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# RESOURCE [EN]

For everyone at Wageningen University & Research

no 10 – 17 January 2019 – 13th Volume



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**INTERNATIONAL  
EDITION**




# Ellen + Faema E98 President

Ellen Roelfsema, Sodexo bar worker in Impulse



## COFFEE WITH A RELAXING CHAT

She brews dozens of cups a day of black coffee, cappuccinos, lattes and espressos. With the Faema E98 President, the snazzy Italian-designed espresso machine behind the bar in Impulse. This is perhaps the best coffee on campus. Roelfsema takes pleasure in making the coffee. If she has time, you even get a relaxing chat thrown in to help relieve your work stress. 'This is such a great job. No two days are the same.'  RK, photo Sven Menschel

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## NEW NAME

Rikilt will become Wageningen Food Safety Research



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## ARE YOU 'CIRCULAR'?

Take the test and find out

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## FORGOT YOUR MUG? NO COFFEE

Curious to see how 'circular' you are? Then do the test on page 24 designed by WUR researcher Evelien de Olde. It's quite an eye-opener. Personally, I discovered I was already fairly 'circular' but there is still room for improvement. For example, if my bike light stops working I buy those little LED lights. That cost me 1 point; the truly circular option would be to cycle without a light (+2 points). I'm also proud that I bring my own mug to work for coffee but that turned out only to earn me 1 point. Drinking no coffee at all is even more circular (+2 points). Incidentally, I'd love to know how many disposable cups we get through on campus. Thousands a day, or even tens of thousands? That won't do for a sustainable university. Time for a new policy: if you forgot your mug, then no coffee. Tough, fair and a little bit more circular.

As the researcher who created the test says, the desire to encourage the most circular solutions does result in some 'strange advice'. The trick is to take circularity into account without making it the only factor. So yes to bike lights, but no to coffee without a mug.

*Luuk Zegers, student and education editor*



>> [Lab life boring? Not for Wilhelmini ! | p.16](#)



## WUR IS LOOKING FOR 800 NEW STAFF

**Wageningen University & Research faces the challenge in 2019 of recruiting a record number of 800 new employees to fill 600 FTEs. Rector magnificus Arthur Mol made this announcement on 7 January at the New Year's reception in Atlas. The new strategic plan was presented then too.**

After years of cutbacks at Wageningen Research and limited growth in funding at the universi-

ty that meant curbs on expenditure, WUR will be getting more cash from the ministries of Agriculture and Education over the next few years. As a result, WUR will be able to create 250 new full-time jobs to cope with the growth in student numbers and fill the new programmes at Wageningen Research. WUR is also looking for people to replace staff who are leaving or retiring (a total of 350 FTEs). Normally WUR recruits around 400 new hires annually to

fill over 300 full-time positions.

WUR will be setting up a special team to help fill all those vacancies. 'We will be putting three recruiters to work,' says Johan Kanis, recruitment manager at Corporate Human Resources. 'They will help us come up with an approach that puts us on the radar of more candidates. They will also headhunt candidates for jobs at WUR'.

Furthermore, the recruiters will take a critical look at the job ad

texts and the recruitment strategy.

The organization started this year with targeted recruitment campaigns. Last week, WUR ran an advert with 'breakfast in 2030', focusing on nutrition and with a link to vacancies in the field of nutrition. More campaigns will follow in the months to come, with links to the latest job vacancies. **AS**

*See the interview on pages 12-15 for more on the new strategic plan.*

## MERGED RIKILT AND NVWA LAB GET NEW NAME

**On 1 June, WUR research institute Rikilt will merge with the food and feed safety lab run by the Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA). The merged institute will get a new name: Wageningen Food Safety Research.**

The merger between the research labs, which was signed on 14 January on Wageningen campus, did not come as a surprise. Both labs are already housed in the same building on campus, and talks have been ongoing about the merger for several years. The merger means that 130 staff at the NVWA lab will become employees of Wageningen Research. Together with the 220 plus staff at Rikilt, they will form a new institute. That institute will be responsible for almost all statutory research tasks for the Dutch government relating to food safety, for example in the event of food fraud incidents like the fipronil affair.

Rikilt already focuses on statutory research tasks but it also performs tests for the food industry. The merger means Rikilt will have to stop these contracts, says Rikilt director Robert van Gorcom. 'But there weren't that

many anyway.' On the other hand, the new institute will be able to carry out EU projects and other grant-funded projects with international science institutes and nutritional companies.

A key advantage of the merger is that it creates an institute that

is one of the top players internationally and has sufficient critical mass, stressed NVWA Inspector-General Rob van Lint and President of the WUR Executive Board Louise Fresco after signing the document. The NVWA lab largely concentrated on regu-

lar laboratory tests to check products for food safety while Rikilt focused more on the development of expertise and new analysis methods. Fresco thinks embedding the institute in WUR will create more room for innovation. **AS**



▲ After the merger was officially sealed, cakes were handed round bearing the new name: Wageningen Food Safety Research (WFSR).

PHOTO: BART DE GOUW



## NWO GRANT FOR WAGENINGEN STARTUP

**Wageningen startup Greencovery and the chair group Biobased Chemistry and Technology have received a Take-Off grant from the Dutch science funding organization NWO for research on ways of extracting raw materials from waste streams.**

The grant of 40,000 euros will let entrepreneur Carlos Cabrera carry out a feasibility study for a combination of techniques for filtering useful amino acids out of

waste streams. Cabrera wants to combine the Greencovery technique developed in Delft with a technique developed by the Wageningen group where he works as a postdoc. 'The advantage of this combined technology is that we can extract amino acids from complex mixtures in two steps at low costs,' thinks Cabrera. The company wants to use the filtered amino acids to produce nutritional supplements and chemicals.

Cabrera comes from Panama, did his Master's at Wageningen, got a PhD from Delft and is now a postdoc at Wageningen. His company Greencovery is based in Plus Ultra on campus and is supported by StartLife. It gave him a loan last year to set up his company. The startup is now in the second phase of StartLife's Incubation programme, through which it gets advice about its business plan and expanding the company. **AS**

**C**OLUMN|VINCENT

### Why there are no eggs

In the previous *Resource*, my fellow columnist Guido Camps highlighted WUR's successful publicity for the announcement of its new Dutch banana. Since then, I have been seeing communication strategies everywhere I look and I have learnt to appreciate the good ones. I now realize an effective communication strategy adds something. Even if it is only about empty supermarket shelves.

Lidl has been selling Kipster eggs for nearly six months now. You may know them: white eggs in a blue container from a Limburg farm that claims to be the most 'animal-, human- and environmentally friendly in the world'. The Kipster concept was inspired by Wageningen research and it is often seen as a shining example of circular agriculture.

Anyway, the eggs were gone last week. Fortunately there was a sign. The first batch of laying hens had been replaced by a second batch. The Kipster eggs would be back once the hens started laying. That's reassuring of course, but my point is that little bit of explanation. The brief bonus exposition on the production cycle of a laying hen. There must have been people standing in front of that shelf and wondering — perhaps for the first time — how it all works.

They would not have to search far for the answer, as Kipster has explained in great detail on social media how they capture, transport and slaughter their chickens. That degree of transparency may not be new or unique but it deserves mention. Guido is right that good communication about science is priceless. So is telling the whole story behind an everyday product, in my opinion. **R**

### in brief

#### >> NATURE DOCUMENTARY Gets Golden Film award

Nature documentary *Wad* by director Ruben Smit won the Golden Film award in December. The prize, which is awarded for 100,000 paying viewers, was initiated in 2001 by the Netherlands Film Festival (NFF) and the Film Fund. NFF programmer Claire van Daal said it was only the fourth time that a documentary had received this award. Director Smit, whose company is based on campus, garnered this distinction before for *The New Wilderness*. That film even went on to get platinum (400,000 viewers). **RK**

#### >> POWER CUT Campus out for 1.5 hours

A power cut brought the central part of the campus to a standstill between 9:00 and 10:35 on Wednesday. The electricity failure affected the buildings of Atlas, Orion, Forum, Helix, Gaia, Lumen and Radix. People were stuck in lifts, there were no lights or heating, and servers were inaccessible. Students and staff swarmed outside. The buildings to the south of the bus lane – FrieslandCampina, Plus Ultra and Campus Plaza – were unaffected by the power failure, as was De Leeuwenborch. A long queue formed for the coffee machines in the AH To Go supermarket. The reason for the power cut was still unknown when *Resource* went to press. **AvE**



▲ Ruben Smit on the Wadden Sea.

PHOTO: RUBEN SMIT PRODUCTION

#### >> ONEPLANET Decision postponed

The decision on whether Gelderland should contribute 65 million euros to the OnePlanet initiative has been postponed for one month. It became clear in the committee meeting on 15 January that the Provincial Council still has a lot of questions about the plans of WUR, the Belgian research institute Imec, and Radboud university and medical centre. OnePlanet wants to study the application of nanoelectronics and digital technology in the agro-industry, food and health sectors. The aim now of the Gelderland provincial executive is to get answers to the questions quickly so that a decision can be taken before the provincial elections in March. **AvE**

Vincent Oostvogels (22) is exploring the delicate interface between nature management and food production through his two Master's programmes, Forest and Nature Conservation and Animal Sciences





## Half of Nuffic course grants go to Wageningen

In December, Nuffic gave grants to over 800 students from developing countries to do a short course in the Netherlands. No fewer than 417 of these students will be attending WUR courses.

Three times a year, Nuffic hands out fellowship grants to international students who want to do a course of two to three weeks in the Netherlands. A majority come to the Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (WCDI), which has been providing short courses on agriculture, nutrition, nature and the environment ever since 1951.

The high proportion coming to Wageningen is not unusual, says Marianne van Dorp of WCDI. Around half the Nuffic grants have been for Wageningen courses in recent years.

Over 400 students will be coming to Wageningen in the next six months for 15 different courses. The course Governance and Food Safety in International Food Chains is particularly popular, with 40 participants on a Nuffic grant, says Van Dorp. Three quarters of the courses are held in Wageningen itself but WCDI also organizes courses in other countries. **AS**

## RUN ON WUR SCHOLARSHIPS



▲ International students at AID 2016.

**At the end of 2018, WUR put all the information on scholarships for international Master's students in one place online. Applications have been pouring in ever since, mainly from African students.**

WUR has a variety of scholarships for foreign students unable to pay for a Master's themselves. The international students have to apply personally for some scholarships, such as the Holland Scholarship and the Africa Scholarship Programme. Others are awarded by the university to Master's students who have already been admitted. They include the Excellence Programme and scholarships co-financed by the Anne van den Ban Scholarship Fund and Nuffic's Orange Knowledge Programme. There are also country-specific scholarships, for example for students from Colombia, Ecuador, Indonesia and Ukraine. WUR has now created a handy overview of all the different scholarships on its website.

It is doing this so as to be able to award more scholarships to foreign students. All WUR's scholarships combined total around two million euros a year, but that money was often not used up, says Dean of Education Arnold Bregt. WUR now wants all those scholarships to be paid out, says Bregt, in order to increase the diversity of the 'international classroom'. The proportion of students from Africa and Latin America is declining in many degree programmes. The board wants to increase their numbers by drawing attention to the scholarships. But there are also scholarships aimed at attracting outstanding students.

Eric de Munck of Education & Student Affairs has seen the effect the improved website has had. He can allocate several dozen scholarships to international students every year. He had been counting on 100 applications but now expects 300. 'In the past few days, we have been getting 25 new applications a day.' The deadline for WUR scholarship requests is 1 February. **AS**



## MR BEAM

If you have a meeting coming up but you are stuck in Kuala Lumpur or at home with a broken leg, Mr Beam could be the solution. This telepresence robot, which has recently appeared in the Actio lobby area, can be reserved at the reception desk. You download the associated software and dial in from your location. You can already use a video conference or Skype for this, but Mr Beam lets you ride along and look around as if you were actually sitting at the table. The robot is currently only available in Actio. If the pilot is successful, Facilities & Services may introduce it elsewhere too. **TL**



# INSURANCE COVERS WUR LIFESTYLE MEASURE

**As of 1 January 2019, the basic health insurance covers the combined lifestyle intervention Slimmer. This measure for overweight people was partly developed by WUR researchers.**

'This year is the first time that a lifestyle intervention for a high-risk group has been included in the basic health insurance package,' says Annemien Haveman-Nies, associate professor in Strategic Communication. 'In the past, these people fell between the cracks. Now we will be able to intervene in good time before they become seriously ill.' Haveman-Nies collaborated closely with the North and East Gelderland municipal health service for several years to develop Slimmer.

The programme is intended for people who are overweight and at risk of diseases of affluence such as type 2 diabetes. They must be referred by their GP. Participants in the Slimmer programme receive mentoring for up to two years from various professionals such as dietitians, lifestyle coaches and physiotherapists, who help them improve their lifestyle, for example by eating more healthily, relaxing more and



▲ Participants in lifestyle programme Slimmer get help from dietitians, lifestyle coaches and physiotherapists for two years.

exercising more. This reduces the risk of disease and improves the quality of life.

Haveman-Nies sees the inclusion of the programme in the basic insurance package as further recognition of its positive results. 'Our study shows that not only do people

lose weight and become healthier, they are also able to stick to that healthier lifestyle.'

The programme is now being offered nationwide, and increasing numbers of care providers will start implementing it over the coming months. 'We will be starting

throughout the Achterhoek region this spring, for instance. We hope it will be a success and reduce overweight,' says Haveman-Nies. That is highly necessary, she says, as about 3.5 million people in the Netherlands currently qualify for this intervention. **TL**

# RING ROAD ALTERNATIVE BACK ON TABLE

**There is hope again for the opponents of a ring road round campus: the provincial authority will also consider the environmental impact of a solution using the existing roads.**

This surprising turnaround comes after the latest traffic counts were incorporated in the most recent traffic model. This shows traffic increasing up to 2030, but at a slower rate than predicted by the previous traffic model. That means the option of tackling the traffic jams to and from campus using the existing

roads is back on the table alongside the option of a new ring road.

The alternative to the ring road is to widen Nijenoord Allee, without using any expensive tunnels or viaducts. So the crossroads will be at the same level. Incidentally, it is still unclear whether this solution would be enough to deal with the traffic jams. The province says 'it cannot be ruled out in advance' that this would be enough to resolve the accessibility problem.

The Wageningen councillor responsible for transport Peter

de Haan (Christian Union party) is more optimistic. In a memo to the council, he writes that the alternative 'should be possible in terms of traffic flows'. At any rate, the provincial executive sees sufficient reason to assess the environmental impact of both routes. A choice will then be made in the spring for a route that will be worked out in more detail.

De Haan is pleased the province will be including an alternative to the campus ring road in its environmental impact assessment. 'That will allow a fair comparison of two alternatives. But I

am still concerned about how easy it will be for cyclists to cross Nijenoord Allee. That's an important issue for the municipality.'

The crossings at Hoeverstein and Bornsesteeg are particularly problematic. Thousands of cyclists a day cross at these points. Previous plans had included overpasses for this, but they will not be built because of the cost. The question of whether students will still be able to cross quickly and safely on their way to and from campus without tunnels or overpasses still has to be answered. **RK**



# ‘AMERICAN BREAKTHROUGH GOOD FOR PHOTOSYNTHESIS RESEARCH’

**American researchers have increased yields from tobacco plants by 40 per cent by improving photosynthesis. That is a huge boost for plant science, says project developer René Klein Lankhorst of the Plant Sciences Group. He now hopes the EU will step up its investment in photosynthesis research.**

According to a publication in *Science*, researchers from the University of Illinois have repaired a glitch in the photosynthesis of plants. Plants produce an enzyme called Rubisco that helps convert CO<sub>2</sub> from the air into sugars for the plant. Except that 20 per cent of the time the enzyme takes oxygen from the air by mistake instead of CO<sub>2</sub>. That leads to toxic compounds that the plant then has to get rid of, leaving it with less energy for growth. The Americans disabled the gene that is normally responsible for disposing of the toxic compound in the tobacco plant and added alternative breakdown genes from an alga and a pumpkin. The resulting genetically modified tobacco plant produced 40 per cent more biomass.

## 75 PER CENT MORE

‘That is an incredibly significant result,’ says Klein Lankhorst, who coordinated the large photosynthesis programme BioSolar Cells for WUR. ‘We have been saying for years that photosynthesis could be improved substantially. The American researchers have now shown what is possible.’ It is not the first breakthrough in the field of photosynthesis. Other researchers had already managed to improve photosynthesis by 15 to 20 per cent using different techniques. Klein Lankhorst: ‘Different processes were involved each time but if you could apply them in combination, you might potentially get plants that produce 75 per cent more biomass.’



▲ Researchers at the University of Illinois have repaired a glitch in the photosynthesis of tobacco plants.

That does not necessarily mean you will have better food production though, explains Klein Lankhorst. ‘You don’t want metre-high potato plants; you want plants with bigger tubers. The question is how you can turn the increase in photosynthesis into greater specific yields.’

## CRISPR-CAS

Another issue is that the Americans created a genetically modified organism (GMO). ‘In Wageningen, we are looking for the natural variation in plants, for example genes in desert plants that have an exceptionally high capacity for photosynthesis. Then you don’t need transgenes. Although I do think we will need CRISPR-Cas to improve the photosynthesis with species-specific genes, otherwise the breeding process will take much too long.’

Klein Lankhorst has been lobbying the European Commission in Brussels for years for a big research programme aimed at improving food production by increasing the yield per plant. ‘We

are facing the challenge of producing more food for a growing world population while at the same time achieving climate targets and using water and minerals more efficiently. You need better photosynthesis for that.’

## PUBLIC OPINION

Klein Lankhorst is currently coordinating the European project CropBooster-P, which is assessing how we can achieve this increase in yields over the next 10 years. In addition to technical research, we also need society’s opinion, says Klein Lankhorst. That is why social scientists will be presenting the CropBooster-P scenarios to panels of consumer organizations, farmers and industry players over the next few years. Consumer scientists will also be engaging in a dialogue with a citizens’ jury. ‘The idea is that you grab people off the street, ask them to spend two days in a hotel, give them information about the scenarios and let them come up with a shared opinion.’ Klein Lankhorst hopes that will result in an unambiguous proposal

that the researchers can submit to the European Commission. The EU will then have to decide whether it wants to invest in food crops with improved photosynthesis.

The EU has invested three million euros in CropBooster-P, a project in which WUR is collaborating with such leading research organizations as INRA in France, VIB in Belgium, the University of Nottingham in the UK and the European organization EPSO. **AS**



▲ René Klein Lankhorst

# DETECTING MUSSEL TOXINS WITHOUT LAB ANIMALS

**Biotoxins in oysters and mussels can make you very sick, which is why the shellfish get thoroughly tested before they go on the market. Some countries still use mice for this. PhD student Marcia Bodero developed an alternative method for detecting both known and unknown biotoxins that does not use lab animals.**

Shellfish such as oysters and mussels may contain toxins that can cause diarrhoea, and in severe cases paralysis or even death. 'That's why every batch has to be tested before it can be released for sale,' explains Bodero. She received her doctorate on Friday 11 January; her supervisor was Ivonne Rietjens, professor of Toxicology.

Before Bodero started her PhD, she worked for the Chilean food safety authority. 'In Chile and many other countries, mice and rats are used for these toxin tests.' Europe already has an alternative, the LC-MS/MS test, which was developed in Wageningen by PhD candidate Arjen Gerssen. It is used to detect lipophilic marine biotoxins. But the downside to this test is that it can only detect known toxins.

Bodero and her colleagues made im-

provements to another test, the neuro-2a bioassay, which can be used in combination with the LC-MS/MS test to detect unknown toxins as well. The neuro-2a bioassay uses cells that are cultured in the lab. Bodero: 'Instead of killing mice, the toxins just kill the cells. That way we know there is a toxin present. After that initial screening we can perform further tests to find out what kind of toxin it is.'

There are still a few limitations to the neuro-2a bioassay. For example, it is not yet sensitive enough to detect the legally permissible amounts of what are known as OA and DTX-2 toxins. Researchers at Rikilt are currently working to improve this.

Bodero hopes that the new combined method will be implemented in the near future. 'Over the next few years, this method will need to be used alongside the tests with lab animals to check the results are comparable'. She finds it difficult to say how many lab animals would be spared if the new test turned out to work. 'I tried to get hold of the data, but governments are reluctant to share this information. In the Netherlands, at any rate, using lab animals for these tests is prohibited.' **TL**



## VISION

### 'Fishing in protected areas not necessarily harmful'



**In December, a headline in Dutch newspaper *Trouw* claimed 'North Sea fishermen often drag their nets through protected areas'. That's right, says Niels Hintzen of Wageningen Marine Research, who is involved in the study the paper refers to. But we must not be too hasty with our conclusions.**

#### *What did you investigate?*

'We identified nine types of habitat in the North Sea, each with its own features such as depth, temperature and sediment. We then looked at how fisheries use these areas. We have known for a while that fishers have preferred areas — hotspots — where they are best able to catch their specific species. We wanted to know what makes these areas attractive for the species and if life on the seabed is specific to that area.'

#### *Some of the hotspots are within Natura 2000, the European network of protected nature areas. Cause for concern?*

'The habitats that fisheries use most intensively are relatively rare. That is to say, these habitats do not cover a large surface area. But this does not mean the species living there are rare. What is more, these areas may be fished more intensively but most fishing still takes place elsewhere. And "protected area" does not mean fishing is prohibited in these areas.'

#### *What can you do with these results?*

'At present, we usually just look at one target species at a time in fishery management. But there has been increasing interest in recent years in life on the seabed and biodiversity. The North Sea is a varied sea environment, not just one big pond. Now that we have mapped it, we can look more precisely at what makes such a habitat special for the fish and whether that's a good indicator for the seabed life, for example. It is interesting to see how many species a specific habitat accommodates, what species it has or could have, and whether you can influence this with fishery management. Linking habitat types to the spread of fishing activity lets us say something about the entire North Sea without having to monitor every square kilometre.' **TL**



# LITTLE RISK SO FAR FROM MICROPLASTIC

**At present, small plastic particles in the environment barely present any risk to humans and animals. But there will be problems if we don't take action, concludes a group of European experts who looked at all the existing scientific research on the danger from microplastics and nanoplastics.**

The experts, headed by WUR professor Bart Koelmans (Aquatic Ecology and Water Quality Management) conducted a meta-study for the European Union. It will serve as the basis for any measures that Europe takes to curb plastic pollution.

'In some coastal zones, concentrations of microplastics and nanoplastics have been measured that could be harmful to some sensitive species. These are marine systems close to densely populated areas,' explains Koelmans. There are no measurement data for many other areas, and much is still unknown about the risks from plastic particles, agrees Koelmans.

That is why Koelmans is not prepared to call the study's conclusions reassuring. 'It would be reassuring if you could say that it is not that



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

▲ If nothing changes, microplastics and nanoplastics will become a big problem in the future, says a team of European experts.

bad now and there won't be any problems in the future either. It is not so bad yet but if we carry on like this, it is plausible that microplastics and nanoplastics will become a big problem.'

The scientists are therefore advocating intensive monitoring of developments. According to Koelmans, the methods for measuring plastic particles and assessing risks are still in their infancy.

'We know what to do for tradition pollution but not yet what to do for plastics.'

Koelmans also points out that the general public does see plastic pollution as a problem. 'It might not yet be a problem from a scientific perspective, but the general public finds microplastics and nanoplastics in the environment worrying and alarming. That is partly because it is an invisible problem.'

A transition to a sustainable relationship with plastic is needed to prevent the risks from getting out of hand. Koelmans: 'That means, for example, banning or phasing out certain plastics that easily form microplastics. We also need to close the waste cycle for plastics.' The third focal area in the approach is awareness, says Koelmans. 'So that people make different choices.' **✪ RK**

## CHINESE CABBAGE THESIS WINS COVER PRIZE

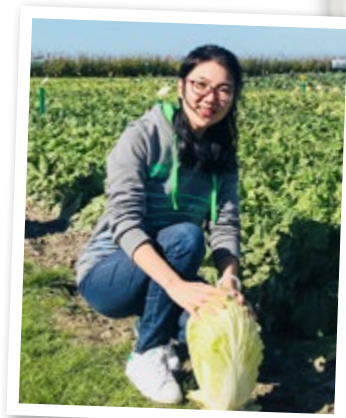
**Chinese PhD candidate Xiaoxue Sun has won the tenth Resource Cover Prize by a mile. The cover of her thesis on the Chinese cabbage garnered almost a third of all votes.**

The online poll started just before Christmas. Sun took the lead almost immediately and stayed in front to the end. There was no doubt about the result, as she received 984 of the 3396 votes cast (29 per cent). Only Bodille Arensman (Negotiating effectiveness, 18 per cent) and Dadan Wardhana (Agro-clusters for rural development, 16 per cent) came close.

Xiaoxue is delighted with her win. She designed the cover with her cousin. 'We tried to keep it simple while still showing all aspects of the research, which is about how the development of the Chinese cabbage head. I think the result is a nice combination of my research and Chinese culture. The Chinese characters

on the cover show my name with a seal below.'

Sun, who is 30, was born in the northern coastal province of Liaoning. After obtaining her Bachelor's degree at the Academy of Agricultural Sciences at Northwest A&F University, she came to Wageningen in 2011 for a Master's in Plant Breeding. She stayed on in 2014 to start a PhD supervised by associate professor Guusje Bonnema and professor of Plant Breeding Richard Visser. Sun obtained her doctorate in November and is currently still working in the chair group. **✪ RK**



◀ Xiaoxue Sun: 'I think the cover is a nice combination of my research and Chinese culture'.

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**RESOURCE**  
For everyone at Wageningen University & Research



## PROPOSITION

### The power of the unknown

**Jorge Ricardo Cunha deliberately chose to do his PhD abroad rather than in Portugal. 'I'm a curious person. I can't really relax until I leave my comfort zone and experience the unknown.'**

'I had a great social life, friends and family in Portugal. But I was also very curious about experiencing something else: a new country and a new life abroad. So I went for it and chose to do my PhD in the Netherlands. This meant I went to a country where I didn't know the culture or the language. In the beginning this was quite stressful and I needed to adapt to these cultural differences. For example, Dutch people are very direct. Only two months after my arrival I received an email from my supervisor about the report I had written and I was a bit shocked by the way it basically said that my report wasn't very good. Now I understand that Dutch people just



Jorge Ricardo Cunha received his PhD on 30 November for his research on recovering phosphorous from wastewater.

say what they think and I'm quite comfortable with it. I actually changed and became a bit more like this myself.

By now I've been in the Netherlands for five years, and this has become my new comfort zone. That experience made me relaxed, because I know I can leave my comfort zone and it will be all right. I know what to do if I decide to pack my bags and leave for another country a second time. For now I'm staying on in Leeuwarden as a postdoc at Wetsus, but at some point I know that my comfort zone will start to feel uncomfortable and that I might want something else. But I'll see what comes on my path.

I realize that not everyone might feel this way. For example my parents didn't understand in the beginning why I wanted to leave. But after hearing my experience, they started to come round. I needed to be quite persuasive, but they are actually coming to visit me for the first time to see my PhD defence. It's a big deal because they don't really travel much. So they are leaving their comfort zone too.' **TL**





Mol and Buchwaldt explain the new strategic plan

# ‘We need to forge more links’

WUR will reserve funds for new staff and investigate the options for curbing growth in student numbers. The board will also take measures to further encourage internal and external collaboration, according to the 2019-2022 strategic plan *Finding Answers Together*. Executive Board members Rens Buchwaldt and Arthur Mol explain their choices.

text Albert Sikkema and Anton van Elburg photos Aldo Allesie

**T**he Executive Board presented the new strategy at the New Year’s reception on 7 January in Atlas. A couple of days later, *Resource* spoke to Rens Buchwaldt, the board member responsible for finance and HR, and rector magnificus Arthur Mol.

#### **What are the key strategic changes in this new plan?**

Mol: ‘We are putting even more emphasis on the impact our work makes than in the previous strategic plan.

We want to make a difference in the world. But we can’t do that alone, so we need strategic collaboration.’

Buchwaldt: ‘The plan’s title is *Finding Answers Together*.

We need to be more proactive in collaborating with one another and we need to partner more with other organizations because we don’t have all the expertise in house.’

## ‘We see that innovation is mainly at the intersection of fields of knowledge’

#### **The wider world is evolving?**

Mol: ‘That’s right. We do very well in our domain, but we see that innovation is mainly taking place at the intersection of fields of knowledge. If we want to remain at the top, we need to start strategic partnerships with other universities and science institutes.’

#### **Can you give some examples?**

Mol: ‘We want to collaborate more within 4TU with the technical universities on hi-tech, we want to work with Eindhoven on robotics and data sciences, and with Utrecht on biological systems and sustainability. We also have a new investment theme, Digital Twins, where we plan to build digital twins of cells, plants, animals and ecosystems. We won’t be doing that by setting up some big Digital Sciences group of our own; instead, we will look to link up with other universities that are strong in data sciences and sensors, such as Eindhoven University.’

Buchwaldt: ‘That requires a change of approach internally. We need to form more teams with members from different science groups. We should be more flexible in how we deploy staff and develop more internal links.’

#### **You ask for more internal collaboration and yet you are keeping the five science groups.**

Mol: ‘Abolishing the science groups would be going too far. WUR has identified three investment themes for the next four years, for which we will be reserving four million euros a year.’ Buchwaldt: ‘And Wageningen Research has five programmes, which partly overlap with the investment themes. The ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality will be investing 30 million a year in them.’ Mol: ‘These are all multidisciplinary research topics that we will be organizing across science groups. We will be bringing people together from different departments, with the science groups forming the basis. We are doing this with the aim of forging more links, including with clients.’



Rector magnificus Arthur Mol and Rens Buchwaldt, the Executive Board member responsible for finance and HR.



**Do you have some examples of this?**

Mol: 'The Robotics team is a good example. There used to be two teams, one in the Plant Sciences Group and one in the Agrotechnology & Food Sciences Group. They would each approach clients individually. You lose out then, both in terms of content and in terms of the added value for clients. Now they collaborate intensively. They learn from one another and visit customers together.' Buchwaldt: 'We believe we should have more such teams in the next few years, and we need to make proper back-office arrangements for this. As an example, we should make sure staff from different science groups can record hours on the same project — that's not possible at present. And make sure science groups are involved under the same conditions and with the same rules. That requires harmonization of internal regulations and procedures.'

**The first investment theme is Connected Circularity, including circular agriculture. What exactly will WUR be doing?**

Mol: 'Agriculture minister Carola Schouten's vision of circular agriculture is a picture of the future. If you listen carefully, you realize that we still have no idea how to put that circular vision into practice, or on what scale. Which cycles could you close and what does that mean for food safety, food waste, farmers' incomes and the Netherlands' position in the export market? We are really just at the start. The creation of the Agroecology and Technology Test Location was an important step.' Buchwaldt: 'We will work out the details of different options and scenarios, identifying the pros and cons. Hopefully that will play a role in the public debate so that we end up with a feasible plan.' Mol: 'We will be putting a group of people to work on this theme, who will set up a research programme in consultation with the ministry of Agriculture, the Dutch Federation of Agriculture and Horticulture and nature organizations.'

**Growing student numbers remains a key issue. Does WUR plan to curb the growth?**

Mol: 'Our guiding principle is the quality of the education, which we want to maintain come what may. So we want to keep our small-scale teaching with lots of contact between the teacher and the students. But that is fairly difficult if you have more students coming. That's why we are looking into digital education and the "flipped classroom", innovations that let us use our teachers where they have most to offer. The key question is how can you best transfer knowledge and teach students how to learn.'

**Yet you also want enrolment restrictions for some degree programmes.**

Mol: 'Each year, we assess each programme to check whether the increase in student num-



bers is still manageable. The programme organizers decide that, not us. Nutrition and Biotechnology decided once again to set an upper limit, but the enrolment limit for Molecular Life Sciences has been scrapped as it is no longer necessary given the number of applications. We keep checking other fast-growing programmes, such as Biology and Food Technology, to see whether we should use this instrument. The ministry is not happy with the curbs on students but this is also about the funding of universities. More money is needed for technical education if you want to keep up teaching standards.'

**'At present, if one nationality dominates we can't correct that'**

**We also see in the strategic plan that you want to select international students for admission.**

Mol: 'Our point of departure is that we want to maintain the "international classroom" with a range of nationalities in our classes. At present, if one nationality dominates, for example Chinese students, we don't have any means of correcting that. Delft has had the idea of offering Bachelor degrees with an English track and

a Dutch track. You select students for the English track but not for the Dutch one. The ministry of Education is currently investigating whether this is permissible and if so, what form it should take. Is it desirable? At present this is not an urgent problem for WUR because the international intake in our BSc programmes is diverse and stable in numbers. But we want options for controlling rapid growth so that we can maintain teaching quality. That is why we monitor the quality every year.'

**The plan says we want to terminate programmes that no longer satisfy a demand. Which are those?**

Mol: 'There is no question as yet of terminating programmes but we want to send a message. We are constantly reviewing programmes to see whether they match students' interests and demand in the labour market. If there is a drop in that interest or the labour market demand, we want to take action. That didn't always happen in the past because student numbers were so low.'

**You talk a lot about entrepreneurship in the plan. Is that a demand from the market?**


Buchwaldt: 'Yes. Students are more interested in entrepreneurship than they used to be; they are more likely to want to start a business or

work for a company. So we want to give this more attention in our teaching.’ Mol: ‘Wilfred Dolfma, the new professor of Business Management & Organization, is currently thinking up new educational paths that include entrepreneurship, for example in such Master’s degrees as Plant Breeding and Food Technology, so that it is interwoven with the degree domains. There will also be courses for PhD candidates and a minor in Entrepreneurship in the BSc programmes.’ Buchwaldt: ‘The second reason for doing more with entrepreneurship is that we want to make more of an impact.’

## ‘We will give entrepreneurship more attention in our teaching’

Wageningen has relatively few spin-offs compared with the other technical universities, although that has improved a lot in the past two years. We have a director of Corporate Value Creation, we now have more start-ups, we organize student challenges and we have investment funds that inject capital in new Wageningen companies. We have created an environment in which investors come along, assess the prospects for the new companies and invest on a commercial basis.’

## Final point: the work pressure. How will the board be reducing the heavy workload for WUR staff?

Buchwaldt: ‘Firstly, we will be putting more emphasis on human resource management over the next few years. We have to do that anyway as the workforce needs to grow and many employees are due to retire. We need to hire at least 600 employees next year — about 250 new jobs and 350 replacement staff. We will be setting up recruitment programmes to achieve that. Both the university and Wageningen Research will be getting extra funds in the next few years and will be using that to take on more staff. That should reduce work pressure. Secondly, we aim to harmonize work processes and reduce the number of internal rules. We want a simpler HR policy with less paperwork and we want a clear framework with the staff themselves deciding what they do within those parameters. For example, staff at Wageningen Research have to record their hours. People often complain about that but it’s necessary as otherwise we can’t draw up bills and provide supporting evidence. But they are really talking about the freedom to allocate those hours, in consultation with the client. That seems fine to me and that helps the workload.’ Mol: ‘In the university, we want to reduce work pressure by offering a teaching career path in addition to the tenure track. That is intended for staff who primarily want to excel in teaching. We hope this career path for good teachers will reduce the education-related workload in the chair groups.’ 




## MAIN POINTS IN THE STRATEGIC PLAN

- The Executive Board will be investing in three research themes: Connected Circularity, the Protein Transition and Digital Twins. Four million euros a year will be available for this.
- WUR wants systematic collaboration with its strong international partners in the Agrifood 5 Alliance: UC Davis, Cornell, China Agricultural University and the University of São Paulo.
- Investments in additional staff should help the university cope with increasing student numbers and enable more research at Wageningen Research. WUR aims to recruit 600 staff in 2019.
- The university will check annually whether degree programmes need an enrolment limit. The criterion: is teaching quality at risk?
- The university will investigate the possibility of selecting international students for admission, if deemed necessary to curb growth and maintain the ‘international classroom’.
- Entrepreneurship will be given a more prominent place in teaching and research in the form of spin-offs, student challenges, and new modules and tracks.
- The internal rules in the five science groups will be harmonized to facilitate collaboration.
- Wageningen Research will invest in five multidisciplinary research themes: Circular and Climate-neutral; Food Security and Valuing Water; Nature-inclusive and Landscape; Safe and Healthy; Data-driven and Hi-tech. Over 30 million euros a year is available for these themes.
- WUR wants to put more emphasis on the excellence of teams and less on the excellence of individuals.
- The corporate culture needs to change. Managers will give staff more freedom, trust them more and let them take calculated risks.





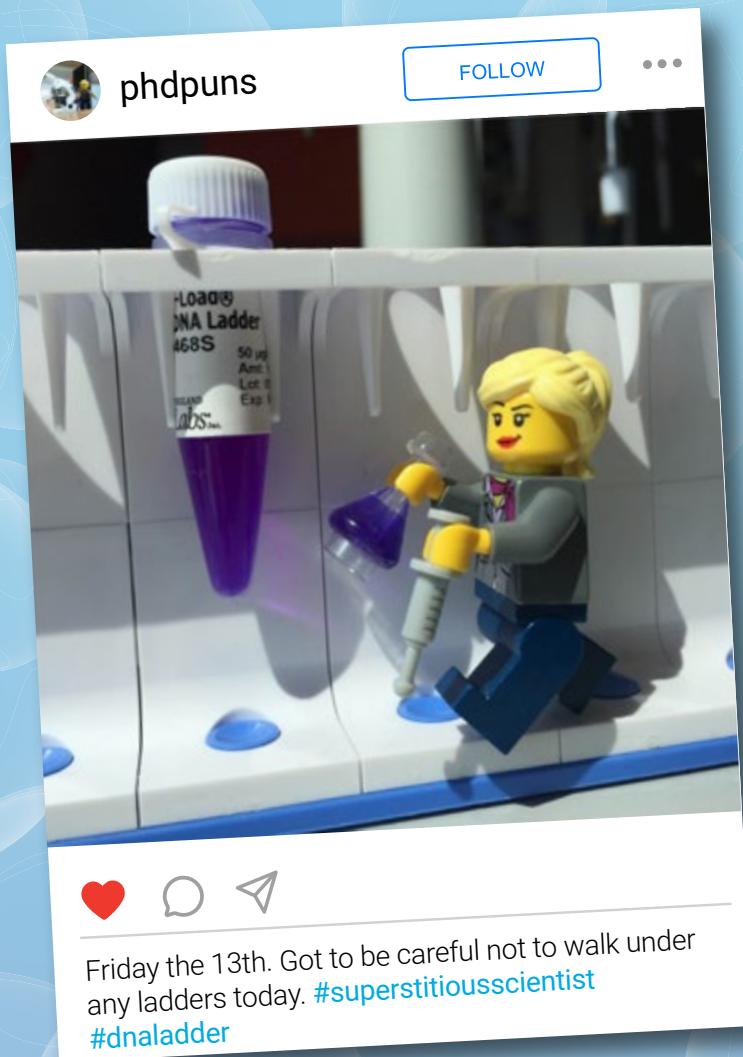
## THE ADVENTURES OF WILHELMINI

Lab life boring? Not for Wilhelmini. The mascot for PhD candidates Janneke Elzinga and Catarina Loureiro experiences the craziest things in Microbiology. 'I was given the Lego scientist when I graduated,' says Elzinga. The little doll turned out to be a great way of poking fun at PhD life. 'Once when Catarina and I were preparing a practical, we came up with all these puns to do with the lab materials. We thought it would be nice to take some photos to go with them for Instagram.' The account phdpuns now has 131 visual jokes and 1001 followers.  LdK, photos Janneke Elzinga and Catarina Loureiro



### PhD puns

Wilhelmini van Eppie ~  
Trying to be punny about  
PhD life and lab stuff





phdpuns

FOLLOW



Making plans for large experiments to be finished before Christmas, is like skating on thin ice. [#phdplanning](#)



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Struggling with your PhD? Here, let me give you some tips. [#pipettingfordays](#)



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We all know how breathtaking science can be. [#anaerobictraining](#)



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Sneakpreview of my photoshoot for the cover of the next issue of Vogue Science. [#covergirl](#) [#coverslip](#)







# Inbreeding risk for Veluwe boar

Groups of wild boar in the Veluwe nature area are fairly isolated from one another despite the wildlife overpasses. The result is inbreeding, as a study by Joost de Jong shows. He advocates vigorous measures. 'After all, what's so wild about our wild boars now? We're long past that stage.'

*text* Roelof Kleis *photos* Shutterstock and Hollandse Hoogte

The wild boar in the Veluwe are doing well, in the sense that there are enough of them. So many, in fact, that every year some have to be culled to keep numbers within manageable limits. But it is misleading to focus simply on numbers as in genetic terms they are suffering an insidious decline. Genetic diversity, which is necessary for a healthy population, is falling. Population geneticists call this 'genetic erosion'. Joost de Jong, a lecturer in the Resource Ecology chair group, obtained his doctorate in December for a detailed study of this issue.

## GENETIC BOAR MAP

It should be noted that De Jong's study was not limited to the Veluwe. To be able to say something about local populations, it is essential to have a detailed picture of the natural genetic variation, in this case among boar throughout Europe. To get this picture, De Jong used SNPs — pronounced 'snips' — which are little genetic markers on the genome (see inset). Every genome has millions of them. Taken together, the markers form a kind of genetic fingerprint that can also reveal information about relationships. De Jong used it to draw a European boar map.

To do this, he worked with the Animal Breeding and Genetics chair group to collect DNA material from dozens of populations of wild boar across Europe. He ended up with about 500 samples. If you think De Jong must have travelled a lot to get this, you are much mistaken. 'The samples were sent by fellow scientists I'd met at conferences, for example, and by hunters and wildlife managers. I did most of my work at my desk,' laughs De Jong. 'In principle, any piece of tissue can be

used to get DNA. I chose the ear because that is usually a part that nobody is interested in so it gets left over. Incidentally, not a single boar was killed specifically for this study. These were all animals that were culled for population management purposes.'



PHOTO: YORICK LIEFTING

Researcher Joost de Jong thinks wildlife managers should do more to combat inbreeding, for example through breeding programmes.



### NATURAL BARRIERS

Analysis of the SNPs revealed an interesting pattern. De Jong: 'You'd expect neighbouring populations to be genetically very similar, but that's not always the case at all. For example, there are big differences within Central Europe. Genetically, the boars belong either to a western group or to an eastern group.' The standard explanation for such patterns is that they are due to the Ice Ages. The argument goes that the differences arose due to repopulation following the retreat of the ice. The arrival of humans is also often cited as a cause. The differences are said to be explained by the loss and fragmentation of habitats, hunting, extermination and the displacement of boar.

But De Jong does not agree. He conducted a model study of the spread of wild boar based purely on the topography of Europe. How does the very shape of Europe and its natural barriers — mountain ranges — affect the genetic variation? De Jong: 'What kind of geographical genetic structure do you get then? Which populations are similar to one another thousands of generations later?' And that gives the same genetic boar map that he had already drawn on the basis of the SNP analysis. De Jong personally finds this the best part of his thesis. 'It's not empirical proof because it is a simulation. But I'm personally convinced that the topography is the main cause. I don't need Ice Ages or human behaviour to explain the genetic profiles of boar.'

## 'The wild boar hardly move at all and are very isolated'

### HALF-BROTHERS AND HALF-SISTERS

Back to the Netherlands. What is the genetic variation like in a relatively isolated and fragmented area such as the Veluwe? It was already known that the Veluwe boar do not form a homogeneous group. De Jong: 'An initial impression was obtained decades ago from protein studies. Three years ago, Alterra mapped the boar populations with genetic research. I've now added far more detail to that picture with the SNPs. It shows that dispersion is rare; the animals hardly change location at all and are very isolated.'

On top of that, there is a lot of inbreeding. De Jong found boar populations where every animal had inbred pieces of DNA, traceable to recent forebears, on 10 per cent of the genome. In this case, 'recent' means going back 10 generations or less. 'To put this in perspective, the values I find are often higher than the expected inbreeding for descendants of cousins and can be as high as the inbreeding for descendants of half-brothers and half-sisters.'

### PRINCE HENDRIK

Another conclusion is that the Veluwe boar are closely related to the boar in northeast Germany. That probably is the result of human intervention. 'There were hardly any wild boars in the Veluwe a century ago,' explains

De Jong. That changed when Prince Hendrik, great-grandfather of King Willem Alexander, and Anthony Kröller, the man behind the Kröller-Müller Museum, introduced wild boar in their fenced parks — now the Crown lands and the Hoge Veluwe National Park. 'Sometimes boars would escape and start new populations on the other side of the fence. That probably explains why they are genetically different to the wild boar in Western Europe.'

## 'Would a wildlife manager want their animals to be so inbred?'

De Jong says it is worrying to see genetic erosion among the boar in the Veluwe. That is why he feels management of the wild boar populations should be based much more on genetics. De Jong: 'Opponents point to the fact that the populations are doing well despite the inbreeding, or argue that other threats deserve more attention. They also say we know too little about how inbreeding affects the genome to worry about it. But I absolutely disagree. I'm an advocate of the precautionary principle. The populations might be doing well in terms of growth but you shouldn't be happy with so much inbreeding. It's a welfare issue. Would a wildlife manager want their animals to be so inbred?'

### WILDLIFE OVERPASSES

What about the wildlife overpasses, known as *ecoducts*? Don't they encourage migration and therefore genetic variation? De Jong has a nuanced opinion about them. 'The wildlife overpasses are a nice gesture to nature by humans and they help prevent isolation. You can see that clearly in the populations on either side of the A50 motorway. When the road was turned into a motorway, a wildlife crossing was built at Woeste Hoeve. Now you see little genetic difference between the populations on the two sides of the motorway. So a wildlife overpass can prevent isolation.'

'But it's more difficult to end isolation than to prevent it,' continues De Jong. 'You need much more migration to introduce genetic variation back into an isolated population that is suffering from genetic ero-



▲ The wildlife crossing over the A50 motorway at Woeste Hoeve.

PHOTO: TON POORTVLIET/HOLLANDESE HOOGTE



sion. That means that if you build a wildlife overpass to connect areas that have been separated for a long time, it will be a while before this has an effect. A connection is soon broken but nature doesn't recover overnight. It takes time.'

#### **BREEDING PROGRAMMES**

De Jong believes we sometimes need to do more than just build wildlife overpasses. His PhD thesis includes a detailed decision schedule with measures that could be taken for different degrees of inbreeding. One such measure is the sterilization of dominant males. Another is introducing new boars from elsewhere. De Jong: 'But you then need to think hard about which animals you bring in to end the inbreeding.' De Jong is aware that this is a sensitive topic. 'Some people think such breeding programmes go too far and are not compatible with the concept of wildlife. But what's so wild about the wild boars in the Veluwe now? We're long past that stage.' ⑥

#### **DETECTING GENETIC PATTERNS WITH 'SNIPS'**

**SNP**, pronounced 'snip', stands for single nucleotide polymorphism. The term refers to pieces of genetic code that are found in a single position. You can imagine them as a typo in the long genetic letter code. The human genome has millions of such SNPs. Each individual person has their own unique pattern of SNPs — a kind of genetic fingerprint. Nowadays there are techniques that make examining a DNA sample for SNPs a fast, routine job. Researcher Joost de Jong had his samples from nearly 500 boars scanned for 30,000 known SNPs for boar. That let him detect geographical genetic patterns in great detail and make precise estimates of the degree of inbreeding and relationship.



# This will be the news in 2019

The action-packed centenary year has ended and we are back to 'normal' in 2019. But that does not mean nothing will be happening at WUR. *Resource* looks at what we can expect from the coming year. With lots of facts and one or two educated guesses.

*text AvE, AS, LdK, RK and TL*

## New Dialogue Centre contractor

The first invitation to tender failed but the Dialogue Centre will still go ahead. The Executive Board will probably announce the contractor in the first quarter who will be constructing the new building for ceremonies and conferences. The board will resign itself to the fact that the costs will be higher than the initial budget. There is still one potential snag — 12 trees will need to be felled. That's always a problem in Wageningen.



A sketch design for the Dialogue Centre.



Jeroen Dijsselbloem.

## New chair for Supervisory Board

It was announced late last year on the WUR intranet that Job Cohen would 'soon' be stepping down as the chair of the Supervisory Board. The minister must now be looking for a replacement. Our tip is WUR alumnus and former Labour party minister Jeroen Dijsselbloem.

## Third teaching building takes shape

The design for the third teaching building will be presented in February so that construction can start at the end of 2019. The site was announced a while ago: opposite Rikilt, where Starhub is at present. Lessons will start there in September 2021. Only the name is still uncertain. Forum, Orion and ...? We predict a poll.

## Increase in number of female professors

The latest stats show women make up one in five professors in the Netherlands. The proportion in Wageningen is slightly less, but is increasing steadily. The new figures will be published early this year. WUR's target is 25 per cent by 2020.

## Digitization research takes off

Together with Radboud university and medical centre and the Flemish research institute Imec, WUR wants to open a new research centre on campus this year for the use of digitization and nanoelectronics in the agro-industry, food and health. The provincial authority is due to decide soon whether to contribute 65 million euros. Even if it does not, digitization will still be a hot topic given the ambitions voiced in the new strategic plan.

## Fresh blood in province

On 20 March the Dutch get to elect new provincial council members. The outcome will determine whether the province of Gelderland continues with its WUR-friendly course of investing in innovation and collaboration between businesses and science institutions. And what happens with the regional infrastructure (see ring road).

## Ring road continues to cause controversy

The planned ring road around the campus will enter a new phase in March with the publication of the environmental impact assessment. A (safe) prediction: the report will lead to more controversy. Another one: the province will opt for a road that cuts through Dassenbos wood. Finally: it will take at least four more years (and countless lawsuits) before the road is built. If it is built.

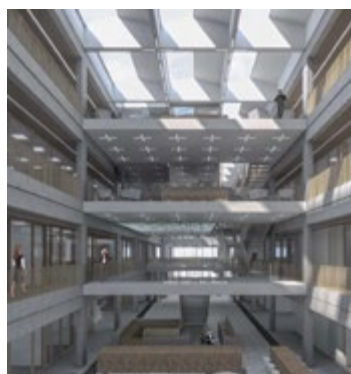


The ring road may cut through Dassenbos wood.

GUY ACKERMANS

## Breaking ground for Plus Ultra II

We reckon construction of Plus Ultra II, Plus Ultra's younger brother, will start in March. Everyone is good to go; they are just waiting for planning permission. The building for new and young companies will be diagonally behind Plus Ultra and there will be a walkway connecting the two buildings. A garage with parking for 385 cars will be built behind the new building.



The interior of Plus Ultra II.

PROOF OF THE SUM

## More money for technical universities

In April, the advisory committee looking at the funding of higher education will publish its recommendations. That will probably say that the technical universities, including WUR, should get more money. Whether those extra euros actually materialize depends on whether Education minister Van Engelshoven and the Dutch Parliament agree.

## Further room shortages

Room shortages among first-years will be even worse next August than last summer. WUR will once again set up a campsite to house first-years during the AID introduction week. Some are suggesting a permanent campsite should be set up with climate-friendly yurts.



The AID campsite on campus in 2018.

PHOTO: GUY ACKERMANS



Carola Schouten.

RIJKSOVERHEID/MARTIJN BEEKMAN

## Brexit headache for research projects

On 29 March, Britain and the EU will finally be parting company. This will affect Wageningen researchers too given that 60 to 70 per cent of all WUR's EU projects include British partners. A hard Brexit would be particularly problematic.

## First agreements on circular agriculture

Agriculture minister Carola Schouten will probably make the first agreements about concrete targets with societal organizations before the summer, some six months after the publication of her vision document on circular agriculture. This will mean work for WUR as it is one of our key investment themes.



Arthur Mol.

PHOTO: WUR

## Rector Arthur Mol reappointed

Arthur Mol's term as rector magnificus will end in late May. We are willing to bet a crate of Duvel beer that he gets reappointed.

## WUR the best again

In October, the Guide to Higher Education will declare WUR the best Dutch university for the 15th time in a row. However, the gap between WUR and the second and third placed universities will narrow.

## Louder calls for paid parking

Traffic queues in Mansholtlaan will lengthen with the arrival of Unilever and continuing growth in the numbers of students and staff. WUR will be forced to do something about its mobility policy. We will start hearing more about paid parking.

## Big announcement at CRISPR conference

On 20 June, the international conference CRISPRcon will start at WUR. Of course they will be discussing the strict rules in Europe compared with the opportunities in the US for CRISPR-Cas. We would not be surprised to see WUR initiating far-reaching collaboration with a leading American university, with a part-time position there for professor



John van der Oost

and Spinoza Prize winner John van der Oost.

NWORAFEL PHILIPPEN FOTOGRAFIE

## Unilever's Innovation Centre opens

Following interminable discussions about dividend tax, Unilever's head office won't be moving to the Netherlands after all. But the Anglo-Dutch food industry giant will still be opening its new 18,000 m<sup>2</sup> Global Foods Innovation Centre on Wageningen campus in June. That building will house 500 staff.



# How 'circular' are you?

The circular economy is all the rage, but what is it exactly? And how do you go 'circular'? Postdoc researcher Evelien de Olde of the Animal Production Systems chair group wondered about this and decided to create a test based on the existing literature. See how you score and find out how circular *you* are.

text Evelien de Olde illustrations Henk van Ruitenbeek

		CODE	POINTS
<b>1</b>	<b>YOU FIND A HOLE IN YOUR SHIRT. WHAT DO YOU DO?</b>	C	-1
	a. Throw it away. Time to go shopping!	R4	1
	b. Repair it (mum?)	R2	2
	c. Nothing, that's fashionable	R1	2
	d. Use it as pyjamas	R8	0
<b>2</b>	<b>WHAT MEAT DO YOU EAT?</b>	R2	2
	a. None, or not much meat	R2	2
	b. Game or meat from nature areas	C	-1
	c. What I can find in the supermarket: chicken fillets, pork chops etc.	R6	1
<b>3</b>	<b>WHAT DO YOU DO WITH YOUR FOOD LEFTOVERS?</b>		
	a. Give to a housemate or save for another time	R3	1
	b. Feed to chickens, rabbits or pigs	R7	1
	c. I never have leftovers	R2	2
<b>4</b>	<b>YOUR SOFA IS STARTING TO SHOW WEAR AND TEAR – NOW WHAT?</b>		
	a. Give to a housemate or save for another time	R3	1
	b. Feed to chickens, rabbits or pigs	R2	2
	c. I never have leftovers	R9	0
	d. Throw away (immediately or after keeping them for a month in the fridge)	R5	1
<b>5</b>	<b>YOUR SOFA IS STARTING TO SHOW WEAR AND TEAR – NOW WHAT?</b>		
	a. No problem, it'll last a few more years	R2	2
	b. Some friend or relative will be happy to have it	R3	1
	c. Take it to the second-hand shop	R3	1
<b>6</b>	<b>THE THERMOSTAT SAYS 18 DEGREES AND YOU FEEL COLD. WHAT DO YOU DO?</b>		
	a. Put on a thick jumper	R9	0
	b. Turn the thermostat up one degree and put on a jumper	R0	2
	c. Turn the thermostat up to 21	R2	2
<b>6</b>	<b>YOUR BIKE LIGHT STOPS WORKING. WHAT NOW?</b>		
	a. Put on a thick jumper	C	-1
	b. Turn the thermostat up one degree and put on a jumper	R4	1
	c. Turn the thermostat up to 21	R6	1
	d. Wash up, clear up and Hoover to get warm	R0	2



- 7 WHAT DO YOU DRINK YOUR COFFEE FROM?**  
 a. My own mug  
 b. Plastic or paper cups because they get recycled anyway  
 c. I don't drink coffee
- 8 WHAT EGG MAKES YOUR DAY?**  
 a. No egg at all  
 b. A Kipster/Oerei egg (eggs from chickens fed with waste products or insects)  
 c. An egg from my own chickens (which get fed leftovers sometimes)  
 d. Just the usual supermarket ones
- 9 YOU DROP YOUR SMARTPHONE AND SURE ENOUGH, SCREEN'S CRACKED...**  
 a. Great, I wanted the new iPhone X anyway  
 b. OK, I'll buy a second-hand one  
 c. I'll get the screen replaced  
 d. I've still got an old, indestructible Nokia somewhere
- 10 WHAT DO YOU DO WITH RESOURCE? (MORE THAN ONE ANSWER POSSIBLE)**  
 a. Resource? Never heard of it! (Eh...)  
 b. I share it with my housemates or colleagues  
 c. I read it online  
 d. I use it as cat litter, decoration, toilet paper...  
 e. I put it on the bonfire!  
 f. I put it out for recycling



CODE	POINTS
R3	1
R8	0
R0	2
R0	2
R7	1
R7	1
C	-1
C	-1
R5	1
R4	1
R2	2
R0	2
R1	2
R2	2
R7	1
R9	0
R8	0

### YOUR SCORE



4 points or less  
 You consume happily while you still can...



5 to 14 points  
 You are already becoming more 'circular'. You consciously try to reduce your impact sometimes.



15 points or more  
 The circular economy is your thing. Some people think you exaggerate but thanks to you there's hope for the planet.

The sources that were used can be found with the article at [resource-online.nl](http://resource-online.nl).



### CIRCULAR ECONOMY LADDER

The points in this test are based on the ten levels of circularity that are identified in the literature. We added level C — consuming — ourselves. At this level, there is no circularity at all and the use of raw materials increases.

We admit that this point scoring system results in some strange 'advice'. In question 6, for example, cycling without a light gives the most points because Refuse (R0) is at the top of the ladder, whereas it's obviously a bad idea. For food too, not consuming at all is not an option. Those are cases where you are better off a little further down the circularity ladder.

Code		Points
R0	Refuse: avoid using raw materials	2
R1	Rethink: use a product more intensively (sharing, multifunctional use)	2
R2	Reduce: reduce use of raw materials	2
R3	Reuse: reuse products	1
R4	Repair: maintain and repair	1
R5	Refurbish: revamp products	1
R6	Remanufacture: make new products from parts of old products	1
R7	Repurpose: reuse for a different purpose	1
R8	Recycle: process and reuse raw materials	0
R9	Recover: recover the energy from materials	0
C	Consume: increase use of raw materials	-1



**FLYING TEACHER (1)**

Learning in virtual reality (VR) requires totally different teachers to learning in a physical classroom, according to research by the University of Copenhagen. In the virtual world, girls learn most from a young woman called Marie while boys perform best if the teacher is a drone that flies around while teaching.

**FLYING TEACHER (2)**

The researchers say boys in a VR environment concentrate better with a drone teacher because of identification. Drones have similar qualities to superheroes in games, and boys respond more to that than girls. Which raises the question of whether that only applies to VR classrooms. How would a flying teacher work in a lecture hall?

**MONA LISA**

The Mona Lisa effect is a myth. Or rather, it exists but not for the Mona Lisa herself, say German researchers. The effect refers to the impression that the eyes in a photo or painting follow you as you look at it from different angles. But Mona Lisa's eyes don't. They carry on staring 15 degrees to the right. Time to give the effect a new name?

**HOUSING SHORTAGE**

One in ten pied flycatchers dies fighting great tits for nest space, according to a study by the University of Groningen. Overwintering great tits have responded to the warmer climate by building their nests earlier. Flycatchers, which winter in Africa, do not do this. The result is deadly conflicts. More nest boxes are needed to resolve the housing shortage.

# Argo feels the burn for Neptunus

**Wageningen student rowing club Argo will be holding an ergometer marathon in the weekend of 9 to 10 February to raise money for Neptunus rowing club in Delfzijl. Neptunus lost its boathouse and entire fleet in December in a fire.**

The ergometer marathon is a new Argo tradition in which crews raise money by keeping a rowing machine going non-stop for 24 hours. Argo chair Daniël Boer: 'This is our third time. The first two times, we raised money for our new training loft.' Now it is time to do something for someone else.

In early December, the boathouse belonging to Neptunus rowing club went up in flames, along with its entire fleet. 'As a club, we know how that feels,' says Boer. 'Our boathouse burned down in 1982.' A new rowing boat costs about 10,000 euros and boathouses are hardly free either. That is why Neptunus aims to raise 100,000 euros with crowdfunding.

Argo wants to do its bit to help them and it has invited rowers from all over the country to join in the marathon. Boer: 'I expect all the student rowing clubs will send a team. A Neptunus team will be taking part, along with several Argo teams of course.' To register for the ergometer marathon, go to [ergometermarathon.nl](http://ergometermarathon.nl). **LZ**



PHOTO: NEPTUNUS



PHOTO: NEPTUNUS

▲ Rowing club Neptunus's boathouse in Delfzijl before and after the fire.

## UK students to keep rights after hard Brexit

If the UK leaves the European Union without a deal on 30 March, Brits already studying in the Netherlands should not worry as they will be able to continue with their studies under the same conditions. Stef Blok, minister of Foreign Affairs, told the Dutch Parliament this. British students currently in the Netherlands will keep their rights to financial assistance and will not have to pay more than the

statutory tuition fees.

In the event of a No Deal, British students coming to the Netherlands after Brexit will be treated as citizens from outside the European Economic Area. That means they will pay the higher institutional tuition fees, like Chinese students for example, and will not get any financial assistance. **HOP**



# Bongerd gets new indoor climbing walls

**There was already a climbing wall outside De Bongerd but soon the sports centre will have another four indoors. Tinko Jans, treasurer for student climbing club Ibox, is pleased. 'This will probably encourage people to climb much more.'**

The climbing wall outside De Bongerd is only seven metres tall and is showing wear and tear, explains Jans. That is why Ibox trained for a while on a climbing wall in the Vlinder sports centre on Hollandseweg. But that climbing wall was removed after the Vlinder roof collapsed in 2007. Since then, the Ibox climbers have mainly trained at a climbing centre in Arnhem.

The new climbing walls are nearly 11 metres tall. They will be

set up in the space between halls 3 and 4 in De Bongerd. They were manufactured in Romania and still need to be transported to Wageningen. 'If that all goes according to plan, we'll be able to start climbing on them in April,' says Jans.

The new walls will have climbing routes that the Ibox members can follow. If the routes get boring, they can be modified. Jans: 'We've got several route builders in Ibox. So every now and then, we'll unscrew the grips and design new routes.'

Jans expects the indoor climbing walls to attract more members and to get current members more involved in the club. 'Now, 25 to 30 of us travel to Arnhem every Thursday evening. Lots of people think that's too far. It also



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

means a short climb takes up an entire evening. Membership will be a lot more attractive if there is a place in Wageningen. You will also be able to go for a climb dur-

ing the day if you have a couple of free hours. It will be easier too to have a drink together after training. That is good for the social side.' **LZ**

## MEANWHILE IN... FRANCE

### 'This shows that the will of the people is important'

**For weeks, the yellow-vest movement has been disrupting public life in France. The participants are protesting against rising fuel prices, the high cost of living and tax reforms that hurt the working class. President Macron has made some concessions, but the protests are continuing, with occasional violent outbursts. Master's student Jean-Marc Delore condemns the riots, but understands the sentiment.**

'The yellow-vest protest started in November, after the increase in fuel and gas taxes. In December many things were destroyed on the Champs-Élysées in Paris by protestors. I understand that the rise in taxation can result in deep frustration. But I believe most people who joined the yellow vests wanted to protest peacefully. The protest is only a manifesto. They want the government to hear their voices. Only a small group of people take advantage of the situation by taking violent action. The real yellow vests are people who are concerned about the issue, and who protest on behalf of the people. I don't

think they want to destroy the country if they are fighting for the people. In France, power is highly centralized



PHOTO: ALEXANDROS MICHALIDIS / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

around Paris, and the elites hold most power, which creates a big gap between the governed and the governors. The yellow-vest protest should make clear to the government that the will of the people is also important, particularly when our purchasing power is continuously decreasing with constant increases in taxes, which are already among the highest in Europe. In France there is a need to re-localize power, so that people can feel involved in their politics and policy-makers can clearly understand their needs. I personally prefer the federal political system, like in Switzerland or Germany. I have always believed France can change, and I still have faith in it. I hope the French politicians will pay more attention to the disconnection between the people and the authorities.' **CC**



Jean-Marc Delore is a Master's student of Agroecology from France. He reflects on recent events in his home country.



# YOU ON CAMPUS

**Chen Zhang (22) is a first-year MSc Organic Agriculture (MOA) student. She's having a bite to eat at Orion whilst planning an upcoming gathering for her degree programme's MOA cafe.**

'MOA cafes are organized by students in the programme, and we take a different theme every time. We've just come back to campus from the holidays, so the theme this time is how different cultures celebrate the New Year via food, and how culture plays a part in how people relate to food. It's going to be one interesting potluck! We're also going to have a bonfire.'

Chen is from Nanjing in China, and she came to the Netherlands in August last year.

'I noticed that people have a different relationship with food here, compared to where I'm from. Lunch is a very straightforward affair in the Netherlands, and my friends think my lunchbox with two dishes is "fancy". It feels like food here is more about survival,' she laughs.

'Last week I went to Utrecht with some friends and we had some amazing Vietnamese noodles there. It was a small shop; the setting and the palate of flavours really reminded me of the roadside eateries I'm used to in Nanjing. I felt moved! It's funny how human beings

**'Last week, I ate such amazing noodles in a small shop in Utrecht that I felt moved!'**

connect with food emotionally too.'

Besides food, Chen also notices how culture impacts on learning styles. 'In my old university in Nanjing, we also had group work but it made up a lot less of the course. Usually, at least 70 per cent of the course result would be based on an exam. Here, we have a lot of



PHOTO: GINNA HO

group work and the learning process feels less systematic. But the good thing about it is that you're more inspired to find your own materials that are driven by the directions the project is taking. It's more organic to learn this way and I do get more motivated to read something after I searched for it.' **GH**

## 'It's so much fun watching the New Me's'

**Blogger Geert van Zandbrink finds it amusing to watch all those people aiming for an improved version of themselves as they start the new year.**

'Completely shattered after the New Year's Eve festivities, I sat in the train heading towards Wageningen on the first day of the new year. My journey took me across three rivers to what we people of Brabant think of as the far north. While crossing the Rhine, I looked out of the window and saw two joggers in the distance, running along the dyke. It was eleven in the morning, so I assumed that these two sports lov-

ers were genuine runners. They probably went to bed early on New Year's Eve so that they could get up fully refreshed for their morning jog. But that afternoon, while walking along the river banks, I passed one red face after another trudging along, and I thought: I recognize this phenomenon. These are the people who take a "new year, new me" approach.

### THE JANUARY EFFECT

The stock market has what is known as the "January effect", when lots of new speculators temporarily enter the market at the start of the year and push up share

prices. Likewise you see loads more joggers in these weeks, as well as people walking around with e-cigarettes, or flasks to help them get through those 1.5 litres of water a day. The university library is filled to the brim each morning with enthusiasts who have found renewed motivation, and in the canteens you find health fanatics with lunchboxes full of healthy, protein-rich meals.

### SNIGGER

It's so much fun watching the New Me's. In just two weeks' time, their numbers will already be much smaller. I must confess I snigger a

## BLOG



Geert van Zandbrink studies Economics and Policy. Go to [resource-online.nl/blog](http://resource-online.nl/blog) to read all his blogs.

bit at the dropouts, but I cheer on the people who are still going strong after two weeks. And I can laugh at myself too: my New Year's resolution had been to eat no meat in January, but right after midnight, while enjoying the fireworks, I stuffed a meat croquette in my mouth without thinking. Failed. That's just how it goes.' **B**

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.

# Visiting coffee farmers

'I was a bit disappointed in the nature in the Ivory Coast. There is hardly any forest left; the only tropical rainforest was in the west of the country but that was a long way away from me. That statement is a bit harsh, of course, given that I was actually working for the sector that's responsible for the destruction of the tropical rainforest.

I worked for ECOM, a global merchant in coffee and cocoa, looking at cocoa farmers' land rights for them. In the Ivory Coast, many land rights are registered in a traditional, informal way. That makes boundaries unclear and causes conflicts about the inheritance of land. In 1998, a law was introduced requiring land rights to be formalized but that has only actually been done for four per cent of the land, mainly large plantations. It is unaffordable for small-scale farmers. So I worked with a trainee from France investigating how ECOM could help the farmers formalize their land rights.

## LAND AS COLLATERAL

My main daily task was to collect information. I would visit government bodies, land surveyors and farmers. I also set up a survey, a kind of market research covering 500 farmers. The idea is that the survey will also provide data for my thesis. In my thesis, I'll be looking at the "collateralizability" of land — the extent to which land can be used as collateral. A lot of

small farmers don't have access to credit, and formal land rights could improve their chances of getting a loan.

I went out a lot in Abidjan on my days off. It has a big French expat community, which the previous intern introduced me to. I went to concerts, had tennis lessons, learnt French and often went out for meals with my housemates. In the weekends I travelled around a bit. One weekend, I hired a motorbike with a friend. You just go to a village, find some random person and hire their bike for 15 euros for the weekend. Except I'd never ridden a motorbike before, so I did need a one-hour lesson first.


## CHILD LABOUR

One of my learning objectives was to find out more about certification. So I visited the exporter for Tony Chocolonely and a number of their cooperatives. I was struck by how difficult it is to monitor quality labels. The farmers had never even heard of some of the farming methods and management terms that I mentioned, such as integrated pest management. Child labour is another tricky subject. It's not clear-cut. I have seen children working on plantations but sometimes they were just helping out, like you or I might help with the mowing. Of course I don't want to defend the dangerous, intensive forms of child labour but it's not fair either to paint farmers as slave

## THE WORKS

**Wie?** Max Steenbrink (22), BSc student of International Land and Water Management  
**Wat?** Internship with ECOM commodity merchant  
**Waar?** Abidjan, Ivory Coast

drivers exploiting their own children.

I found it striking that while our company was making efforts to increase productivity, the farmers would often say: "The little I earn is enough". We Westerners want progress but the fact of the matter is that the farmers often see things differently.' 



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



## In memoriam

## Ger Londo (1935-2018)



Our valued former colleague and guest staff member Ger Londo passed away on 18 December 2018. Ger worked for the predecessors of

Wageningen Environmental Research (WENR), such as the National Institute for Nature Management (RIN), where he did important research on nature conservation and development. His particular passion was figuring out the fascinating interaction between plant species in a range of communities. After completing training college, Ger enrolled at the University of Amsterdam in 1957 to study Biology. In 1964, he became a researcher at the field biology research centre RIVON. He obtained his doctorate at Nijmegen in 1971 for a study of dune valley vegetation. An abbreviated version of his thesis was also published 'for the managers of dunes and other sandy areas'. That was typical of his philosophy and approach. He always felt research was not successful until it had been turned

into practical applications for nature management. He wrote the classic reference work *Natuurontwikkeling* ('Nature development', 1997) in a series on forest and nature management in the Netherlands.

Ger also successfully called attention to the value of nature gardens and parks for nature and education, particularly with the construction of the scientific experimental gardens at Kas-teel Broekhuizen and his own home in Scherpenzeel. Designs with different types of environment and a range of soil types resulted in superb vegetation with a great diversity of species. Another outstanding example is the nature garden around Lumen that Ger initiated and designed. Ger played a part in the nature garden committee until 2017. It is a privilege to be able to enjoy and learn from the exceptional nature garden around Lumen.

*Pieter Slim and Joop Schaminée, on behalf of the Vegetation, Forest and Landscape Ecology group and the nature garden committee of WER*

## Announcements

## MSc course: European Forest Resources and the Bio-economy (3 credits)

The course, which includes an excursion to the European Forestry House in Brussels, is scheduled for Period 4 (18 February to 15 March). If you are interested and in the third year of your Bachelor's or the first or second year of your Master's, send an email to gert-jan.nabuurs@wur.nl. For more information, see: ssc.wur.nl/Studiegids/Vak/FEM-31303.

## Arduino course for beginners at Fab-Lab Wageningen

You will learn about microcontrollers (Arduino), electronics and the programming language to make robots, self-steering machines, advanced measuring equipment or even control a 3D-printer. The course consists of eight Tuesday evenings. Starts 22 January. Email info@fablabwag.nl.

FABLABWAG.NL

## Good sense of smell?

Do you want an easy way to make money (nine euros an hour net + travel costs)? Have you got plenty of free time and are you flexible? Buro Blauw in Wageningen is looking for people for its odour panel. For more info or an appointment, email geur-lab@buroblauw.nl.

## Wageningen Volkoren needs tenors

Are you the man who can reinforce our tenor section? We sing accessible world music and we've built up a global, diverse repertoire. You don't need experience or huge talent, but we do expect serious effort and you to enjoy singing. Email bestuur@volkoren.nl.

VOLKOOREN.NL

Book: *Metamorfose 1993-2018. Hoe Wageningen wereldtop werd*

The title translates as 'Metamorphosis 1993-2018. How Wageningen became a global leader'. This fourth volume in the history of the 'Agricultural University' explains how the merger of the

Science Cafe  
Wageningen

www.sciencecafewageningen.nl

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a magic cure for bacterial infections?

Dr. Stan Brouns  
- TU Delft

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## WIL JIJ:

- De belangen van alle studenten in het hoger onderwijs behartigen?
- Een afwisselende baan waarin je met politici, beleidsmakers, medezeggenschappers en zelfs de Minister spreekt?
- De gelegenheid om kennis op te doen over de politieke, juridische en maatschappelijke kant van het hoger onderwijs?
- Een hechte samenwerking in een enthousiast team van medewerkers en bestuursleden?
- Leidinggeven aan een studentenorganisatie?



## WIE ZOEKEN WIJ?

- Een student of net afgestudeerde (hbo/wo);
- Die fulltime beschikbaar is om zich vanaf eind juni een jaar helemaal voor het ISO in te zetten;
- Met gedrevenheid, een flexibele houding en interesse in de politiek en de onderwijswereld;
- Met een constructieve en proactieve houding;
- Die energie haalt uit het werken in een team;
- Met bestuurs- en/of medezeggenschapservaring (pré, geen must).

## INTERESSE?

Op 17 en 30 januari vinden op het ISO-kantoor informatieavonden plaats. Aanmelden kan via derks@iso.nl

Solliciteren kan door je CV en motivatiebrief uiterlijk 8 februari om uiterlijk 23:59 te mailen naar rullens@iso.nl

## HET ISO?

Het Interstedelijk Studenten Overleg (ISO) is de grootste landelijke studentenorganisatie en behartigt de belangen van bijna 730.000 studenten aan hogescholen en universiteiten. Het ISO is vaste gesprekspartner van onder andere het ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, de politieke partijen en de koepels van hogescholen en universiteiten.

## Meer weten?

Kijk op:  
www.iso.nl/bestuursjaar of  
mail naar stikvoort@iso.nl  
voor een vrijblijvende  
koffieafspraak.



university with the agricultural institutes became a worldwide success. The journalists Martijn de Groot and Joost van Kasteren reflect on that success with the key players. The book also covers developments in Wageningen's research and education, the research policy and the relationship between Wageningen and society at large. The book is only available in Dutch. It costs €32.50 and is on sale in the Forum WURshop and on wur.unigear.eu/sellingpoints.

### Sheet music and musical instruments for hire

The Van Uven Foundation music library offers sheet music, vocal scores and books in the category of classical music. Students are allowed to view these exceptional documents, copy them and borrow them (including via the Internet). The foundation also hires out musical instruments. Johan van Uven was professor of Mathematics at Wageningen and a keen musician. He set up a student orchestra and choir, now known as the WSKOV. Throughout his life, he collected various valuable musical instruments and an enormous quantity of sheet music for a variety of ensembles. Location: Generaal Foulkesweg 1A, Wageningen.

VANUVEN.NL

### Want to find out how to Cope With The Blues?

Depression symptoms are common, including among students. You can have a great student life but given all the changes (a new degree, town, friends), it would be no surprise if you felt ill at ease and anxious for shorter or longer periods. You might wonder: am I up to it, do other people really like me, why do I feel down when everyone around me seems to be so happy? You're not the only student to feel like this! If you get help and advice in time, then the risk of a genuine depression will be much smaller. The sites gripopjedip.nl and kopstoring.nl were developed to make it easier to ask for help and advice. You can get help for free and anonymously, via email or in online group courses supervised by mental health professionals. New courses start every month.

GRIPOJEDIP.NL, KOPSTORING.NL

## Agenda

### Thursday 17 to 31 January SHOWING AT MOVIE W

*Gräns*: Swedish fantasy film about a border guard who can sense feelings of guilt and anxiety. *Free Solo*: nerve-racking American documentary about Alex who climbs the El Capitan rock wall without safety gear. *Come and See*: Russian anti-war masterpiece about Nazi terror in Belarus, seen through the eyes of a partisan boy. *Shoplifters*: Japanese drama about a poor family that commits thefts and gives a home to a runaway girl. *The Extraordinary Journey*: Indian drama about a fakir who travels to Paris. Venue: Wilhelminaweg 3A, Wageningen. €6.50/€5.

MOVIE-W.NL

### Friday 18 and Saturday 19 January STUDENT DRAMA SOCIETY PERFORMS MOORDWIJVEN BY CORINA RUES-BENZ

This year, the actors will be able to shine on a real stage — the Junushoff in Wageningen — in their Foundation Day production. Go to wstv.nl for tickets.

### Sunday 20 January, 15:30 MUSICA VOCALE CONCERT TO POEMS BY LORCA

Chamber choir Musica Vocale will perform works full of Spanish passion to texts by the Spanish poet Federico García Lorca. Lorca's poetry contains folklore elements from Andalusian flamenco and southern Spain's gypsy culture. Venue: Johannes de Doperkerk, Wageningen. Ticket sales (students: €10 for advance sales) via www.musicavocale.nl.

### Monday 21 January 12:45-13:45 WORLD FREE HUG DAY

We are students who sometimes feel lonely and disconnected. On World Free Hug Day, we engage and invite students to offer free hugs in the Forum building during lunch time. Let's give each other some warmth, acceptance and recognition.

### Tuesday 22 January, 12:30-13:20 WAGENINGEN WRITING LAB LUNCH WORKSHOP: 'OPTIMIZE YOUR PERSONAL WRITING STYLE'

In this workshop, you'll discover your personal writing style and how to approach the writing process. You will learn about typical pitfalls and how to avoid them. We will set to work practising some techniques that will help you to make your writing style a strength in current and future writing assignments. Be on time, as participant numbers are limited to 20. Free admission. Venue: Forum C0211. For more information, email info.wageningenwritinglab@wur.nl.

### Tuesday 29 January, 12:30-13:20 WAGENINGEN WRITING LAB/WUR LIBRARY LUNCH WORKSHOP: 'REVISING OF TEXTS'

It is a myth that a well-written text is written in one go; revising is crucial! At first you concentrate fully on the content of your text, and only in the second step on all the other aspects of academic writing. We'll offer you practical strategies for revising your text. Do bring the draft version of your text with you. Free admission. Be on time, as participant numbers are limited to 20. Venue: Forum C0229. For more information, email info.wageningenwritinglab@wur.nl.

### Wednesday 30 January, 20:00-22:00 YOUNG AND LONELY IN THE MOVIES

Together with Kevin Toma, film critic of *De Volkskrant*, we explore how cinema depicts the loneliness of young movie characters. How, for example, does the isolation of a young American woman in Tokyo come across in Sofia Coppola's *Lost in Translation*? This Studium Generale event will give you a melancholic but inspiring taste of the history, clichés and pitfalls of cinematic loneliness. Venue: Impulse.

## Colophon

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

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# >>TYPICAL DUTCH



ILLUSTRATION: HENK VAN RUITENBEEK

## Unmoved by music

**I have been living in Wageningen for almost three years, and I never experienced major culture shock. Until recently, that is. It happened when I started attending concerts in the Netherlands. I expected the same collective euphoria that I know from home. But as it turns out, this is not the Dutch way.**

I was talking to a Chilean friend recently about the kind of concerts she and I had attended. I asked her: 'Have you noticed the lack of emotion?' She answered: 'Ah yes, that is called the Dutch disease'. Her Dutch boyfriend had told her that. It means that people just go on standing or sitting still, talking and drinking, no matter what kind of music the artists are playing. Unlike in the Netherlands, in South America massive concerts only take place in big cities such as Santiago, Buenos Aires and Sao Paulo. When world-famous bands play, people may travel more than 1000 km to hear them, and sometimes people even camp outside the stadium (speaking from my own experience). Once the concert starts, the collective euphoria rocks the entire stadium. Throughout the concert, people sing, jump, scream and sometimes cry. They never talk! I have just obtained a ticket to attend Metallica's concert in Amsterdam next year. I am looking forward to seeing how the symptoms of the Dutch disease will show up then. Dear Dutch people, life is too short to keep still at a concert. Feel the music!  Pamela Bachmann Vargas, PhD candidate in the Environmental Policy Group, from Chile

**Dear Dutch people,  
life is too short to keep  
still at a concert!**

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