a community around it,' says Aernoud, who has joined the conversation. 'Everyone has something good to contribute and I want to get them joining forces,' says Mark. This ambition led to the formation of Wageningen Debating, which Mark initiated in 2013.

Mark says it's not that difficult to form

new groups. 'Lots of ideas fizzle out but some get off the ground quite smoothly and you get a kick out of that.' You've made a start as soon as you bring enthusiastic people together, says Mark. 'I can't do much on my own, but I gather the

'I can't do much on my own but I gather the right people around me'

right people around me, and then you start getting somewhere. I am not afraid of saying I need other people.' Mark appreciates the fact that he can always find people who have the energy to take things on, and who are there for each other. 'You can always appeal to people for help. Maybe that's a Wageningen thing?'

Currently Mark is investing time in the new political party. 'Ultimately I want to



PHOTO: ANNE VAN DER HEIJDEN

improve on Dutch democracy,' he says. 'I think local democracy will benefit from better representation for young people and students.' His open lunch in the Forum is one of his ways of making contact with his target group. 'A new person joins us every time,' he says, indicating those around him. Aernoud looks at the mixed gathering and says: 'That's Mark's talent. He got this crazy bunch together.' **AvdH**

PARTIES

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

JUNUSHOFF THEATRE - FESTIVALATINO WAGENINGEN

Saturday 30 September from 19.30 to 02.00

Wageningen is the Dutch town with the most nationalities after Amsterdam, and that is reflected in the range of cultural events on offer. On 30 September, you can enjoy Latin American and Caribbean dance and music.

SHOUT - OKTOBERFEST

Saturday 7 October from 22.00 to 03.00

Shout is bringing the Oktoberfest to Wageningen, only in glittering pink. Especially for all those LGBTQ people and gay-minded beer lovers in Wageningen. With half litres for 2.50 euros.

HOTEL WAGENINGSE BERG - QMUSIC: FOUTE PARTY XL

Saturday 14 October from 21.00 to 01.00

DJ Paul Alder will be sending hackneyed hits blasting through the speakers in Hotel de Wageningse Berg. Think YMCA, No Limit, 'Una Paloma Blanca' and 'Sex on the Beach'. The theme is *Over The Top*. Go to wageningenup.nl for info on how to get tickets. **AvdH**

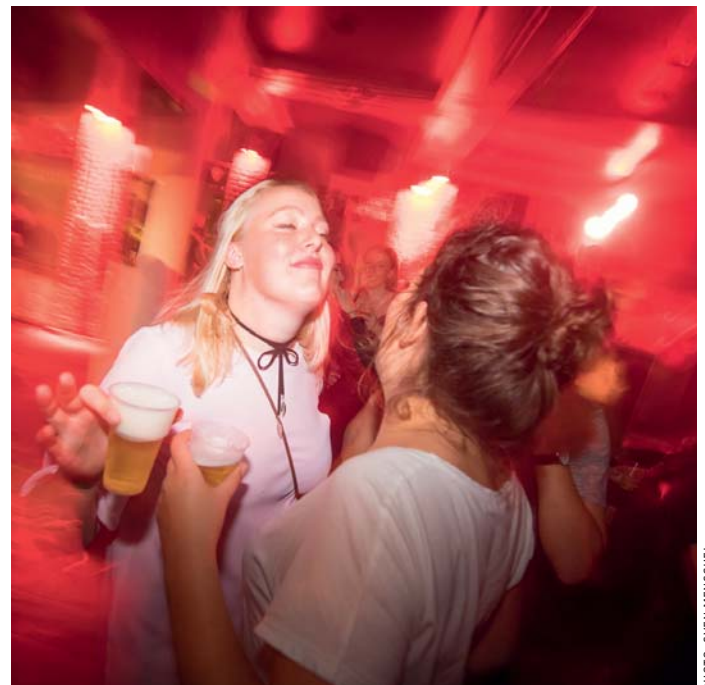


PHOTO: SVEN MENSCHER

There was a great atmosphere at the open party at KSV Franciscus on Thursday 21 September.

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

Even refugees want to chill out

'It was an unforgettable experience. When my internship at the UNHCR came to an end I was offered a job, for which I stayed another couple of months in Za'atari. Now I'm back in the Netherlands. The Association of Dutch Municipalities International and the City of Amsterdam wanted to do something about creating public space in this refugee camp. I took that upon myself and worked with the UNHCR and the City of Amsterdam to develop the idea into the Emerging Public Spaces project.

With its 80,000 residents, Za'atari is the biggest UN refugee camp for Syrians in Jordan. It was established five years ago and is now home for its residents. At first they lived in tents, now they live in containers. People plant little front gardens, a water supply system is under construction and about 1000 little businesses and shops are up and running. This is not a place where people just sit and wait for aid; they build up a new life in the temporary permanence of the camp.

SPACE TO CHILL OUT

The refugees themselves said they would like to have some outdoor meeting places, where children can play and they can "chill out". Up to now there were only enclosed community centres which could be used under the watchful eye of security guards. It became clear at community meetings that there was a real

need for improved public space, and it was my job to make that happen.

We came up with the main criteria together with the refugees: the meeting places should be created by them and for them, without fences or guards. The refugees should own these spaces themselves. I helped during the building phase, took care of the day-to-day management, maintained contacts with neighbourhood residents and solved conflicts between volunteers. I worked 14-hour days.

BACK AGAIN

And I'm not done yet. At the moment I'm back in Wageningen to finish my thesis, but I leave for Za'atari soon to check how things are going. All the time I was there I did nothing but work hard, and I never had time to have a cup of tea with the guys I was working with, even though that is a crucial way of keeping the project well-oiled. Luckily I get to go back soon. I am very grateful for this project. The way I was able to develop things on the ground together with the refugees made it unforgettable.'  LH

THE WORKS



Who? Hedzer Roodenburg Vermaat
What? Internship at UNHCR (The UN High Commission for Refugees) and work for VNG International and the City of Amsterdam
Where? Za'atari Refugee Camp, Jordan

See too
 Hedzer's vlog
 on resource-online.nl



in memoriam**Prof. Aede de Groot**

Former Wageningen professor of Bio-organic Chemistry Aede de Groot passed away on 11 September. Professor

de Groot was born in Jorwerd in 1939 and studied chemistry at the University of Groningen, going on to do his PhD there with Professor Wijnberg as his supervisor. After a brief period with the State Mines and at the technical college in Eindhoven, in 1972 he was appointed lector at the laboratory for Organic Chemistry at what was then Wageningen Agricultural College of Higher Education. His job involved teaching and doing research on bio-organic chemistry. Both as a person and as a professor, Aede de Groot was agreeable and straightforward in his dealings with others. Professor De Groot realized the im-

portance of bio-organic chemistry for research at an agricultural university. So he devoted himself to designing efficient synthesis routes for complex plant compounds so that both the natural compounds and their analogues could be tested for biological activity. He was particularly interested in compounds that keep destructive pests at bay. That later included the identification and synthesis of insect pheromones and the clarification of bio-synthetic routes. The latter also played a central role in his lectures on 'Nature Products' and 'The Biosynthesis of Secondary Metabolites', in which he explained the importance of the inherent structure and reactivity of the substrate, including in enzymatic reactions. Aede de Groot was an enthusiastic teacher and taught the first-year Organic Chemistry lectures for several degree programmes in the main lecture theatre in the mathematics building. His research generated 35 PhDs and more than 200 academic publications.

We offer our condolences to Professor De Groot's wife Svetlana, his children and all his loved ones, and wish them the strength to bear their heavy loss.

On behalf of the Organic Chemistry chair group: Maurice Franssen, Teris van Beek and Elly Geurtsen

Jorg Jacobs

We have received the sad news that Jorg Jacobs passed away on Thursday 7 September. He was 50 years old. Jorg was a researcher in the Infection Biology department of Wageningen Bioveterinary Research (WBVR). He had been employed by WBVR and its predecessors since 1990.

Jorg joined DLO almost immediately after completing his applied university degree in Chemistry, and he spent nearly 27 years working for our organization at various locations. He fo-

cused on biochemical analysis methods, applying this expertise in various areas of research. In addition to his work as an applied researcher, Jorg also contributed to the organization in other ways, including as a member of various employee representative bodies. Jorg was also an emergency response team member for nearly 20 years and a first aid official for even longer.

We will remember Jorg as a committed employee who delivered excellent, accurate work. Jorg was very dedicated, good at his job and was always very well prepared. We will miss him.

Ludo Hellebrekers, on behalf of the WBVR directors

announcements**Alpha course to start**

The four Christian societies — CSFR, Ichthus, NSW and VGSW — are joining with the ICF (International Christian Fellowship) to organize the only genuine student Alpha course in Wa-

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geningen. There will be a Dutch group and an international group for this Alpha course. In the course, you join others in searching for the meaning of life. You discover what Christian beliefs involve in nine interactive and sociable meetings. The course starts on Monday evening, 9 October. For more information, send an email to alphawageningen@gmail.com.

NAVIGATORSWAGENINGEN.NL/ALPHA

Wanted: volunteers to keep party platform WageningenUP going
WageningenUP has been the biggest online platform for student and general parties in Wageningen for nearly 10 years now. With its own website and a column in *Resource* (see p.28), the platform keeps students and other Wageningen residents informed about what is going on in the town. To keep the platform going, we urgently need students who are willing to help maintain the website. Your working hours are flexible and there is the possibility of some remuneration (to be agreed). It will also let

you quickly build up a wide network in Wageningen. Do you like the idea of contributing to our active platform that gets used by thousands of students and Wageningen residents? Then send an email to wageningenup@gmail.com.

agenda

Thursday 28 October to Friday 13 October

FILMS FOR STUDENTS

Taxi Driver: a classic film with a mentally unbalanced Robert de Niro in New York. *Wakefield*: a man in a midlife crisis spies on his family. *Una*: a subtle drama about a prohibited love. *Just Like Our Parents*: moving Brazilian family portrait, a quest for certainty. *Une Vie*: low-key but rich character sketch of the claustrophobic life of a young baroness. *Una Mujer Fantastica*: flamboyant drama about a transgender singer in Chile, an ode to resilience and the lust for life. Venue: Wilhelminaweg 3A, Wageningen.

MOVIE-W.NL

Thursday 5 and Friday 6 October FILM AND ART FESTIVAL ABOUT SYNTHETIC BIOLOGY

Imagine a world in which biological systems are produced not by the trial-and-error methods of evolution but on the basis of designs created by people at the drawing board or on the computer. Can the design of biological systems help the world, for example with the development of intestinal flora for people with a digestive disorder or with a new food crop able to resist all diseases and pests? Or should we actually be concerned about this use of modern biotechnology? The festival is part of the SynCity Days, the name for a number of activities in October centred on synthetic biology. As a prologue, the film *Code 46* will be shown in Movie W on Sunday 1 October. Two Wageningen Dialogues (organized by Studium Generale) will be held on 12 and 18 October to discuss the results of the festival. Venue: Orion.

WUR.NL/SYNCITY

Thursday 5 October, 20.15 THEATRICAL LECTURE 'THE GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS' (IN DUTCH) FOLLOWED BY A Q&A FOR WUR STUDENTS

Comedian Hans Sibbel and journalist Jeroen Smit want to let the economy work for them. In this 'theatrical Economics lesson', the two will explain why people should not be duped by banks, governments, multinationals or market mechanisms. 'Take a look in the mirror: we are the market, we are the banks, the governmental authorities and the rest of that shit. There is no time to lose. We have to make a change ourselves. Using your mobile phones as ballot box, we'll show you how we get conned and what we can do about this!' Afterwards there will be a special Q&A with the creators for WUR students. Student can buy last-minute tickets (half an hour before the start) for 10 euros. Venue: Junushoff Theatre, Wageningen.

JUNUSHOFF.NL

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

colophon

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>>TYPICAL DUTCH



ILLUSTRATION: HENK VAN RUITENBEEK

Mice in the kitchen!

I was about a month into my internship in a Dutch company. All the staff were Dutch so if they sent a collective email, it was almost always in Dutch. One day someone sent one in English, which was nice for me because I didn't have to translate it online to understand it. However, the subject confused me: 'Mice in the kitchen at 15.00.'

What a weird email subject. Why would someone put mice in the kitchen? Or, reading it another way, how could anyone predict there would be mice in the kitchen at exactly 3 o'clock that afternoon? When I read the email, I got even more confusing information: the mice were there to celebrate a newborn baby boy. What?!

Since I couldn't find any logical explanation for this, and also since I didn't want to meet the mice when I passed the kitchen, I asked around about the meaning of the email and then at last it became clear. It turned out that what they meant by 'mice' is a typical Dutch food, and nothing to do with small rodents. They told me that mice are blue or pink sprinkles traditionally eaten on rusks to celebrate a newborn. The colour depends on the baby's gender.

It seems that Dutch appreciate birthdays even more than I had realized. That they bring a cake to the office on their birthdays is not so unusual, but other Dutch birthday-related traditions are not found anywhere else: putting a birthday calendar in the toilet, wearing orange clothes and accessories on Koningsdag (King's Day) and, of course, mice for newborns **Dea Putri Utami, MSc student of Food Technology, from Indonesia**

The Dutch have birthday traditions you don't find anywhere else, like 'mice' for newborns

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.