

Resource

NOVEMBER 2022 VOLUME 17

The journalism platform for all at Wageningen University & Research

**Scientists4Future
Wageningen**
kicks off

**Teachers positive
about**
resit policy changes

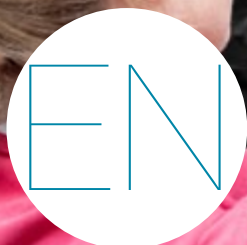
**Chinese poster
fake news**
causes unrest

**Contact point for
inappropriate
behaviour**

**60 million for
animal-free
dairy and meat**

The last meal
of orca Gala IB6 | p.20

**Drug use in
Wageningen**
On the rise?
p.23



Contents

NO 5 VOLUME 17



12

Two Communication professors
in a green haven

18

A closer look at
gender-neutral
language

they, them,
their?



26

Iranian colleagues
on the protests
back home

6 Women scientists on
temporary contracts
at greater risk

6 Action group opposed
to more asphalt

7 Farmed insects
fit in food system

11 Column:
Guido criticizes
'accommodation plan'

28 The side job:
Rémi washes up

Read the latest news and
background stories at
resource-online.nl



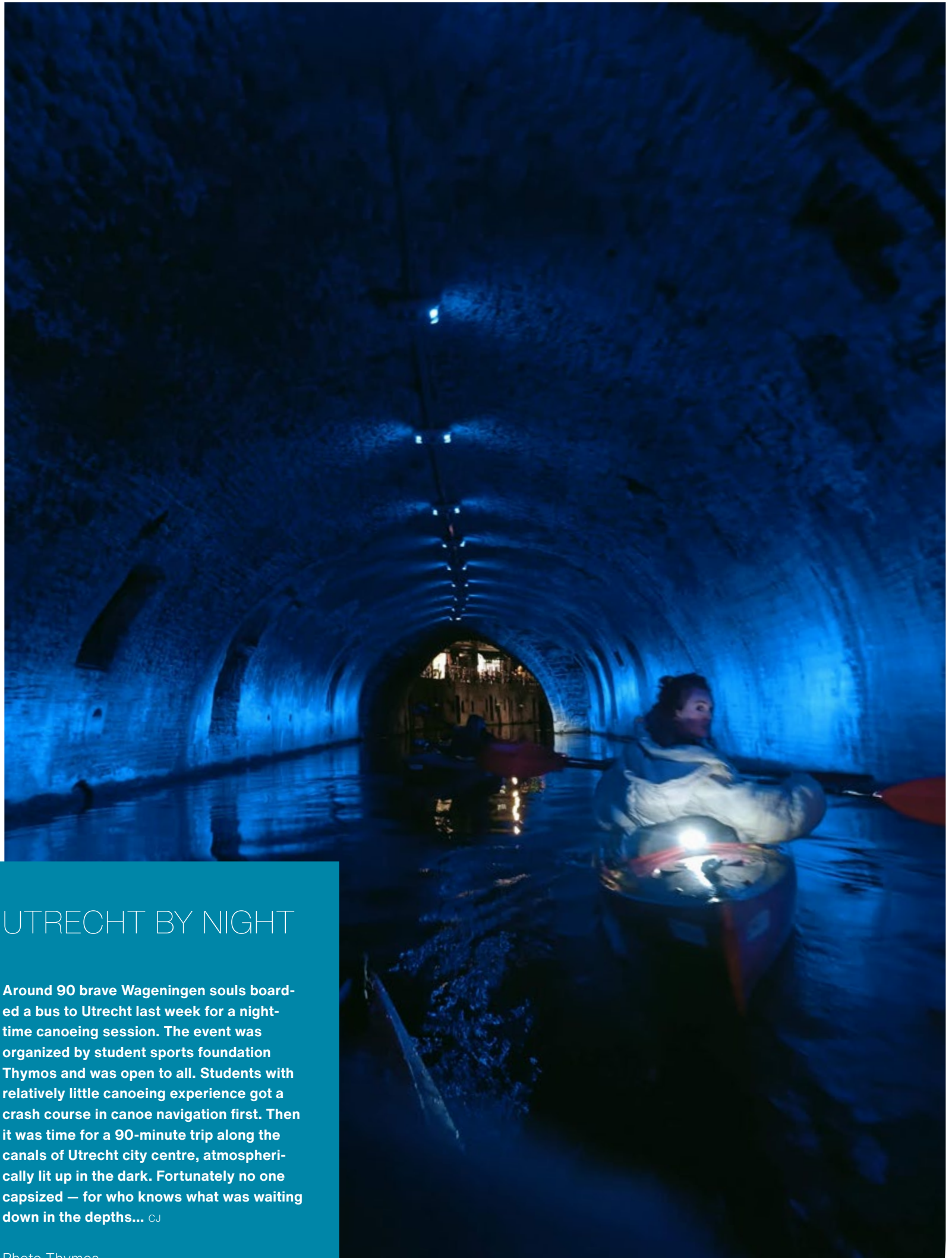
FOREWORD

Action

There is something brewing at the moment in the 'green' sciences. I noticed that at the kick-off for the Wageningen branch of Scientists4Future (page 4). And when I read the arguments in the petition by associate professor and Wageningen celebrity Jeroen Candel opposing a motion that was passed by the Dutch Parliament to water down a proposed European ban on the degradation of nature. And I certainly saw it among the Wageningen students preparing to take part in the Schiphol protests next Saturday. I find it impressive that increasing numbers of scientists, both up-and-coming youngsters and established names, feel they have to abandon their scientific aloofness and take action. In the process, they accept the risk that they will be the target of abuse and online hate (page 12). They feel they have no choice. Anything for a good cause. Although... anything? I hope it's *nearly* anything. Hopefully Wageningen scientists don't have to glue themselves to something or throw soup at paintings to get heard. And if they do have to resort to such extreme methods, I can think of a portrait gallery that could do with an update. But we will talk more about that in early December when the new monitor on female professors is published.

Marieke Enter
Editor





UTRECHT BY NIGHT

Around 90 brave Wageningen souls boarded a bus to Utrecht last week for a night-time canoeing session. The event was organized by student sports foundation Thymos and was open to all. Students with relatively little canoeing experience got a crash course in canoe navigation first. Then it was time for a 90-minute trip along the canals of Utrecht city centre, atmospherically lit up in the dark. Fortunately no one capsized — for who knows what was waiting down in the depths... [CJ](#)

Photo Thymos

Teachers positive about changes to resit policy

A survey among teachers organized by the Student Staff Council (SSC) shows that teachers are overwhelmingly positive about the proposed new resit policy.

The Executive Board's proposal reduces the number of times a student can sit an exam in a given course from three to two. However, the number of resit periods will go up from two to three. The idea behind the proposal is that staff will only have to compile one resit exam a year, which will reduce the workload. Students' pass rates are also expected to increase, as that is what happened at other universities.

Survey

A total of 445 teachers filled in the SSC survey questionnaire. 85 per cent are in

favour of reducing the number of resits (4 per cent are against this and 11 per cent don't know). Over two thirds (68 per cent) expect the change in policy to reduce the workload for teachers (14 per cent do not expect this and 18 per cent don't know).

The idea of spreading the resit weeks over

Over two thirds expect the workload to go down

the year also gets a positive reception:

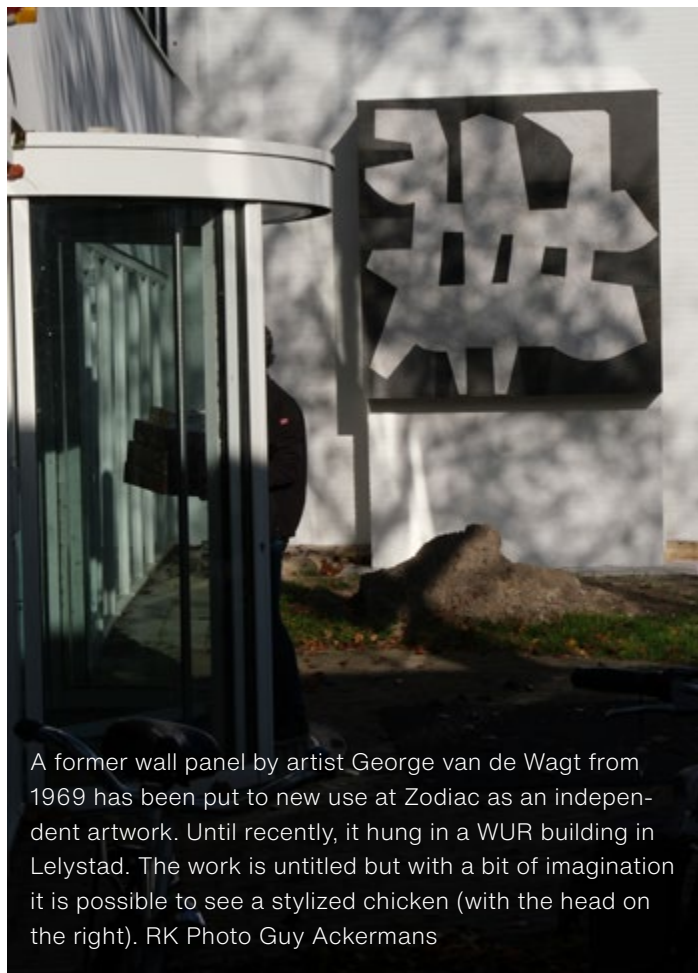
69 per cent of the teachers are in favour; 9 per cent are opposed; 22 per cent don't know. The Student Council previously organized an event for students to have a say on the proposed resit policy. It seems the stu-

dents will also agree to the new resit policy

as long as certain concerns are dealt with.

One such concern is the need to be able to make exceptions for special cases, for example if a student is about to finish their degree and only has to resit one course, but the next resit opportunity is six months away. There are also calendar issues, for example a wish to move the resit week in January to February. LZ

A vote on the resit policy was on the SSC agenda for Wednesday 2 November. As Resource had already gone to press by then, we can't tell you whether the vote took place and if so, what the outcome was. For the latest news, see www.resource-online.nl



A former wall panel by artist George van de Wagt from 1969 has been put to new use at Zodiac as an independent artwork. Until recently, it hung in a WUR building in Lelystad. The work is untitled but with a bit of imagination it is possible to see a stylized chicken (with the head on the right). RK Photo Guy Ackermans

Scientists4Future Wageningen kicks off

Arrange outreach training for scientists who want to become more activist. Make Wageningen expertise more accessible as input for the public debate. Promote associated initiatives in the Wageningen community such as the petition by associate professor Jeroen Candel (very topical!) — see resource-online.nl. Make the campus nature-inclusive and vegetarian, discourage cars on campus and sever all financial ties with the fossil fuel sector.

There was no shortage of ideas at the kick-off meeting for the Wageningen branch of Scientists4Future, organized by assistant professor Ignas Heitkönig and researchers Susanne van Donk and Geert Aarts. They are focusing on forms of collaboration that get results. 'We know a lot of students, scientists and support staff are very worried about the planet. Our aim is for the Wageningen Scientists4Future group to become the main way to channel that concern into action.' ME

13,108

The total number of students registered on the reference date of 1 October was down slightly on last year, the first decline in years. There were 13,153 students registered in 2021 (45 more than now). The decrease is mainly due to a smaller intake of Dutch students for both Bachelor's and Master's programmes. More on the falling intake next week on www.resource-online.nl. LZ

Contact point for inappropriate behaviour

'Inappropriate behaviour should have consequences,' said ombudsperson Jacqueline Schoone recently in *Resource*. She announced plans for a new, accessible contact point. That contact point is now operational and is for both students and staff. People who witness such behaviour can also contact the desk, for example to discuss what they can do to stop inappropriate behaviour. The desk functions as the first point of contact, lending an ear and giving some initial advice. If wished, you can be referred to more specialised assistance, or follow-up steps will be suggested. The desk is staffed by Schoone, social safety coordinator Joyce van der Velde, safety coordinator Wietse Willebrands and Rutger Kroes of the Student Service Centre. To contact the desk, email socialsafety@wur.nl or call 0317-481 774. ME

WUR takes Chinese protest poster fake news seriously

There was commotion on campus last week after it was reported posters protesting at the reappointment of the Chinese president Xi Jinping had been removed. Messages on social media claimed that WUR and Wageningen municipality had had the posters taken down and the people putting them up could face sanctions. Both organizations have said this is a complete lie.

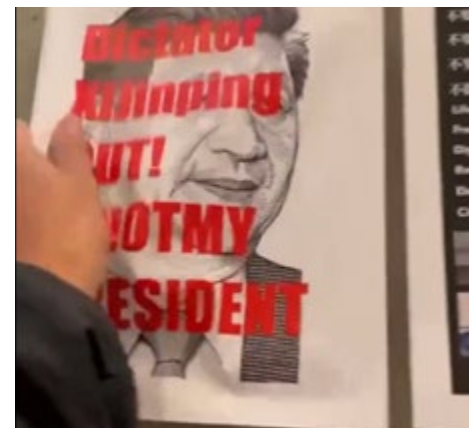
A possibly staged film clip posted online showed someone taking down a protest poster from a notice board in Orion. The accompanying text claimed that WUR is strongly opposed to the posters and is searching for the people behind them. Wageningen municipality is also allegedly tackling these 'illegal and unacceptable' posters in response to reports. But spokespeople for the university and municipality deny this. They stress that they have not received any reports about

the posters, they have not had the posters removed and they are not considering sanctions. There is also no basis for the rumour that the university might pass on personal data to the Chinese embassy. 'WUR would never do that,' says spokesperson Vincent Koperdraat.

Stirring up

WUR finds this fake news incident worrying. 'It is deliberately aimed at creating a feeling of insecurity among our students and staff,' says Koperdraat. 'We take this very seriously. As a teaching and research institution, we set great store by a safe learning and working environment, as we do by freedom of speech.' WUR is investigating the source of the fake news and hopes to prevent any repeat. Wageningen municipality is also taking the incident seriously. 'Stirring things up in this way increases the risk of polarization,' says a municipal safety officer.

This is not the first time Chinese students have been the target and instrument for political influence. In 2020, the Clingendael research institute warned that they are often monitored by fellow students and/or the Chinese embassy and they feel they are not safe to do as they please. ME



Still from the video.

Fewer members at major student societies

The number of first-years enrolling with the big long-established student societies KSV Franciscus, WSV Ceres and SSR-W is down considerably on previous years.

'We have almost 100 fewer new members this year compared with 2020,' says KSV Franciscus chair Koen Sibering. 'You see that trend among all the major societies in Wageningen.' He suspects it is connected to the increase in the number of international students in Wageningen.

'The negative stories about student societies in other cities may also be a factor.' But the lower numbers don't mean they have less fun, continues Sibering. 'Smaller cohorts are often more close-knit.'

In contrast, smaller societies such as Nji-Sri and Unitas have seen their intake increase. Lisa van Veen, secretary of Nji-Sri: 'During the 2021 AID, only a few people were allowed in our small clubhouse at the same time because of the Covid rules, whereas our parties and the in-person contact are our main selling point. That was allowed again this summer, and you immediately see an increase in numbers.' Rowing club Argo is as popular as ever. LZ

For the numbers, see www.resource-online.nl.

Action group opposed to more asphalt

'At present, traffic models are the starting point but the response to our survey shows that there is a lot of interest in switching to a new sustainable, green approach focused on quality of life.'

This conclusion comes from Jacco Bontekoe, one of the students who stood in the parking area in front of Lumen last summer to draw attention to the future of mobility and public space in and around the campus.

The survey results revealed so many

worries about such aspects as health, ecology and the quality of life that he and fellow activist Mayra van der Vrande (MSc Biology) decided to take things further. They set up the Wageningen New Mobility Action Group, in part to get a debate going about who the public space is really for. 'If we really want things to change, we need new, shared values driving the layout and use of public space, plus a vision for us to aim for.' ME

Women scientists on temporary contracts at greater risk

Women scientists on a temporary contract are at greater risk of discrimination and unequal treatment than scientists on a permanent contract.

This finding comes from a study of women leaving academia that was commissioned by the Ministry of Education at the request of the Lower House of Parliament.

A lack of job security, the tough competition for research funding and high work pressure are key reasons for both men and women on temporary contracts to give up a career in the

academic world. Factors that are mentioned more by women than by men are children, the opaqueness of appraisals and pay, and a poor work-life balance.

Explicitly asked

Women on temporary contracts are also at greater risk of unequal treatment: many say they were explicitly asked about their plans to have children, and they got negative responses when they became pregnant. Such experiences can reinforce the other reasons for leaving academia. HOP

Planning for spring

Under the watchful eye of ecologist Wieger Wamelink, a bulb-planting machine recently dug up the grass between the cycle path and the Droevendaalsesteeg road as far as Bornsesteeg, and planted flower bulbs underneath. Wamelink: 'We have planted a mix of wild flowers. In spring we will get a sea of flowers along Droevendaalsesteeg, such as botanical tulips, crocuses, celandines and snowdrops. The snowdrops and winter aconites will appear first, followed by the celandines and crocuses, and then the botanical tulips. We'll have wonderful blooms from early spring through to May.' WA Photo Resource



60 million for animal-free dairy and meat

Organizations including WUR, Maastricht University and Delft University of Technology are to get 60 million euros from the government for cellular agriculture in the Netherlands, to be invested over the next eight years in education and research on the animal-free production of meat and dairy.

The focus will be on cultured meat and precision fermentation. In precision fermentation, the DNA code of an animal protein is inserted in the cell of a micro-organism, which then replicates that protein. The DNA is not taken directly from an animal cell; the code is reproduced synthetically and then inserted in a microbe such as a yeast. In this way, a yeast or bacterium can make milk proteins.

'Precision fermentation is a form of modern biotechnology, but in the end it is still

'It may become a separate Master's programme'

ordinary fermentation,' says René Wijffels, professor of Bioprocess Engineering. 'All the yeasts, bacteria or moulds need are sugars as nutrition, and in the case of algae light too.' A tenure track scientist and a PhD candidate will work on precision fermentation in Wijffels' group, looking in particular at dairy proteins. Other PhD candidates at WUR will examine protein structures, food safety and socio-economic aspects such as consumer acceptance.

New Master's

The universities are also developing three courses for a Master's specialization in cellular agriculture. 'If a lot of students register for the courses, it may become a separate Master's programme,' says the professor. 'We expect to start the courses within the next two years. They will deal with cultured meat, precision fermentation and the societal aspects of these novel foods.' ss

Farmed insects fit in food system

Fly larvae can convert waste streams from agriculture and the food industry (such as potato peel) into insect protein as food for humans or animals. Alejandro Parodi studied the sustainability of the production of insects using waste streams.

The edible insect industry is growing. Insects require less land and contribute less to global warming than other animal products such as milk

and meat, especially if the insects are raised using waste streams.

Alejandro Parodi (Animal Production

'We need to have a debate now the sector is starting to grow'

Systems) measured emissions of greenhouse gases and ammonia during the cultivation of black soldier fly larvae. The gases are released for example through the insects' metabolism and respiration. Gas emission measurements are needed as only then can researchers make accurate calculations of how efficient insects are in converting food into body-weight.

Almost a quarter of the carbon in the feed was lost via gases if the larvae were fed a diet of yeast, wheat and potato remains. However, almost no nitrogen was released (one per cent).

Manure management

The fly larvae can also be fed on animal manure, which would be a promising solution for manure management. Carbon dioxide and ammonia emissions were higher from pig manure in combination with larvae than from manure without larvae. Despite the loss of nitrogen, the larvae were able to take up 25 per cent of the nitrogen in the manure in their bodyweight; 13 per cent was from the ammonia nitrogen in the manure. If larvae are raised using waste streams from the agrifood sector, farming black soldier flies can reduce greenhouse gases. However, the use of larvae as animal feed offsets these gains as the waste streams used to farm the larvae could have been fed directly to pigs. 'We need to have a debate now the sector is starting to grow,' says Parodi. 'And not make the same mistakes that were made in livestock farming.' ss



Photo: Shutterstock

[You win some, you lose some]

A failed experiment, an error in your model, a rejected article: in academia such things tend to be labelled failures. As for talking about failure? Not done! But that is just what WUR co-workers do in this regular feature 'You win some, you lose some'. Because failure can be useful. In this instalment, we hear from Bram Büscher, professor of the Sociology of Development and Change. Text and illustration Stijn Schreven

One of the first articles I wrote was really bad. My PhD research was about a 'trans-frontier conservation area' in Lesotho and South Africa. In the article, I wanted to revise the theory of anti-politics, a well-known theory in my field, according to which conservation organizations present themselves as neutral, whereas there are always political interests at play. In the trans-frontier park, the Lesotho organization was engaged in a new form of anti-politics: they didn't present themselves as neutral but as the voice of the community, and therefore considered themselves above criticism.

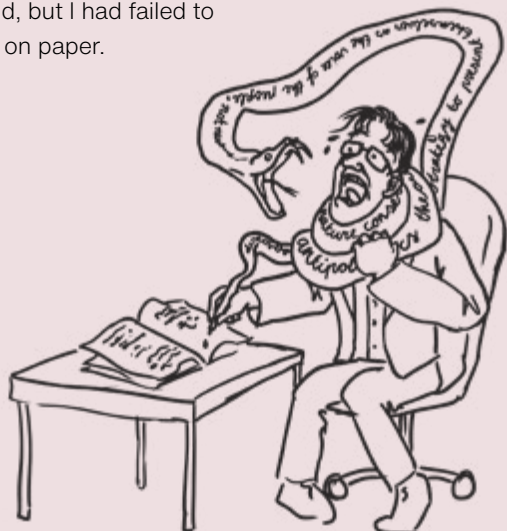
That form of anti-politics was an innovation in the field, I thought. But when my wife read the text, she stopped after two pages, it was so badly written. That was rather sobering, but it was also motivating. I adapted the article and submitted it to a journal. The reviews were unanimous: unreadable. It was so frustrating. I was so eager to share my idea with the world, but I had failed to put it across on paper.

There was work to be done. I took a course in Academic English and became aware of the huge importance of language, details and nuances of meaning. And my manager was

English. After that first review, I asked him to look at my texts

'The reviews were unanimous: unreadable'

much more carefully, and he coached me over the following few years. I got many a report and article back from him covered in red ink. It was tough, but it was incredibly good for me. I resubmitted the manuscript a year later and it came back with major revisions. I made a third attempt the next year, and eventually, after four years, my article was published. I learnt an awful lot from the writing process. And to this day, I pass on the lessons I learnt to my students.



Turmeric drinks to combat malnutrition in Nigeria

Adding turmeric to popular drinks could help combat malnutrition in developing countries. PhD candidate Folake Idowu-Adebayo discovered that adding turmeric to soya milk, cow's milk and hibiscus drink increases the amount of micronutrients.

Numerous health benefits have been claimed for turmeric, ranging from antioxidants to protection against cancer and poisoning. Folake Idowu-Adebayo, a researcher at Food Quality and Design, wanted to use turmeric to combat malnutrition in her home country, Nigeria. She added turmeric root to two popular drinks sold by street vendors: zobo and soya milk. Zobo is made by boiling the calyx of the roselle plant (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) in water.

Boiled zobo with two per cent turmeric contains much more vitamin C, which is surprising because turmeric itself does not contain any vitamin C. Boiling may release precursors

Zobo with two per cent turmeric contains more vitamin C

of vitamin C from the turmeric, which may then react with other compounds in the zobo to produce vitamin C. Idowu-Adebayo also

showed that soya milk is a better carrier of turmeric antioxidants than cow's milk. So a plant-based variant of 'golden milk' (milk with turmeric) may have more health benefits than the animal-based variant.

Additional benefits

Both studies point to the effect of the food matrix: the combination of ingredients in a food product influences the health benefits from the individual ingredients. Ingredients can strengthen one another. Idowu-Adebayo advocates further study of such influences. 'Then researchers may find the scientific evidence for the purported health benefits of turmeric, claimed since ancient times.' ss



Protein quality of most soya products is good

Scientists at Unilever and WUR have discovered that on average processing has no negative effect on the nutritional value of soya, contrary to what is often thought.

Soya has to be processed, for example by soaking or heating it, before it can be used. 'People have doubts about the nutritional value of processed food, in particular the protein quality,' says Jurriaan Mes, researcher at Wageningen Food and Biobased Research. 'But it seems you don't need to worry about that with soya-based products.'

Some products even score better after processing

The researchers looked at the literature on digestibility indispensable

amino acid scores (DIAAS). The higher the score, the better the product satisfies the body's requirements in terms of amino acid composition and digestibility. 'Anything above 75 is seen as a good score as this is the minimum required for health claims in certain countries,' says Mes.

High scores

Analysis showed soya product groups differ in their protein quality scores. Some products scored less than 75, mainly processed soya beans, soya protein meal and protein isolates. The average score for all products was 85, and the DIAAS was sometimes higher after processing than before.

'The study shows that processed soya as used in most vegetarian alternatives can make a significant contribution in meeting the body's protein requirements,' says Mes. He thinks a study of the final products could also be interesting in future. 'After all, you eat the entire product, not just the soya meal for instance.' TL

Risk of vitamin deficiency after stomach reduction



Some obesity patients who have a stomach reduction fail to take their pills every day as prescribed, which can lead to vitamin deficiency.

This finding comes from research by Marieke Smelt. She obtained her doctorate on 16 September in the Human Nutrition and Health group. Smelt works at Catharina Hospital in Eindhoven. 'Changes in the gastrointestinal tract after a stomach reduction lead to a decrease in the uptake of nutrients, vitamins and minerals,' explains Smelt. 'This can

result in vitamin deficiency even with a healthy diet.' To prevent this, patients are

'You can get vitamin deficiency after a stomach operation even with a healthy diet'

prescribed vitamin supplements designed especially for them. However, Smelt discovered that a substantial proportion of the patients (22 per cent) did not take the supplements, or not every day. She wanted to know why these patients were failing to take the vitamin supplements. 'Only then can we figure out how to improve this.'

Over 4600 patients from four hospitals in the Netherlands filled in a questionnaire about the use of multivitamins. The main reasons

for not taking the pills were the side effects, the off-putting taste or smell, and the lack of information. The cost was another issue. In addition, 30 per cent of the patients were not satisfied with the explanation they got from the health professionals in the hospital. 'Apparently we are not doing a good job as professionals,' says Smelt.

Insurance

However, steps have already been taken, explains Smelt. 'A stomach complaints outpatient clinic has been set up. We also now discuss the patient's personal preferences and potential issues.' In addition, the supplement manufacturers are working on how to improve the taste and smell. Smelt also sees a role for health insurers. 'Stomach reduction surgery is not a quick fix for obesity. It requires lifelong treatment, for example with these multivitamins, and insurers need to acknowledge this. If patients develop medical problems later on, the healthcare costs will be much higher.' TL

THE PROPOSITION

For PhD candidates, their thesis propositions are an opportunity to publicly express their professional and personal convictions about science and society. In this feature they explain their most thought-provoking proposition. This time, a proposition from Mirjam Breure (Soil Biology), who defended her thesis on 28 October 2022.



'A kid, kitten or kite a day keeps the doctor away.'

'It is of course a nod to the English saying, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away". My proposition refers to the health benefits of play. Play is just as essential to health as food and sleep. No, I don't have a child, a cat or a kite myself. Those three things stand for different kinds of play. And they alliterate nicely, of course. My favourite? Playing with young children. They do nothing else and they love to involve you in their game. I became an aunt four times during the years I was doing my PhD. As an adult, you don't tend to start playing

with Lego. People should play more. It increases your problem-solving capacity, creativity and social skills. But the main thing, of course, is that it's fun and relaxing. I was once working at my parents' house while they were looking after the grandchildren. That day I got a message saying there were problems with my soil samples from Ethiopia. I burst into tears. My little nephew brought me a toy to comfort me. That did me the world of good. The message: if you're sad, do something fun. Play cheers you up.' RK

Vacancy

Are you passionate about new types of education and do you know how to promote them? Then we are looking for you!

The Alliance of TU/e, WUR, UU, and UMCU (EWUU) is looking for a student-assistant for at least ½ year for 6 hours per week for communication and promotion of our challenges and eduXchange, and support events. You will work, together with colleagues from different institutions, in the EWUU communication team led by the WUR project coordinator.

Interested?

Send your CV and motivation letter in English before this 11th of November to sara.panis@wur.nl. Interviews will take place on 15th and/or 18th of November.

Your responsibilities / opportunities

- Develop communication materials, texts, articles, videos and visuals in different tools a.o. in Canva for social media.
- Prepare emails to different target groups incl. program directors & study advisors.
- Support promotion and strategy to reach students.
- Support events in challenges.
- Representative at events and open days

Your qualities

You are proactive with an eye for detail, know how to capture the imagination and convey a message. You can work independently but also support others well as a team player.

Preferably, you have experience with communication, promotion, event organization or on a committee, a board or similar.

You are flexible, available for 6 hours a week, fluent in English, a competent planner and stress resistant. You will work mainly online but also on campus or in the Alliance office at UU. You schedule your own hours except for the weekly meeting.

Starting date: 1st of December 2022. You will receive a one-year contract with possibility of extension and a standard student assistant salary.

Accommodation plan

When I think back to my own PhD research, one of the nicest things about it was sharing the ups and downs with my office mates who were doing their PhD as well. Your first publication, a tough conversation with your supervisors or an incomprehensible question from the Medical Ethics Review Committee: it all got discussed and processed in the safe togetherness of my PhD room. And of course, now and then somebody left

‘Colleagues are your first touchstone to check if you’ve gone mad or the world has’

after defending their PhD thesis and then a new colleague was welcomed and gradually initiated by the more experienced PhD students in the room into the ins and outs of the Training and Supervision Plan, the research proposal and the joys of lecturing. Nowadays I share an office with people who are at a different stage of their careers, but luckily, the conversations are very similar: an incomprehensible question from your professor, your first grant or a tough conversation with one of the PhD students you supervise: your colleagues are your sounding board and the first touchstone to check whether you’ve gone mad or the world has.


after defending their PhD thesis and then a new colleague was welcomed and gradually initiated by the more experienced PhD students in



Guido Camps

In short, your colleagues, especially your immediate peers in the form of office mates, are an incredibly important factor in your job satisfaction. Interaction was precisely what most people missed while working from home during the Covid pandemic. A terrible email in your inbox is instantly less terrible when your colleague responds to your snivelling with, ‘what’s up?’

This is part of the reason why I just don’t get why the newly announced ‘accommodation plan’ of my group, the Agrotechnology & Food Sciences Group, is based on flexible workstations, a euphemism for depriving yourself of a fixed spot, permanent office mates and the pleasure and convenience of leaving a paper on your desk at the end of the working day. I get that the world has changed since Covid, buildings are expensive and people are working from home more. But come on! Looking for a spot every day, no longer being able to look at your old conference poster on the wall, and no longer knowing where everyone is sitting? That’s a very drastic change and I haven’t heard anyone have a good word to say about it. Let office mates make their own schedules and solve a problem themselves if there is one, but don’t just deprive them of their rooms.

 To comment on this column, go to resource-online.nl

Guido Camps (38) is a vet and a researcher at Human Nutrition and OnePlanet. He also enjoys baking, beekeeping and unusual animals.

A new chairholder after five years

COMMUNICATION DUO

It was predictable that the departure of Peter Feindt and Noelle Aarts in 2017 would leave a big gap to fill at Strategic Communication. But not that it would take as long as it has. But since July, the group has at last had a chairholder again. And he did not come alone. 'We are doing this on an equal basis.'



Text Marieke Enter

The chair was unoccupied for precisely four years and ten months. 'Pretty intense,' confirms Sanne Kruikemeier, who has been professor of Digital Media & Society since April. In her very first meeting with the chair group, she witnessed the agenda item 'who will be the new chair?' finally being ticked after five years. She knows the new chairholder well, having worked closely with him for years at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). Rens Vliegenthart started three months after her, but their move to Wageningen was really a joint one.

From no to maybe

Naturally, *Resource* is curious to know how that dual transfer went: who didn't want to go without whom, was WUR up for it right from the start, what is the procedure in a case like that, and what happens if one gets the job and the other doesn't...? Vliegenthart chuckles at the questions. 'A lot went on in the run-up to it,' he admits. He was on the appointment committee for the new chair three

times, but no appointment was made. 'Apparently I then joked that if they still didn't have anyone after 10 years I would come myself,' he recalls. And yet when he was seriously sounded out last summer, he initially said no. 'Until WUR asked me whether a context was conceivable in which a transfer would be attractive. Then I texted Sanne. I had already drawn WUR's attention to her, as a top communications scientist that WUR should definitely have on board. And that's how the idea came up of the two of us making the move.' But it wasn't a done deal yet. Vliegenthart: 'Our assessment was that a move would only be a success if we had enough clout – if we could do it together, on an equal footing, so both as professors.' But Kruikemeier wasn't a full professor yet. 'That's why I went through the whole process of becoming a personal professor first,' she says. Vliegenthart chips in: 'I had my first job interview the day after it became clear that Sanne was going to succeed (and WUR asked her to come anyway, regard-

less of whether I came).' And so, in one fell swoop, WUR gained two professors: a male chairholder and a female full professor. 'Although I really wouldn't have minded if Sanne had become the chair,' says Vliegenthart.

Wageningen themes

The attraction of the move lay largely in the Wageningen context, they explain. Kruikemeier: 'I do a lot of research into political communication in the digital domain; social and other online media. You see Wageningen topics coming up more and more often: climate change, the nitrogen crisis, meat consumption –

**'ONLY TOGETHER
WILL THIS MOVE
BE A SUCCESS'**



Sanne Kruijkemeier and Rens Vliegenthart • Photo Duncan de Fey

you name it. As a diehard communication scientist, it's very exciting to me to investigate these frequently politicized subjects from a communication perspective. It's really relevant to society.'

Vliegenthart too is very interested in the Wageningen domain. 'Always was,' he says. 'As a secondary schoolboy I even attended the information day on Food Technology. In the end I chose to do political science and socio-cultural sciences at the VU University Amsterdam, but the interest was there and has always remained.' And there were other considerations making the Leeuwenborch an appealing workplace for Vliegenthart. 'I was at a kind of crossroads in my life: in my early forties, promoted to research director of a large research school in Amsterdam (the Amsterdam School of Communication Research - ASCoR, ed.). Nice, but it meant less and less time for research and teaching. And where do you go from there? Several other universities sounded me out, but each time I thought: nah. I

'WE NEED MORE UNDERSTANDING OF HOW SUCH A PUBLIC DEBATE UNFOLDS'

wanted to both be involved at the academic level and build something new. You can do that here.'

It's a good thing that is what he was looking for, because the task facing Kruijkemeier and Vliegenthart is not easy. If a group is without a chair for nearly five years, that leaves its mark. 'That is true, but the group has done a good job of keeping the show on the road, and excellent communication research is taking place here,' responds Vliegenthart. Until recently, the group focused mainly on interpersonal forms of communication

such as dialogues. The links with mainstream communication science could be strengthened, he acknowledges: 'Communication has become so complex in recent years –with the mix of the media, the public, and the politicians. In the chair group, the media perspective is still somewhat neglected, whereas Sanne and I make it a standard part of our approach



to research and education'. He clarifies: 'It's about major, far-reaching changes in how people consume their information. I love exploring those big political and social themes.'

And do those big themes appeal to students too? 'You would think they would, wouldn't you?' he replies. 'Yet the BSc in Communication & Life Sciences is the smallest in Wageningen, with 20 first-year students. That is one of the things the rector has told us: it's allowed to grow a bit. Yes, that is the ambition.' Kruikemeier: 'In our education, "the big questions" are very important. You have to make education relevant. That inspires the students too.'

Polarization and politicization

As for the research agenda: Kruikemeier has a strong track record as a researcher of online political campaigns, plus the way they are influenced by fake news. She investigates, for instance, whether online targeting has measurable effects and whether these can have a noticeable impact on the democratic process (spoiler alert: it seems they can, as political ads can influence voting behaviour). She will continue this line of research in Wageningen, together with several PhD students. There are lots of new things in the pipeline as well, such as two imminent PhD projects on typical Wageningen themes: one on polarization around climate change and one on the politicization of science communication. 'Take questions such as: how exactly do you get information across to the public, how do third parties such as right-wing populist political parties create their own narrative out of it, what are the consequences of that – like the hatred of scientists, journalists and

politicians – and what solutions can be found for this?' Kruikemeier continues: 'I notice that the life sciences are looking more urgently for something to hold onto in this area. Just look at the nitrogen debate, where nitrogen benchmarks are being questioned and so is the credibility and integrity of scientists. There is a great need for more understanding of exactly how a public debate of this kind unfolds.'

'We just have a lot of research ambitions,' adds Vliegenthart. 'There are things we want to figure out, and we also want to figure out how you figure such questions out – because methodologically, communication science faces quite a lot of challenges. Perhaps we should also draw clear attention to that methodological innovation, so that Strategic Communication will not just be seen as a group that does relevant research and understands the complexity of communication, but also as a group that uses a range of sound methods to do so.'

Have the new professors already seen any less positive sides of Wageningen? Vliegenthart thinks for a moment and then answers quite firmly. 'That it is quite patriarchal here, male-dominated – I'd say that's a thing. You just mentioned that it is great that, with Sanne, WUR

'THE GROUP HAS DONE A GOOD JOB OF KEEPING THE SHOW ON THE ROAD'

has another female professor. But in the discussions about our appointments, I didn't get the impression that it was a factor – even though there is a total imbalance, even in the Social Sciences Group, a field in which the gender balance is rapidly improving at other universities. In my view, WUR still has a way to go. But other than that, I haven't seen anything I'm very worried about.'

Kruikemeier: 'What strikes me most is that people are incredibly friendly. Students say that too. If they spend some time at other universities, they are glad to come back. You feel at home in this green haven.' ■



Sanne Kruikemeier (1985)

Is: professor of Digital Media and Society.

And also, for example: board member of GVR/Slagzinnenregister

Used to be: associate professor of Political Communication and Journalism (UvA).

More detail: go to sannekruikemeier.wordpress.com for more on her research



Rens Vliegenthart (1980)

Is: professor and chair of Strategic Communication.

And also, for example: editor of popular science blog StukRoodVlees.

Used to be: professor of Media and Society and academic director at the Amsterdam School of Communication Research (ASCoR, UvA). And president of The Young Academy (2016 to 2018).

Anti-pest weapon deciphered

Plants develop all kinds of strategies for warding off pest insects. Some varieties of cabbage, for example, kill the part of the leaf where the cabbage white butterfly lays its eggs, as Niccolo Bassetti, a researcher at Biosystems, has shown. The egg then dies. Exit cabbage white.

Bassetti obtained a PhD earlier this month for his study of the genetic mechanism behind this localized suicide. The phenomenon itself has been known to scientists since the 1980s. Varieties of cabbage exhibit necrosis (cell death) at places where cabbage whites have laid eggs.

Many cabbage plants use glucosinolates, the bitter substance in radish, rocket and cauliflower, as a defence against butterflies. To counter this, cabbage whites have developed the ability to break down this toxin. That puts the score at one all. But some cabbage plants went on to develop local necrosis. Bassetti's experiments showed that the wild black mustard plant is particularly good at this.

Cell death

According to Bassetti, it is not entirely clear how cell death causes the eggs to die. 'We think the eggs on the dead bit of leaf get dehydrated. We see them shrink. Another explanation is that the egg becomes misshapen because the leaf dries out. It is also possible that the necrosis releases substances that are toxic to the egg. Perhaps all of that goes on; biology is never simple.'

Bassetti looked for the genes in Chinese cabbage and black mustard that are responsible for the stimulated necrosis. In Chinese cabbage, three sites in the genome turned out to be involved, and they explained 30 per cent of the necrosis between them. The wild black mustard was a simpler case with only one site on the genome responsible for the defence response.

Escape routes

This piece of the genome consists of 11 genes. It is not yet clear which of the 11 genes is the real 'murder weapon'. Bassetti has a prime suspect but cannot name it because of an ongoing patent application.



Necrosis (cell death) on the spot where a cabbage has laid an egg.
♦ Photo Nina Fatouros

'You can insert this trait in plants for which the eggs are a big problem.' Arms proliferation, in other words, but all in a good cause.

A lot of cabbage species could benefit from such improved protection against the cabbage white. 'In crops, the necrosis response is very weak, whereas it is strong in wild black mustard. This kind of difference between crops and wild

species is quite common. That is due to domestication: the necrosis response gets diluted in the selection for other properties. Modern genetics lets us restore that

response and increase genetic diversity.'

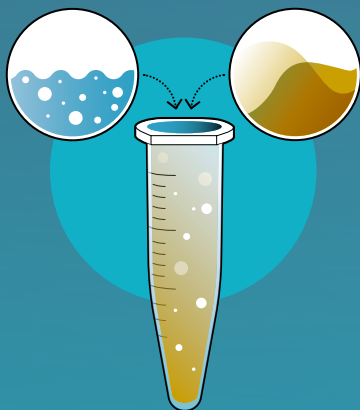
That puts the ball back in the butterflies' court. 'Some cluster their eggs, which results in fewer deaths,' says Bassetti. 'Our hypothesis is that they dry out more slowly. Some butterflies choose to lay the eggs on the flower rather than the leaf. A third option is to move house. That might be what happened with the black-veined white. It escaped the necrosis by changing host.' ^{RK}

**'Biology
is never
simple'**

SEAWEED AS A SOLUTION

Brown seaweeds, such as giant kelp, contain valuable carbohydrates such as alginate, which is often used as a thickener and medical hydrogel. At present, the extraction of alginate uses a lot of water and chemicals and unavoidably destroys other useful substances in the seaweed. The recently started SeaSolv project, headed by Antoinette Kazbar of Bioprocess Engineering, aims to use natural solvents (deep eutectic solvents, DES) to sustainably extract all the seaweed compounds one by one. Ideally, the process should be waste-free: all the solvents are recycled and all the substances in the seaweed are used.

Text Stijn Schreven • Infographic Pixels&inkt



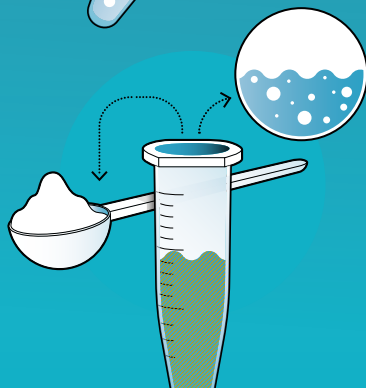
MIX

The seaweed and DES are mixed. The DES binds to seaweed protein, alginate, or pigment (fucoxanthin), depending on the composition and properties of the DES.



TWO PHASES

After mixing, the solution separates into two phases: a hydrophobic phase above, a water-soluble phase below. The DES is in one of the phases with, for example, alginate.



REUSE OF DES

Adding more of one of the two DES compounds, CO_2 , or an anti-solvent that breaks the hydrogen bonds changes the water solubility of the DES and precipitates alginate. The alginate can be purified and the DES reused.

DES: HOW DOES IT WORK?

A DES (deep eutectic solvents) consists of two natural compounds such as sugars, alcohols, or amino acids. They are mixed and heated up to 50-80 degrees Celsius.



HYDROGEN BONDS

These compounds form hydrogen bonds between them, which lower the melting point of the mixture. Thus, it is liquid at room temperature.



CELL WALLS

The mixture can break down cell walls, releasing the cell contents. This mechanism has already been demonstrated in microalgae; it is expected to work in macroalgae (seaweed) as well.

Dry weight **20%**

Water **80%**

DRY WEIGHT COMPOSITION

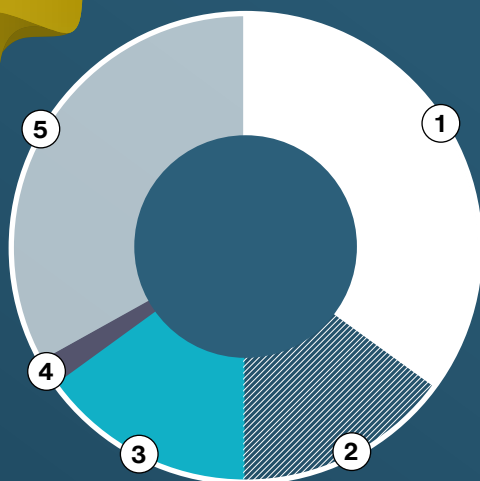
Alginate **35%** ①

Protein **15%** ②

Sugars **15%** ③

Fat **2%** ④

Minerals **33%** ⑤



Two sides

‘Gender-neutral forms can obscure difference and inequality’

They, them, their, theirs. In an ever more inclusive world, language is changing too. *Resource* talks to gender studies researcher Margreet van der Burg and Menno Sedee, final editor at the Dutch daily *NRC*, about the limits of inclusive language and images in science and journalism. Text Willem André • Photo Margreet van der Burg: Guy Ackermans • Photo Menno Sedee: Bram Belloni



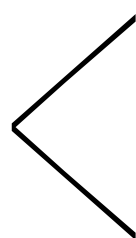
Should we say actor or actress? He or they? Which photos shall we use? We consulted two experts. Sedee is a freelance final editor at *NRC* and collaborated on an LGBT style guide for that newspaper. Van der Burg is a senior researcher in Gender Studies and the WUR-wide gender+ integration project leader for the EU project Gender-SMART.

Sedee: ‘The core of our style guide is: we write with respect for everyone and use people’s preferred pronouns, but at the same time, we don’t want to confuse the reader. With non-binary pronouns like they /them/their we still usually find that we need to explain. Gender-neutral language is also about gendered names of occupations. We tend to choose the masculine form as the neutral form. But is that really neutral? In Dutch, for example, if you say *politicus* for politician, most people picture a man. So I think that pre-

cisely by using the feminine form *politica*, you contribute to emancipation.’

Van der Burg: ‘I always add “man” and “woman” to neutral forms of language, or hint at whether the people in question are women or men. Research shows that you don’t break down the stereotyping in our heads by bringing back old feminine forms like “actress” or “manageress”. They just conjure up old associations with difference, like “farmer’s wife”. Women involved in agriculture want to be called women farmers, not farmers’ wives. That’s how they emphasize their contemporary identity. I also specify “male farmers” if I’m referring exclusively to men. I think we should acknowledge and name difference and inequality, and be transparent and specific. Gender-neutral forms can obscure that.’

Sedee: ‘Every day we print all the pages of the next day’s paper. Then the editor-in-chief and the photo editors look at this overview, partly to see if there are enough women in the paper. You’re on thin ice here, because you interview someone



‘Totally gender-neutral language is not necessarily the goal’

Menno Sedee

> 'You don't break down stereotyping by bringing back old forms like actress or manageress'

Margreet van der Burg

because she's an expert, not because she is a woman. But sometimes you are more inclined to give a man prominence in the photo than a woman. At such times, your bias becomes visible.'

Van der Burg: 'An element of conflict remains. You want to reflect reality while at the same time doing justice to diversity. Think of our *dies natalis*. If you photograph the front row of the procession of professors, you see mostly older men, because it goes by seniority. If you take a photo further down the cortège, you will see more women, and the same goes for student speeches. You can put together a collage. Making a conscious choice relates to the question of which realities you see and consider important and why. To me it's more interesting to look for the scope for that kind of nuance and creativity than to play the policeman and point out everything that's wrong.'

Resource: How do you feel about the discussion about 'women who menstruate' as opposed to 'people who menstruate'?

Sedee: 'I think the two can coexist. It's OK to write "people who menstruate" if that is relevant. In medical contexts, for example, it is relevant to be precise. But that doesn't mean you can never say "woman" again. Activists can make an issue of this, but if you're rigid about it, that's grist to the mill of people who wail that "you're not allowed to say anything anymore". But in general, respecting the rights of minorities doesn't mean taking anything away from majorities.'

Van der Burg: 'People are frustrated that it is taking so long to create a more inclusive society. I would say "women who menstruate" is fine. But that does refer to a subset because there are also women who don't menstruate and there are menstruating people who don't identify as women. It is certainly important to understand that. It's a shame there is such a fuss about it because there are better uses of our time.'

Sedee: 'The world is not always diverse. Suppose you were to have this conversation about the fire service. The fact is that there are not many female firefighters. So should you still choose a woman for the photo, in order to break the stereotype? The same goes for non-binary pronouns. On the one hand, you want to describe everyone as they identify themselves, but in society at large, these pronouns are rarely used and people are not at ease with them yet. We're beginning to get used to they/them/their, but suppose another pronoun is added next year, like "xi", say? I don't think NRC will adopt that straightaway. But newspapers are part of society, so they too play a role in getting people used to new terms.'



Van der Burg: 'In sectors where women are underrepresented, you can place the situation in a broader context. You might, for example, comment that there are only men in certain army barracks. You can't change the facts, but you can draw attention to them.'

Sedee: 'Totally gender-neutral language is not necessarily the goal. Many people derive much of their identity from their gender, and that includes transgender people. Trans women, for example, have often fought hard to get to be women or to get an "f" in their passport. If people were to be addressed on the train as "passengers" instead of "ladies and gentlemen", they might feel deprived of the chance to be addressed according to their gender. Now, it's no big deal on the train, but it would be if gender were to disappear altogether.'

Van der Burg: 'You should aim to be empirically correct, transparent and specific. Particularly by being specific, you can expose stereotyping or inequality. To that end you should definitely choose not neutral forms but gender-sensitive or -specific forms.' ■

What do you think? Comment on this article at resource-online.nl.

Four stomachs and 30 metres of gut

THE LAST MEAL OF ORCA GALA IB6

Within hours of her death on 16 October, the beached orca from Cadzand was hoisted onto the dissecting table in Utrecht with the aim of determining the cause of death. Later that week, the stomach and intestines went to Wageningen Marine Research in Den Helder for dietary analysis. *Resource* was an observer.



Text Stijn Schreven

We are in the dissecting room at Wageningen Marine Research (WMR). The open door provides a view of Den Helder harbour. Daylight reflects off two sparkling clean dissecting tables. In one corner of the lab, two people in blue coats are hunched over a black barrel. Marine biologist Mardik Leopold and his assistant and former trainee Anita van Nierop are looking at the shapeless mass of organs that half-fill the barrel. 'These will be the intestines, so the stomach must be in that bag,' says Leopold. They hoist a large bag onto the cutting table, tip the contents into a grey tray and start searching the organ for clues with their hands. A glance into the tray reveals a large hunk of solid meat, covered in membranes.

The smell is not too bad: it smells of blood but not of rotten fish. That's because the animal is still very fresh. It died on Sunday night and was taken straight to Utrecht for autopsy, after which the stomach and intestines were immediately frozen. A beached whale is often somewhat decayed by the time it gets here, and then you can smell it. There's a reason why the door is open to the outdoors.

From Spain to Cadzand

By now, there is a line of employees in blue coats watching the two at the dissection table with curiosity. It is the first orca ever to be examined at WMR. She

was beached alive near Cadzand, but died in spite of a rescue attempt. The immature female turned out to be the Spanish-Portuguese Gala IB6. She had swum all the way from the waters around the Iberian Peninsula to the North Sea – an odd thing to do. In Spain, she was always seen together with a male. Near Cadzand, too, a second orca was swimming by her side, but only Gala beached herself. 'That does suggest that she was sick,' Leopold said. The only question is, what was wrong with her. To find that out, Leopold is investigating Gala's stomach and intestines.

Plastic

The first stage of the stomach analysis is to cut the great hunk into manageable pieces. 'Hey, look at this!' Leopold's hand emerges from the stomach with a large piece of clear plastic. The researchers get hold of a first piece of the stomach, which is white on the inside with rough folds. They rinse out these folds with a jet of water in a sink. Then they pour the water into a large glass, which they let overflow slowly under the tap. 'This way, all the mucus, foam, pieces of tissue and microplastics float out,' says Leopold. These particles are caught in a sieve under the glass.

What Leopold is really interested in are the things at the bottom of the glass: the heavy ossicles (ear bones) of fish, called otoliths. Those bones provide information

about the orca's diet. 'They are bones of half a millimetre to a one and a half centimetres in size. You can tell the species of the fish by their shape, and its size by their size.'

The first flush yields a meagre catch: one fragment of shell. We return to the tank. Now another bit of stomach emerges, which is dark and less folded. 'This is the second stomach,' says Leopold. 'A whale has four stomachs. I don't expect there will be any prey left in the second stomach, only liquid.' The food enters stomach one, and stomach two produces digestive juices and releases them into stomach one. From there it goes back and forth and then the liquid matter flows on to stomachs three and four. 'Those are more like outlets into the intestines.'

Metre by metre

After three flushes, the researchers are done with the stomach. The organs go into a red container in the freezing cell. The result: 'Maybe one otolith,' says Leopold, pointing to a white piece of bone in a glass petri dish. On to the gut. The researchers lay the slippery tube

'IT IS CLEAR THAT THIS ORCA WASN'T EATING WHEN SHE DIED'

out zigzag on the table. 'We want to measure the length of the intestine. That's something we don't know about the orca. The dissection table is exactly one metre wide.' Leopold and Van Nierop count a total of 30.6 metres of intestine – which they also cut open and rinse, in search of ear bones. In vain.

Leopold then examines the haul from the stomach under a microscope. What was assumed to be an otolith turns out to be a pebble. 'Too bad,' says Leopold. 'So we can't learn anything about the diet from this. Clearly, this orca was not eating when it died. If the diagnosis in Utrecht is starvation, we can at least confirm that.' It is now 6 p.m. and the analysis is over. The door opens and the cleaner comes in. He glances around the room and asks Leopold: 'Will you guys do the floor?' ■



Leopold (left) and Van Nierop measure 30.6 metres of intestines. ♦ Photo Stijn Schreven

HOW MUSHROOMS GROW

If you want to see mushrooms, you should get out and about now. But if you want to see a mushroom in a whole new way, watch WUR scientist Tim Wijgerde's documentary *Dutch Mushrooms* about fly agarics, earth stars, stink agarics and more.

Wijgerde is a marine biologist, but in his spare time he photographs and films 'everything that flies, crawls or swarms'. And the quality he produces bears comparison with famous BBC series. His latest production is a half-hour documentary, more like a vlog really, about Dutch mushrooms. Wijgerde takes the viewer to the Horsterwold woods in the Flevopolder (see: YouTube: Forest Vlog - Episode 12: Dutch Mushrooms).

The vlogs are the latest development in Wijgerde's oeuvre. Having started out as a photographer, he turned to time-lapse filming seven years ago. 'I saw a time-lapse video of coral on YouTube. I thought, hey, that's fun. If I take photos in series, I can make videos of processes.' The time lapse approach led to a transition to film and moving images.

A little over one year later, Wijgerde released *A reef by night and day*, a documentary chock-full of spectacular time-lapse footage of corals. 'Corals are animals,' Wijgerde explains, 'but because they are so static, they look more like plants. Everything in nature moves, but often on a different time scale than ours. That can make it seem very static, when it is actually very dynamic. You can capture that very well with time lapse footage.'

Not at ease yet

Incidentally, the bulk of those coral images were not shot on the reef, but at home in the sea aquarium he had at the time. This method of working was born of necessity. 'That's how the BBC works too. It is hard to leave a camera on a reef for very long, with limited power supply. With mushrooms, you can do it sometimes, at least if they grow fast enough, like the common stink-horn. That comes out of the ground in three hours.'

The coral film was still a classic nature documentary



Fly agaric. ♦ Photo Tim Wijgerde

with a voiceover commentary. But in his vlogs, Wijgerde has a more visible presence. 'People like to see other people, they want a visible person who explains things,' he says. 'But it still feels strange to me. I'm not really at ease in front of a camera yet.'

Wijgerde works alone and is self-taught. 'I do everything myself: image, sound, editing. I never took a course. Just a lot of reading and searching on the internet.' The images are razor-sharp, yet his equip-

ment is fairly basic:

'They are just ordinary consumer cameras. Nikon SLRs, one 12 years old and one seven. With some Adobe software and a powerful computer, you

'I have never taken a course. Just done a lot of reading and searching on the internet'

can achieve cinema quality. That coral film has been screened in several cinemas during film festivals.'

Despite the professional standard, it remains a hobby. 'But it is awfully time-consuming. I have spent over 200 hours on this mushroom film over the past three years.' So why does he do it? 'For pleasure. As a scientist, you spend a lot of time sitting indoors. Making films gives me an incentive to go out into nature and film. I really enjoy that combination of creativity and being out of doors.' RK

Drug use among students: on the rise?

Since the Covid-19 pandemic and the accompanying lockdowns, drugs use is said to be booming among students. There have been articles on this in various media, Utrecht student societies organized a symposium about it, and WUR rector Arthur Mol expressed his concerns about the 'increasing use of stimulants among students'. But is it actually true? And what is the situation in Wageningen?



Text Coretta Jongeling

Where does the perception that students are using ever more drugs come from? This impression appears to come largely from students' experiences and stories, as well as signals picked up by people supporting them. There are very few hard figures on drug use among students. In spring 2021, the research institute Trimbos and health organizations RIVM and GGD GHOR ran a survey on wellbeing

and substance use among higher education students. This survey was filled in by more than 28,000 students from across the country and covered alcohol, drugs, tobacco and gaming. It also asked about stress, pressure to perform, and mental health. You can see some of the results in the table below. The

results were not broken down by educational institution.

'It is the first time we have conducted this study among students only,' says Michelle van der Horst, a scientist at Trimbos, in an interview on Teams. 'So we can't say anything about changes in drug use among students. This survey is a starting point and we want to do it every other year from now on.' Van der Horst has another disclaimer besides this. 'The survey was done during the third lockdown. Certain substances are very setting-specific. For instance, ecstasy is used a lot at festivals and not

Drugs	Used in past (%)	Used in past year (%)	Used in past month (%)
Alcohol	96	85	No data
Cannabis (hashish, marijuana)	53.2	33.5	16.8
Nitrous oxide	28.3	8.9	1.5
Ecstasy/ MDMA	22.5	13.2	3.3
Magic mushrooms	13.7	6.7	1.0
Cocaine	12.2	7.4	2.5
Ketamine	9.4	5.8	1.8
2C-B	8.6	5.2	1.1
LSD	5.1	2.3	0.4
4-Fluoramphetamine (4-FA, 4-FMP)	3.5	0.8	0.1
GHB or GBL	1.9	0.5	0.1

Source: Monitor on mental health and drug use among higher education students.



so much at home. Students also reported smoking more cannabis than usual. So we expect to see some differences in follow-up research results.'

Stronger stuff

According to the Utrecht students who organized the symposium, many of their fellow students had started using more drugs during the lockdowns. Was it the same for Wageningen students? *Resource* spoke to three students from different scenes. 'My impression is that before Covid, people mainly used weed, drank a bit and maybe took something else at a special party,' says a Master's student of Plant Sciences who prefers to remain anonymous. 'Now I notice at parties that there's often someone who has some stronger stuff with them. For example, I was at a party not long ago where ketamine was suddenly being passed around. And people were already drunk. I get the impression that people tried things with friends during the

lockdowns and that has lowered the bar for taking other drugs.'

Levi Altenburg, a student of Landscape Architecture and Planning, thinks the secret house parties during the lockdowns changed things, too. 'As a result, I think more people started taking drugs at home, rather than only on special occasions. The threshold for using drugs has lowered as a result. And I think people influence each other. When stories go around about a party where "everyone is going to do pills", people might think: I'd better join in.'

Yet not everyone sees it this way. 'In my circle, I think drug use has actually decreased since the lockdowns,' says a Master's student of Nutrition and Health who wishes to remain anonymous. 'But that could also be because we are all getting a bit older. I used to do drugs sometimes, but in the past few years it's gone down a lot. There's a bit of it at parties. Maybe it has become more normal, and less furtive.'

Normalization

That may be partly why drug use is coming in for so much attention. The more it is talked about, the more visible it becomes? According to a local drug dealer, that's true. 'I don't think people have started using more,' he says, 'but I do think they're more open about it.

'If you start publishing articles about drug normalization, you normalize drugs'

'The amount of booze consumed by students is truly bizarre'

Where people used to go to the toilet or pop into someone's room, I now see them taking drugs openly. It seems to have been somewhat normalized.' And that has its pros and cons, says Van der Horst of Trimbos. 'It's good to make drugs use discussable. That lowers the threshold for talking about it and for letting someone know that you might need help. But if you talk and write about it a lot, you can also create the impression that everyone is doing drugs. Sometimes students call an addiction hotline asking "I never do any drugs. Is that weird?" In drug education, you are always seeking a balance between wanting to prevent drug use, but also not to arouse too much curiosity. If you publish articles about drug normalization, you normalize drugs by doing so.'

Concerns

So it's hard to say whether Rector Mol should be worried about the increasing use of stimulants. Do the currently available figures give cause for concern? Van der Horst: 'First of all: drug use is never risk-free. Full stop. And if you do drugs, make sure you're well-informed. Look on a website like *Drugs en uitgaan* (Drugs and going out). What worries

Alcohol consumption

11%

per cent drink excessively (more than 21 glasses a week for men and more than 14 glasses a week for women)

16%

per cent are heavy drinkers (for men, drinking 6 or more glasses, for women, 4 or more glasses on one day at least once a week)

40%

per cent say it is acceptable among their close friends to drink 10 or more glasses of alcohol in one evening.



Illustration Valerie Geelen

me most is that some students say they can't do without drugs. It doesn't matter which substance it is. For example, some students say they need a joint to get to sleep. At that point, their drug use ceases to be just social and becomes worrying. In such cases, it is good to think about why you are doing it. If something becomes a habit, then you have to be careful.'

And one typically habitual drug is, of course, alcohol. 'In many student houses, alcohol is always present, and is actually almost always drunk at and after dinner. The health council's advice is: don't drink, and if you drink, stick to a maximum of one glass a day. If you look at the figures among students (see previous page), that's obviously an issue.' Student Levi sees this all around him. 'The amount of booze consumed by students is truly bizarre. And in that I include student societies and student houses where there are traditions around

Drug policy among student societies

Drug use is prohibited at Ceres, KSV, SSR-W and Unitas. Members caught in possession of drugs, or dealing or taking them, must leave the premises. Depending on the seriousness of the situation, this will be followed by a warning, a fixed-term suspension or even expulsion.

The four clubs do confirm the impression that more drugs were used during the lockdowns, out of boredom and because there were more unsupervised parties in student houses. But all the societies state that they reckon drug use has now gone back to pre-Covid levels.

drinking vast amounts. And yes, I do enjoy it myself now and then. But it can't be healthy.'

Integral approach

What is the university's role when it comes to alcohol and drug use? Van der Horst: 'We know from scientific research that it is not enough just to provide education and awareness-raising, but that you need to get people

involved. This could include student societies, sports clubs, teachers, student counsellors, and so on. That is partly why more and more educational institutions have policies around alcohol and drugs. And not just to ban drug use, but also to set up a good care system. So that when a teacher notices that someone is always very tired – which can be for all sorts of reasons, of course – they know where to go for information. Or that if a student says they can't keep up with their studies, the student psychologist asks about substance use.' ■

Iranians at WUR on the protests in their homeland

'There is huge solidarity'

Protests demanding women's rights, democracy and freedom are going on all over Iran. Government troops are using extreme violence against the protesters. Iranians at WUR feel both worried and hopeful.



Text Luuk Zegers

On Monday 17 October, Iranians and other WUR staff and students came together on campus to express their solidarity with the protesters in Iran. Two organizers of the event, PhD student Nika* and postdoc Sarina*, talked to *Resource* about what is going on, how the protests affect them, and how WUR and the WUR community can help.

'We have a long history of protests in Iran,' says Nika. 'Over time, the protests have become more frequent.' The current unrest started after the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in September. Amini was arrested by the morality police for not wearing her headscarf correctly. Eyewitnesses say she was severely beaten after her arrest, which put her in a coma. She died three days later. Across Iran, protests erupted demanding women's rights and more freedom in general. There are strikes going on in various sectors, like the oil industry, education and transport. Sarina: 'I think the majority of Iranians are against the mandatory hijab and other extremely strict Islamic rules. The young generation knows what freedom looks like in the rest of the world thanks to social media. Then they see what happened to Mahsa Amini and they think: that could have been me, or my sister or my daughter.'

Doubts

Nika grew up in a conservative region of Iran. 'As a young girl I already questioned the different rules for boys and girls, but I was told it was a big sin to cast doubt on them. For a while, I wished I was a boy,

because they have a lot more freedom. That was confusing, but after a while I realized the problem was not that I was a woman – I love being a woman – but being a woman in this society.'

'Women, life, freedom'

Like all Iranian women, Nika and Sarina were obliged to wear hijabs in school from the age of seven, and in all other public places from the age of nine. Sarina: 'You can't swim, you can't dance, you can't do anything.' Nika: 'Even if you dance at a private party in your home, police can come in and arrest you for "immoral behaviour".' In court, the word of a male witness is worth twice as much as that of a female witness. A married woman has to ask her husband's permission to go to work or even to leave the house. Sarina: 'Protests against those rules were silenced and women's rights activists were jailed.' Nika and Sarina estimate that less than 20 per cent of Iranians support the current regime. Nika: 'Even in that group, I don't think everybody is so strict, but many of them depend on the system because they have government jobs.'

Since the protests started, more than 200 people have been killed, at least 28 of them children aged between 7 and 17, says Sarina. 'Hundreds of others have been arrested or tortured or have disappeared. Our fellow students and academics in Iran are in mortal danger.' But despite the tough government crackdown, the protests are still going strong. While they fear for the safety of their family and friends, Nika and Sarina are



On Saturday 22 October, there was a big protest in Berlin to demonstrate solidarity with Iranian activists. An estimated 80,000 people took to the streets. Nika was there and took this photo.

hopeful that this time, the protests will bring change to the country. 'I think it is different this time compared to previous protests,' says Sarina. Nika agrees. 'These protests are taking place all over Iran, even in the smaller towns and conservative areas. The young generation is taking the lead and there is massive solidarity. Also, there is no clear leader, which makes it harder for the regime to shut down the protests.' Sarina: 'And everybody agrees about the goals: women's rights, freedom and democracy.'

The situation in Iran is having a big impact on Nika's and Sarina's life in Wageningen. 'The images are disturbing, but I can't stop watching,' says Sarina. 'Last week, the university where I did my Master's was attacked by police. I go to sleep around two in the morning and wake up at seven.' The government is blocking communication channels such as social media and WhatsApp, which makes it harder to stay in touch with family and friends back home. 'It is stressful.'

'The images are disturbing,
but I can't stop watching'

Sarina and Nika are grateful for the response of their supervisors and colleagues. 'They are very supportive and tell us to take all the time we need. Not all Iranians at WUR have supervisors like us. We think Iranian students could use some extra help. WUR should approach them proactively and tell them how to get in touch with the student psychologists.'

People who want to help can speak out on social media to keep up the pressure, says Nika. 'And join demonstrations. After massive demonstrations in Canada, the government imposed sanctions.' Another option would be to approach political representatives directly to call for sanctions against the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. 'They oppress us in Iran, but their families live in freedom abroad. Freeze their assets and deport them.'

Nika and Sarina hope that WUR will make a statement declaring solidarity with the demonstrators, like the University of Groningen did two weeks ago. 'That would make us feel supported.'

'We too are concerned by the developments in that country,' says WUR spokesperson Annet Blanken. 'We are offering support to anyone at our university who is worried about their family and connections in Iran. We are in contact with the Iranian community at WUR to give them a voice within our university through meetings and interviews and to give them support.' ■

**Names have been changed for safety reasons.*



THE SIDE JOB

You've got to make ends meet somehow. We can all borrow from Uncle Duo, but there are also students who earn money in unusual ways. In this series, we put some interesting side jobs in the spotlight. This time we meet Rémi Féraut (26), a BSc student of Plant Sciences, who washes up at the two-star Michelin restaurant De Nieuwe Winkel in Nijmegen.

Text Steven Snijders

Rémi washes up

Who: Rémi Féraut

What: washing dishes in a two-star Michelin restaurant

Why? to get inspiration

Hourly wage: €14, plus tips

Three years ago, *Resource* talked to Rémi about how he was establishing his own food forest in France. The forest is now growing apace. Meanwhile, it is no coincidence that Rémi works at De Nieuwe Winkel, a restaurant that serves produce from a food forest.

'The restaurant has two Michelin stars, so everything has to be perfect. We don't

keep all the opened bottles of wine and beer for the next day. We get to taste those after hours, with explanations from our beer steward. I work primarily as a dishwasher, but I sometimes help prepare ingredients. Peeling chestnuts, for instance. The restaurant is intended to be a tasting room, expanding your palate. For example, we serve chocolate made from chestnuts and dishes made with nut pâté instead of meat. Those nuts grow here in the food forest in Groesbeek. I hope guests are inspired by the delicious food and become enthusiastic about food forests. And that they will want to plant more trees. Trees restore soil and help create a more

resilient farming system. In fact, trees are the solution to everything. The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, the second-best time is now.

'The best thing about my job is that I can get inspiration for future projects in France here. I've nearly finished my Bachelor's degree. In a year or two, I want to go back to France, where I planted the food forest three years ago. It is not mature yet, it needs another couple of years to reach a significant level of production. I'll work part-time at the food forest and teach part-time at a secondary school. Every year, students from local schools get some work experience at the food forest so as to introduce them to this approach to farming. I also want to set up a research centre on different forms of agroforestry. I want to sell the harvest from the food forest to local restaurants. One local restaurant is already sourcing spices from that forest.'

'Trees are the solution to everything in fact'



Rémi Féraut (right) together with chef Emile van de Staak. ♦ Photo Tim van de Griend

Do you have an unusual side job or know someone else who does? Send an email to steven.snijders@wur.nl

Flower hunting

In this series, student editor and MSc student of Plant Breeding Julia van der Westhuyzen (photos and text) and professor of Plant Ecology Joop Schaminée (stories) go looking for the loveliest campus flora.



Broadleaf cattail

Common name: Broadleaf cattail

Scientific name: *Typha latifolia*

Flowering time: late summer to late autumn

Location on campus: behind Lumen, next to the small pond

‘Two species of this genus are found in the Netherlands: *Typha latifolia* and *Typha angustifolia* – the broadleaf and narrowleaf cattail respectively. Both species are aquatic, but where the broadleaf species lives in swampy ponds, the narrowleaf one is found on the banks of bigger lakes. As is often the case, the etymology of the name is not known. *Typha* may derive from the Greek word *típhos* (marshland or water body) or from the word *typhe*, which means cattail, referring to the shape of the fruit. Several other colloquial names exist in Dutch such as the *rietsigaar* (reed cigar) or *duivelsknuppel*, which means “devil’s stick”.

‘I have fond memories from my youth of going into wetlands to collect a bunch of reeds and cattails to decorate my room with. The problem is, though, that the brown cylindrical flower heads of this plant produce lots of white fluffy seeds. So after a few weeks, there was fluff throughout our house! My parents never complained. If you visit the Lumen pond, you will see more and more fluff there in the coming weeks too.’

The WUR community is home to all the flavours of the world. Yurdanur Yilmaz (32), a PhD student of Food Sciences from Turkey, shares a recipe for Turkish lentil balls.



Flavours of WUR

Turkish Lentil Balls

‘Lentil balls are basically meatballs without the meat. In this recipe, the minced meat is replaced with red lentils, making it a good alternative for both vegetarians and vegans. It reminds me of home, where my mum often makes lentil balls when she invites relatives or friends over to have a good time together.’

Ingredients for 5 portions :

- 1 cup red lentils
- 1/2 cup fine bulgur wheat
- 1 onion
- 1 small spring onion
- 50g parsley
- 50g dill
- 1 lettuce
- 5 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 lemons
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper

- 1 Cook the lentils till they soften.
- 2 Mix the bulgur into the moist cooked lentils. Leave the mixture with the lid on at room temperature for 30 minutes.
- 3 Heat the vegetable oil in a pan, add the finely chopped onion and fry it.
- 4 Add tomato paste, salt and pepper and fry for about 3 minutes. Then add the onion and tomato mixture to the lentils and bulgur. Knead well.
- 5 Finely chop the spring onion, parsley and dill and mix into the lentil mixture.
- 6 Lay the lettuce leaves on a flat plate.
- 7 Take a handful of the lentil mixture to form a medium-sized ball. Aim to make about 25 lentil balls.
- 8 Cut the lemons into two and squeeze onto the lentil balls.
- 9 Arrange the lentil balls on the lettuce leaves and decorate the plate with slices of lemon.
- 10 *Afiyet olsun!* (Enjoy your meal)



Yurdanur Yilmaz
a PhD student of Food Sciences from Turkey

10-euro lunch voucher

Share your recipe with *Resource* and get an **Aurora voucher worth 10 euros.**
resource@wur.nl



Photos Tim den Duijf and Niels Mulder (MiniCulture)

MiniCulture celebrates 10th anniversary

The students of MiniCulture have been organizing dance events for a decade. From minimal to afrobeat and dancehall, as long as it is 'for and by Wageningers'. 'At the start, we would sometimes say: It would be hilarious if MiniCulture was still going in 10 years' time.' Last Saturday, they celebrated their 10th anniversary in a sold-out Junushoff Theatre.

It all started with Arno Timmer and Reinout Haisma, who embarked on their studies in Wageningen about 10 years ago. They went to a lot of open parties at the student societies but felt something was lacking. Timmer: 'The music at those venues was just not optimal. We thought there was room for improvement.' So they called a meeting with some of

their friends, everyone contributed 30 euros for beer, and the first party took place in a student house above what was then café De Overkant. The music? Minimal techno 'because that was the easiest to put together,' says Timmer. Then came the disco parties in Villa Bloem, the tiny coffee bar on the marketplace. Haisma: 'Not many people came in the early days, but that wasn't an issue. If there were 15 people, it was cosy.' They made a name for themselves and improved their DJ skills and organizational abilities. Through the years, they performed at numerous student houses as well as in Loburg, the Bunker, Unitas and at the Liberation Festival. There they started out as a supporting act between the bands, and ended up last 5 May with 'a sea of people filling half the Heerenstraat'.

A highlight? Timmer: 'We organized a big party in a barn at someone's home. A homeless person had been living in it and the landlord had filled it with all the trash he could find to make sure he

'We started with minimal techno because that was nice and easy to put together'

wouldn't come back. We removed all the trash and organized a party for 250 people. The police came by, so we asked whether there had been any complaints and if we should turn down the volume. Oh no, said the police officer. Having fun? Then I wish you all a nice day! That was at six thirty in the morning.' CJ

WEEKLY UPDATES ON STUDENT LIFE AND WORKING AT WUR?

Go to resource-online.nl
(Subscription page) and subscribe
to our digital newsletter.

SIGN UP

Resource

WUR from within: straight, sharp, transparent




NEW!

Social Safety Contact Point

for students and staff of WUR:
0317-(4)8 17 74 | socialsafety@wur.nl

Looking out for each other
Go to wur.eu/socialsafety



Colophon

Resource is the independent medium for students and staff at Wageningen University & Research. *Resource* reports and interprets the news and gives the context. New articles are posted daily on resource-online.nl. The magazine is published every fortnight on Thursday.

Contact Questions and comments for the editors:
resource@wur.nl | www.resource-online.nl

Editorial staff Willem Andrée (editor-in-chief), Helene Seevinck (managing editor), Roelof Kleis (editor), Tessa Louwerens (editor), Luuk Zegers (editor), Marieke Enter (editor), Stijn Schreven (editor), Coretta Jongeling (online coordinator), Thea Kuijpers (secretariat).

Translations Clare McGregor, Meira van der Spa, Clare Wilkinson

Design Alfred Heikamp, Larissa Mulder

Overall design Marinka Reuten

Cover Photography Bas Niemans/Universiteit Utrecht

Printing Tuijtel, Hardinxveld-Giessendam

Subscription A subscription to the magazine for one academic year costs 59 euros (135 euros if abroad). Cancellations before 1 August.

ISSN 1389-7756

Publisher Corporate Communications & Marketing,
Wageningen University & Research





EXTINCTION REBELLION STARTS TRACTOR CROWDFUNDING

The climate action group Extinction Rebellion Wageningen (XR) has launched a crowdfunding campaign to purchase tractors. 'The recent farmers' protests showed us how useful tractors are when you want to make a point.'

'If we organize a climate march in Amsterdam with 50,000 people, we attract some attention briefly, but sadly it ebbs away after a day,' says Annewil Leven (a Bachelor's student of Biology) on behalf of XR. 'By throwing soup over art, we scare off some of our left-wing supporters. And gluing ourselves to talk-show tables doesn't have as much of an impact as we had hoped either, unfortunately. But as soon as activist farmers block the motorway with tractors and spread manure on the road, there is much more of a commotion and attention is paid. As a result, the issue gets discussed for longer and more broadly. Eventually, someone was even appointed specially to listen to them! We want Remkes to listen to us too! So we are raising money for a small fleet of tractors.' The campaigners hope to buy 10 John Deere tractors this year. 'Second-hand of course, that's a lot more sustainable,' Leven says. Why John Deeres? 'They are

pleasing to the eye! Besides, it might boost the intersectional support for the climate movement from farmers. We hope farmers will see our tractors and think, "phwoah, that's gorgeous". Climate change affects us all, so we should show solidarity.'

Besides, tractors are just really handy, Leven says. 'I've got a big vegetable garden myself, which is quite hard work. It'll be a lot more doable with a tractor.' XR Wageningen is planning to adopt some of the protesting farmers' other tactics. 'You see the flag flying upside down all over the place,' says Leven. 'Everyone knows it stands for farmers' dissatisfaction with the government's policy. We are dissatisfied too, but we are not farmers. We are going to turn the flag 90 degrees. That will make people think: they are dissatisfied too, but they can't be farmers! Or they'll think they're in France – that could explain it too, of course.'