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# RESOURCE [EN]

For everyone at Wageningen University & Research

no 3 – 14 September 2017 – 12th Volume



## Delta Plan for Bangladesh


p.18

**INTERNATIONAL  
EDITION**





## THE BOWELS OF A WHALE

Christine Koersen, Elisa Bravo Rebolledo and Anastasia O'Donoghue of Wageningen Marine Research are taking samples of the contents of a 60-metre-long whale's guts. The researchers want to know what the whale had eaten before it was washed up on the beach on Texel last month. They also collected a litre of stomach contents and a bag of whale poop. 'We are going to study this material for bits of fish,' says research leader Mardik Leopold. 'We already know there are krill remains in it; we are curious about the extras.' It is not uncommon for dead whales to be washed ashore in the Netherlands. Usually they have been run over by a big ship somewhere south of the North Sea, and pushed through the straits of Calais into the North Sea on the bow of the ship.  AS, photo: Mardik Leopold



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## HAZING 2.0

September is the month in which student hazing rituals always get into the news. Last year, rector Arthur Mol appealed for an end to this tradition. A way of ridding ourselves of all the trouble it causes at a go. There was more negative news about hazing excesses this week. A group of student in Groningen wrecked a sushi restaurant. I still remember being sent to Groningen to report on a case of a student who fell into a coma after being forced to drink a bottle of Dutch gin. And then there's the story of the Delft students who were made to crawl through a mountain of abattoir waste. How happy I was, then, to hear of a new Wageningen initiative: Regreening. The Zen version of 'de-greening', as hazing is called in Dutch. A nice spot of digging, planting and sawing branches. Cooking on a primus stove or making your own pizza in a stone oven. The Green Active Network came up with this bright green idea. Some might think it a bit soft, but I think it is in the spirit of our time. Hazing 2.0.

Edwin van Laar



>> [Chlamydia caviae can make guinea pig owners very ill | p.10](#)

## REGRETTABLE CONDUCT BUT NOT CITATION FRAUD

**The Wageningen soil scientist accused of citation fraud has been absolved. She did not violate scientific integrity, but she did demonstrate ‘regrettable scientific conduct’, according to the Scientific Integrity Committee (CWI) at Wageningen University & Research.**

The committee, which has spent the last six months investigating the case, concluded that ‘the researcher acted in a regrettable manner and showed insufficient awareness in the past period of the seriousness of the situation’. The regrettable conduct refers to the fact that the soil scientist thinks it is normal for editors and reviewers to call on authors to cite their own articles. This form of manipulation gives scientists a higher citation score and scientific journals a higher impact factor.

The Wageningen soil scientist had previously been accused of being part of a citation cartel of international soil scientists centred on the Spanish professor Artemi Cerdà. He has been proven to have manipulated citations. The Wageningen scientist, a protégée of Cerdà, was an editor of several journals in which the Spaniard was also involved. They worked and published a lot together.

CWI is not sure whether the Wageningen researcher was aware of Cerdà’s activities or whether she is a victim of his manipulations.

At any rate, the accusation of organized citation pushing cannot be proved. On the other hand, she must have noticed the ‘help’ coming from Cerdà and she was definitely guilty of citation pushing in one instance. This does not constitute a violation of scientific integrity, however, as the code of conduct for scientists does not have any rules on reviewing and editorial activities.

It is not clear what consequences the CWI ruling will have for the soil scientist. ‘This is not a formal reprimand,’ says Executive Board spokesman Simon Vink. ‘It will be added to the personnel file and then it’s up to her managers — the professor and the science group director.’ The Executive Board has urged the journals in question to remove the false citations. But it is not clear whether they will do that.

Vink says the board was shocked to discover how easy it is to commit citation fraud. ‘And it’s not really possible as an organization to pinpoint this. We don’t have a good view of such reviewing processes.’ That is why the board has urged other parties to take measures (see box). **✉ RK**

### MEASURES TO COMBAT CITATION FRAUD

Following the case involving the soil scientist, WUR Executive Board will be asking the publishers of scientific journals to reconsider their reviewing procedures. They should take more measures to prevent citation pushing, the practice whereby editors and reviewers (anonymously) goad authors into citing their own articles. WUR has also asked the Dutch Association of Universities to take action. In response, the association has decided to include rules in the scientific code of conduct for researchers who act as reviewers or editors for scientific journals.

## LAND SURVEYING BUILDING ON STAMP

**The former Laboratory for Land Surveying on Wageningse Berg has been immortalized in a stamp. The stamp is one of a series of ten featuring post-war reconstruction architecture.**

In the series, designed by Arienne Boelens and on sale at Bruna as of this week, PostNL looks at the period of reconstruction after the Second World War. The stamps show buildings typical of their time that were erected between 1945 and 1958 and served as residential housing, factories, offices or educational buildings.

The Wageningen property is in this final category. The Faculty for Geodesy, as it is officially known, was designed by the architect Frants Edvard Röntgen and built between 1950 and 1953. After the war, Wageningen Agricultural College grew fast and the land surveying faculty was one of the first new buildings in that period.

The location at the top of Wageningse Berg was incredibly important at the time as the unimpeded view of the floodplains and the Betuwe was essential for land surveying. A striking



feature is the large hall at the top for practical work, where the students carried out their measurements.

New infrared techniques were introduced in land surveying at the end of the 1960s, which meant a good view was not longer im-

portant. From that point on, the hall was mainly used for exams. By the end of the century, the building had become too small and it was sold. The property, which became a listed building in 2007, is now used as a home and commercial premises. **✉ RK**



## CHINA RISING UP THE RANKINGS

**Chinese universities are doing better and better in the top 200 of British weekly magazine *Times Higher Education* (THE). Some have already left the Dutch universities behind. Wageningen is in 64<sup>th</sup> place, one place higher than last year.**

Seven of the 13 Dutch universities are in the top 100 in the annual THE World University Rankings. The University of Amsterdam scored the highest at number 59, with Wageningen University & Research coming second in 64<sup>th</sup> place.

For the first time two British universities head the rankings: Oxford at number 1, Cam-

bridge at number 2. American and British universities continue to dominate the highest echelons of the rankings. But Asian universities are on the rise. This year, two Chinese universities are in the top 30 in the world, and seven are in the top 200: three more than last year. Hong Kong, meanwhile, has five universities in the rankings.

'The rise of China is remarkable and shows how the global landscape of higher education is changing,' says rankings editor Phil Baty. 'China's top universities are now truly part of the global elite and outstrip prestigious universities in the United States, Great Britain and Europe.' **Ⓡ HOP**

## © COLUMN | STIJN

### A fun degree

I swallow. This is not a good moment to get annoyed. Her comment was frank and no doubt it wasn't meant personally. In fact, I don't think she even realizes I did Forest and Nature Management myself. And perhaps she does have a point. Maybe Forest and Nature Management really is Wageningen's 'fun degree'.

I certainly hear it said quite often, especially by people I hold in high regard. They say biologists are more scientific and perform better, right from the start of their degree programme. 'Forest and nature managers enjoy their degree, but that's about all you can say about it,' a professor confided to me recently. 'It's different with biologists.'

His remark keeps coming back to me as I cycle up the hill in Wageningen with a bunch of first-year biologists and a soil drill. 'We'll stop here,' I call out, and a circle of sleepy young people forms around me and my soil drill. 'And, anyone got any questions about the last field trip?' I ask hopefully.

The students give me glazed looks. Silence reigns. 'Okay,' I say. I try not to show my disappointment and decide to ask a few basic questions about the previous field trip. The glazed eyes avoid my gaze. Can this group really be so much smarter than the forest and nature managers I'll teach tomorrow?

The next day, the forest and nature managers give me glazed looks. I take a deep breath and begin: 'Now, before we start, any questions?' Nearly half the group put up their hands. I can't suppress a satisfied smile, and point enthusiastically at a student, picked at random. 'Yes, I have an important question,' he says confidently. 'When exactly will you mark our folders?' **Ⓡ**

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



### in brief

#### >>FLOATING ISLANDS

##### Trial successful

Lettuce, tomatoes, Chinese white cabbage and potatoes can all be grown on floating islands made of polystyrene. A first trial by Wageningen Plant Research and the Floating Islands foundation was a success. WUR researcher Marcel Vijn: 'With the first harvest from the islands, we have demonstrated that farming on water is possible.' There is still room for improvement, though: 'Some of the yield was eaten by aquatic birds.' Growing vegetables on floating islands could be a good option in areas that are subject to frequent flooding. 'And also for a city like Singapore, which doesn't have much land for farming,' says Vijn. **Ⓡ VK**

#### >>NEW LAB

##### Physiological research

The Human and Animal Physiology chair group will open a new research lab in Zodiac next week, where all research on the energy metabolism of humans, mice and cells will be brought together. Professor Jaap Keijzer: 'We are integrating physiological and molecular research. Within our group we do this research on humans, lab animals and cells. This enables us to pick optimal research models in every case, so we can answer a research question as well as possible.' The new lab is already up and running, but will be opened ceremoniously on 19 September in Zodiac after a mini-symposium on energy metabolism, which starts at 15.00. **Ⓡ AS**

#### >>ASIAN HORNET

##### A threat to bees?

Wageningen bee experts intend to find out whether and how Dutch beekeepers can prepare themselves for the arrival of the Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*). This exotic vespine came to France from China in 2014, in a cargo of crockery, and is spreading across the continent. It has recently been spotted in Belgium, close to the Dutch border. Bram Cornelissen of Biointeractions and Plant Health will now identify the possible implications of the arrival of this exotic species for beekeepers in the Netherlands. The honeybee features prominently on the Asian hornet's menu. **Ⓡ RK**



PHOTO: SØREN KNITTEL

## PRIVACY CHECK FOR ALL RESEARCH

**Next year, all Wageningen researchers will need to comply with WUR's tighter privacy policy. They will have to declare whether they use personal data in their research and if so, whether the data are sufficiently protected.**

All new WUR research projects will be assessed next year, says Frans Pinggen, the data protection officer. Over the next few weeks, there will be a survey of ongoing projects and applications that involve large amounts of personal data or sensitive personal data. All projects with privacy-related information must be recorded in a registry by 25 May 2018 at the latest. That registry should show what risks WUR is incurring in the protection of personal data.

Wageningen researchers already have to store and update their projects in the My Pro-

jects system. As of next year, they will also be asked whether personal data will be processed for the purposes of their research. If so, they will have to answer a small number of questions in the application to determine how risky the project is in terms of privacy. If the risk is high, this will be followed by a Data Privacy Impact Assessment (DPIA), which may lead to measures being recommended to mitigate the risks.

Pinggen hopes this will give him an overview of the projects with privacy risks. He will then need to make sure these risks are dealt with as soon as possible to avoid fines from the Personal Data Authority. 'Sometimes an unnecessarily large number of people in the project have access to the personal data, sometimes the data are stored in an insecure place such as an external disk,' he explains.

'The use of personal data for purposes other than that for which they were collected is also forbidden.'

As well as the research projects, WUR will also be screening various applications and databases for privacy issues, to prevent hacks and data leaks. Pinggen: 'The supply of digital information keeps on increasing and as a result an awful lot of personal details are being stored, even when they are no longer needed. We need to take a critical look at this.'

Pinggen agrees that the privacy policy will take up more time for researchers who process personal data. 'But it is in everyone's interest, including the researchers, that personal information cannot be misused.' Pinggen hopes to minimize the inconvenience for the organization by incorporating the privacy check in My Projects. **AS**

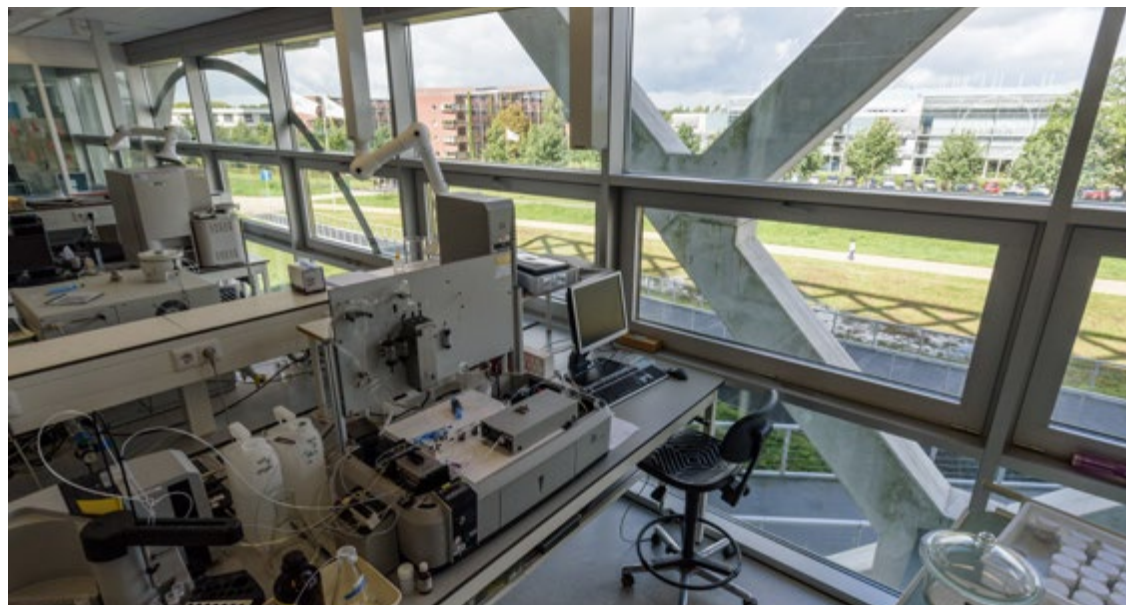
## ESG MOVES OUT OF ATLAS

**The Environmental Sciences group is to be concentrated in Gaia and Lumen, freeing up more than two floors in Atlas for other purposes, primarily teaching space.**

The ESG move was on the agenda two years ago but was abandoned because of the cost. The situation has changed since then, explains ESG director Bram de Vos. 'The urgency is greater: the space in Atlas is needed for teaching the growing numbers of students.'

There are currently still three chair groups in Atlas: Soil Physics and Land Management, Soil Biology and Biological Soil Quality, and Soil Chemistry and Chemical Soil Quality. They take up the third and some of the fourth floor of the building, and the ESG's labs are on the second floor and the ground floor (the level below the entrance). From September 2018, these labs will be needed for teaching purposes.

The concentration in Gaia and Lumen entails some renovations and some sharing of space. 'The biggest challenge is the labora-



**The ESG labs and chair groups in Atlas are moving across the road to Gaia and Lumen. The vacated space will be used for teaching.**

tory space,' says De Vos. 'For that we have in mind the business block behind Gaia and some rooms in Lumen.' The extra workspaces will have to be created by arranging existing rooms differently. 'That means fewer square metres per person. But that is possible.' Exactly what the new layout will look like, no one knows yet. Staff have been

invited to chip in with their ideas during the design phase, which runs until the end of October.

The concentration of the ESG in Gaia and Lumen coincides with cutbacks in Wageningen Economic Research. Due to poor financial performance, the institute has to shed 100 of its 350 FTEs. This process is now half-

way, says de Vos. It simplifies the move as fewer workplaces are needed. And leaving Atlas will bring savings in accommodations costs.

At the moment, the move has the status of a proposal by the Executive Board. The final green light will be given once the plans have been worked out in detail and the works council has approved them. **RK**



# IDEALIS WANTS TO GET BUILDING AT BORNSESTEEG

Student accommodation provider Idealis wants to build 400 units as soon as possible next to the star-shaped block of flats at Bornsesteeg. An extension with 40 new units is also planned at Asserpark. This became apparent Monday evening, 11 September, when Wageningen municipal council discussed possible sites for new student accommodation.

'We've already made the preparations that will let us start work immediately. If the council agrees,' said Idealis director Sylvie Deenen in response to questions from the council. The municipality, Idealis and WUR estimate there will be over 14,000 students studying in Wageningen by 2021. An additional 2200 rooms are needed soon to accommodate them all. Some (800 rooms) are already being developed, but space still needs to be found for 1400 rooms. The municipal executive has now come up with a list of possible locations. In addition to Bornsesteeg and Asserpark, the most suitable options are Marijkeweg 20 (a building that belongs to the Rijn IJssel training college), the Olympiahallen sports centre, the old Plantsoen post office and the WUR building behind the Aula. Mixed accommodation for both students and other target groups is envisaged for Duivendaal and De Dreijen. A number of parties in the council are con-



PHOTO: GUY ACKERMANS

**If Idealis gets its way, there will soon be 400 new student rooms built adjoining the Bornsesteeg block of flats.**

cerned by how fast WUR is growing and the pressure this is putting on housing. Erik Bijleveld of GroenLinks (the Green Left party) wanted to know whether WUR could build more on its own land, for example on campus. WUR spokesman Simon Vink: 'An interesting question. Accommodation on campus was ta-

boo not so long ago.' Vink pointed to the option of building more at De Dreijen. The municipal executive's current plans have a maximum of 300 units there, only some of which will be for students.

The council will decide next month on the preferred sites for student accommodation. **RK**

## PR IN THE EIGHTIES

WUR will celebrate its centenary in 2018. *Resource* has been searching the archives for interesting photos. Like this one by Guy Ackermans from the pre-internet era. These days student societies have all sorts of ways of publicizing a party: their own website, Facebook, email, WhatsApp... None of that existed in 1983 and Ceres had to find other ways of promoting the jazz night on its 75th anniversary. Like driving musical members through town in an old-timer.

The photo is part of the series: 100 years of... listening, available on resource-online. Have you got a nice story to tell about this photo, or other ones? Drop in on the *Resource* editors in Atlas or email [vincent.koperdraat@wur.nl](mailto:vincent.koperdraat@wur.nl)

Look up the **100 years of... listening** photo series on [resource-online.nl](http://resource-online.nl)



PHOTO: GUY ACKERMANS

# BREXIT COULD AFFECT DUTCH FISHING RIGHTS

**Brexit could have serious consequences for Dutch fisheries, concluded researchers from Wageningen Economic Research and Wageningen Marine Research.**

A key issue in the Brexit negotiations is the division of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This is the area of sea up to 200 nautical miles (370 kilometres) from a country's coast. European member states are allowed to fish in each other's EEZs. What is more, the fishing quotas – the total number of fish a country is allowed to catch – are distributed among the countries.

The British EZ covers a large area of the North Sea. 'Since Brexit was announced there has been a lot of uncertainty among Dutch fishers about future access to these fishing grounds and about the quota distribution,' says Mike Turenhout of Wageningen Economic Research. He and his colleagues lined up the figures in the journal *EuroChoices*.

In total, there are about 35 Dutch ships which earn more than half their income in British waters. It is in these waters that Dutch pelagic fishers now catch almost 60 percent of their herring and mackerel, and cutter fishers catch 30 percent of their catches.

Some Dutch-owned ships sail under foreign



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

**Many Dutch fishers get most of their income from British waters.**

flags. At the fish auction in Urk, for instance, more than a quarter of the fish comes from Dutch fishing boats that sail under the British flag. Turenhout; 'It is not clear yet whether this will still be possible after Brexit, and whether import duties might have to be paid then.'

An added factor is that Dutch flatfish fishers use a pulse trawl, which catches fish using electric shocks. This saves on fuel and the fishers

catch sole, which fetches a better price. But the United Kingdom is opposed to this technique and it is not certain that the pulse trawl will be permitted after Brexit.

Last year the big Dutch sea fisheries landed 275 million kilos of fish and shellfish, worth 112 million euros. Cutter fisheries accounted for 84 million kilos of fish and shrimps, worth 343 million euros. **TL**

# FIELD BIRD CAN STILL BE SAVED

**Only better land use planning and management can still save the black-tailed godwit for the Dutch landscape. So say ecologists Dick Melman of Wageningen Environmental Research and Henk Sierdseman of Sovon in a report for the ministry of Economic Affairs.**

The researchers outlined several scenarios with different sets of measures and their expected impact on field bird populations. They used the black-tailed godwit as a model bird. Their conclusion: it is not yet too late to save the black-tailed godwit, but its habitat would have to be improved considerably. The areas where it lives need to be wetter, with different vegetation and less disturbance.

The researchers focus mainly on reserves and areas where agricultural nature management is already being practised. The total area concerned is 146,000 hectares, half of which is farmland. With good planning and management, Melman believe a sustainable population of 40,000 breeding pairs of black-tailed godwits could thrive on this land (there are currently 32,000 to 36,000). Other field

birds would benefit from the measures too. The number of breeding pairs of northern lapwing (now 24,000) could almost double, and the same goes for the common redshank (now 10,500 breeding pairs). There is a price ticket attached, though: 100 million euros for better planning, and 20 million a year on top of that for better management.

A lot of this money would be needed just to make the areas wetter. It would also be necessary, says Melman, to tackle the vegetation in many places. 'The landscape should be open. Field birds like open areas. But because wood is used less nowadays, woods and hedgerows are growing taller than they used to. Also, the grass in many farming areas is too thick to walk through and after early mowing, chicks are easy prey. A lot can be gained with the right mowing calendar and by creating drainage pools.'

Disturbance and predation also make life hard for field birds. People walking their dogs, for instance, are disastrous for breeding success. And when there are chicks, foxes, buzzards and crows are all waiting to eat them up.

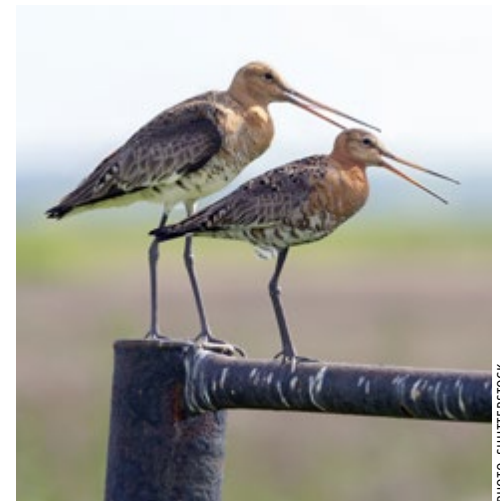


PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

**With good land use planning and management, a sustainable Dutch population of 40,000 breeding pairs of black-tailed godwits should be possible, says researcher Dick Melman.**

Melman sees hunting as a last resort, though. 'In the first instance, you must look carefully at the reasons why there are so many predators. Crows, for instance, survive the winter by eating out of open silos on farms. It is easy to do something about that.' **RK**



# RIDLEY'S SPEECH: A CLOSER LOOK

In his speech at the opening of the academic year, the British author Matt Ridley reviewed a series of developments which make him optimistic about the future of the planet and its residents. *Resource* asked Wageningen professors for their take on four of the claims he made which raised questions.

## CLAIM 1

*'I think global warming is real, but the effects of climate change are not as bad as was feared. Climate change is real but harmless.'*

Rik Leemans, professor of Environmental Systems Analysis: 'Climate-change deniers currently accept anthropogenic climate change. But then they hasten to add that the warming and its impact will be trivial, many impacts may be positive and adaptation is always feasible. Mitigating greenhouse gas emissions is thus unnecessary.'

The latest IPCC Climate Change report unambiguously shows that this reasoning is at odds with scientific insights. Compared to IPCC's 2000 report, which motivated the Paris Agreement's 2°C climate protection target, the 2014 report shows that we are now much more vulnerable. Ridley is on the academic advisory council of the Global Warming Policy Foundation, which lobbies against climate policy. He cherry-picks arguments from the climate change literature.'

## CLAIM 2

*'The total forest cover in the world has increased by 14 percent in the last 30 years. That greening is 70 percent down to the increase in CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere.'*

Niels Anten, professor of Crop and Weed Ecology: 'Forest cover has indeed increased in many parts of the world, but it is far from certain that this is mostly due to elevated CO<sub>2</sub> levels. Furthermore, the side effects of this greening are probably not good. Regionally, for instance, it results in reduced radiation reflection and this contributes to further warming, especially at high latitudes. It probably also speeds up the melting of the permafrost in the arctic, adding CO<sub>2</sub> emissions on a scale similar to the current emissions of the USA.'

## CLAIM 3

*'Globally, deforestation has almost stopped. In poor countries we are still losing forest, but in rich countries we are gaining new for-*



ILLUSTRATION: SHUTTERSTOCK

*ests. Deforestation in the tropics occurs mainly to meet the firewood needs of the local population.'*

Pieter Zuidema, personal professor of Tropical Forests: 'It is not true that deforestation is mainly a result of the local demand for firewood. Gathering firewood thins the forest but rarely causes deforestation. The main reason for the felling of tropical forests is agriculture. 80 percent of the lost forests are ploughed over for small-scale farming and commercial plantations for palm oil, wood pulp, rubber and soya. To support the idea that deforestation has almost stopped, Ridley uses figures about net forest loss after all the deforestation and the reforestation. But a small net loss does not mean there was not much deforestation. Every year, an area of tropical forest twice the size of the Netherlands disappears, and satellite measurements suggest this has increased recently. The statement that forest cover in wealthy countries is increasing is correct. And to a negligible extent that goes for tropical countries too, but it is too soon for generalized optimism about tropical forests.'

## CLAIM 4

*'In my lifetime the proportion of human beings living in poverty has plummeted from two thirds to less than 10 percent. In line with that, infant mortality has dropped spectac-*

*ularly on all continents.'*

Ruerd Ruben, professor of Impact Assessment for Food Systems: 'There has indeed been a big drop in the percentage of the world population living in poverty. The World Bank estimated it at 9.2 percent in 2015. But most of that drop is accounted for by China. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 35 percent of the – growing – population is living below the poverty line. And the fall in undernutrition and child mortality has not kept pace with poverty reduction. It is true that child mortality was halved between 1990 and 2015, from 90.6 to 42.5 per 1000, but stunting has only gone down by 30 percent in the same period. So there isn't a straightforward correspondence between higher incomes and better nutrition.' **IRK**

*Read too Point of View on p.20: Are there grounds for optimism?*

You can watch  
Ridley's speech  
on WURtv





## GUINEA PIGS CAN CAUSE PNEUMONIA

**People can get respiratory tract infections from their guinea pigs, according to a study in which Wageningen Bioveterinary Research was involved.**

At least three Dutch people have incurred serious respiratory tract infections from ill guinea pigs in the past four years. This finding was reported in the *New England Journal of Medicine* on 7 September. 'At first it was thought that these people had been infected with psittacosis,' explains vet and researcher Marloes Heijne of Wageningen Bioveterinary Research. She is a member of the team of vets, doctors and microbiologists who carried out the research.

However, the researchers discovered that another *Chlamydia* bacterium was the culprit, namely *Chlamydia caviae*. 'We knew that this bacterium causes eye infections in guinea pigs and possibly also in humans but there have been no previous accounts of severe pneumonia in humans in the literature.' The patients were healthy and in their 30s. Two of them became so sick that they ended up in intensive care. Fortunately, all three made a complete recovery after they had been treated with the right antibiotics.



Heijne says it is not known how often *C. caviae* causes respiratory tract infections. 'It is quite possible that the bacterium occurs more often but a diagnostic test is not always carried out as people often recover due to the treatment anyway.'

There is no need for guinea pig owners to

worry, says Heijne. 'We have now had three patients in a period of four years and the bacterium can be treated effectively with antibiotics. The important thing is that doctors and vets are aware of this so that they can arrive at a diagnosis quickly and give the right advice and treatment.' **TL**

## 'USE MORE RESIDUE STREAMS IN ANIMAL FEED'

**The Dutch government can make meat production more sustainable by allowing more waste products from the food industry, such as offal and food remnants, to be used in animal feed. This argument was made by Walter Gerrits, professor holding a personal chair in Animal Nutrition, in his inaugural lecture on 31 August.**

A lot of by-products from the food industry are already used in animal feed in the Netherlands, but there is a ban on the use of offal from abattoirs and food remnants. Bone meal from abattoir waste was banned by the EU in 1999 because of concerns about Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. The ban on food remnants dates from 1986 and was in response to concerns about the spread of swine fever. This is an extensive residue stream that is mostly converted into bio-energy, says Gerrits. The health risks are tiny when the appropriate processing techniques are used. He believes the government should reconsider these bans so that more by-products can be incorporated into animal feed.

In addition to these policy changes, the Dutch need to eat less meat, argues the Animal Nutrition professor. But from a global perspective, meat consumption will rise in many Asian and African countries. We therefore mainly need to make more efficient use of the available biomass.

Gerrits is working on improving nutrient efficiency — the efficiency with which nutrients are translated into animal growth. In this way he wants to help minimize the amount of land needed to produce animal proteins. Gerrits thinks gains can be made by adjusting the nutrition of animals to better fit their genetic potential. 'In future, we could also align the supply of nutrients more to an animal's requirements by recording more information about the animals as they grow.'

But Gerrits also points to developments that could be difficult to square with nutrient efficiency. Take the increased interest in animal welfare. 'It's not the pig's aim to convert as much feed as possible into meat — it's the pig farmer who wants that.' For instance, research shows more aggression and tail biting among



**Walter Gerrits**

pigs when their feed contains relatively little protein whereas this feed scores well in terms of protein efficiency and environmental impact. Gerrits is looking at precision nutrition as a way of resolving such conflicts between feed efficiency, the environment and welfare. **AS**



Campus life is in full swing again. And that generates a lot of Resource news – more than fits in this magazine. Here you have a sample of what's online.

#### ARION THEN AND NOW



Villa Arion on the Niemeijerstraat – now a private home, meeting venue and B&B – was once a bastion of Wageningen activism. Student union WSO had its office here. Photographer Guy

Ackermans studied old photos and took new ones from the same angle. The make-over can be admired on [resource-online.nl](http://resource-online.nl).

#### FRUITY LIGHT BEERS



Using a different kind of yeast makes it easier to produce low-alcohol special brews, discovered Wageningen PhD candidate Irma van Rijswijk. An added

advantage is that more aromas are released, opening up the possibility of even fruitier light beers.

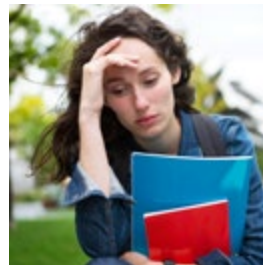
#### PROTEST



This year, WUR invited British author Matt Ridley to speak at the opening of the academic year (see too p. 9 and 20). That prompted a small student demonstration,

which got into the national press. The demonstrators feel the Brit downplays the seriousness of global warming caused by human activity.

#### BURNOUT



According to Dutch newspaper *De Volkskrant*, burnouts are becoming increasingly common among today's busy students. Blogger Carina wonders

whether society is to blame for this, or the students themselves. 'Because employers expect more than just a degree, it means we have to spend another 40 hours a week on extra-curricular activities.'

## MEANWHILE ONLINE

#### EATING AL FRESCO



The International Food Truck Festival on campus on 6 September drew quite a crowd of students and

staff. Some of them felt there were not enough trucks, though. 'Three trucks don't make a festival,' says Reineke van Tol.

Check them all out at [resource-online.nl](http://resource-online.nl)

## PROPOSITION

### 'We should actively spread factual information'

'Sounds controversial, doesn't it?' Eliakim Hamunyela laughs. He is pleased that the last proposition in his thesis is raising eyebrows. Not long before his graduation ceremony – 'I'm a bit nervous' – the researcher at the Laboratory for Geo-information Science and Remote Sensing is happy to explain.

'What I mean is that accelerated circulation of fake news can help society to become more self-aware. Which individuals and groups are likely to believe and spread fake information and why do they do this? If you know that, you can begin to target the problem.'



Eliakim Hamunyela (Namibia) received his PhD on 6 September for a study on the monitoring of tropical forest changes using satellite data.

I compare it to growing up. As a small child you are not aware of your own strengths and weaknesses, but you get to know yourself as you

grow up. It is like that with society too. The circulation of fake news can help us to understand the weaknesses in the community. We can then tackle those weaknesses with accurate information. I believe we should put out factual information much more actively. So far, scientists have been too laid back. Fortunately this is changing now.

I thought of this proposition because in the last few years people have started to complain about the fact that certain groups are susceptible to fake news. Of course I agree that this is a problem. But I believe that when something goes wrong with the children in a family, it is not a problem with the children, but also with the parents. They should ask themselves: what did we do wrong and how can we improve the situation? So that is how I wanted to look at the problem of fake news. What can the leaders in society learn from it?' **LdK**





**Robotics, sensors and Big Data**

Rural areas are becoming depopulated because young people no longer want to slog away on a farm, says Frans Kampers, one of the authors of *Food Transitions 2030*. 'If they can let robots do the heavy work, living in rural areas will become more attractive. But you could also consider intercropping, in which crops are combined. We have shown that intercropping gives higher yields than monocultures with fewer inputs, but it is more labour intensive. You might be able to solve this problem with robots and precision agriculture.'

**Less food processing**

We eat a lot of processed food and that is not good for the environment. Drying food ingredients and separating food out into individual raw materials uses up a lot of energy. It is also becoming increasingly clear that processed food is less healthy than unrefined products. 'So the food industry should really start producing less refined food products,' argues Kampers. 'That requires a switch in their processes.'

**Plant and animal breeding**

New breeding techniques such as Crispr-Cas let us change the properties of plants and animals very precisely. This offers opportunities for improving food security and reducing the use of pesticides and drugs, according to Kampers. 'But this is a subject for public debate. I hope we can achieve a turnaround so that we can use these technologies for sustainable agriculture.'

**Health**

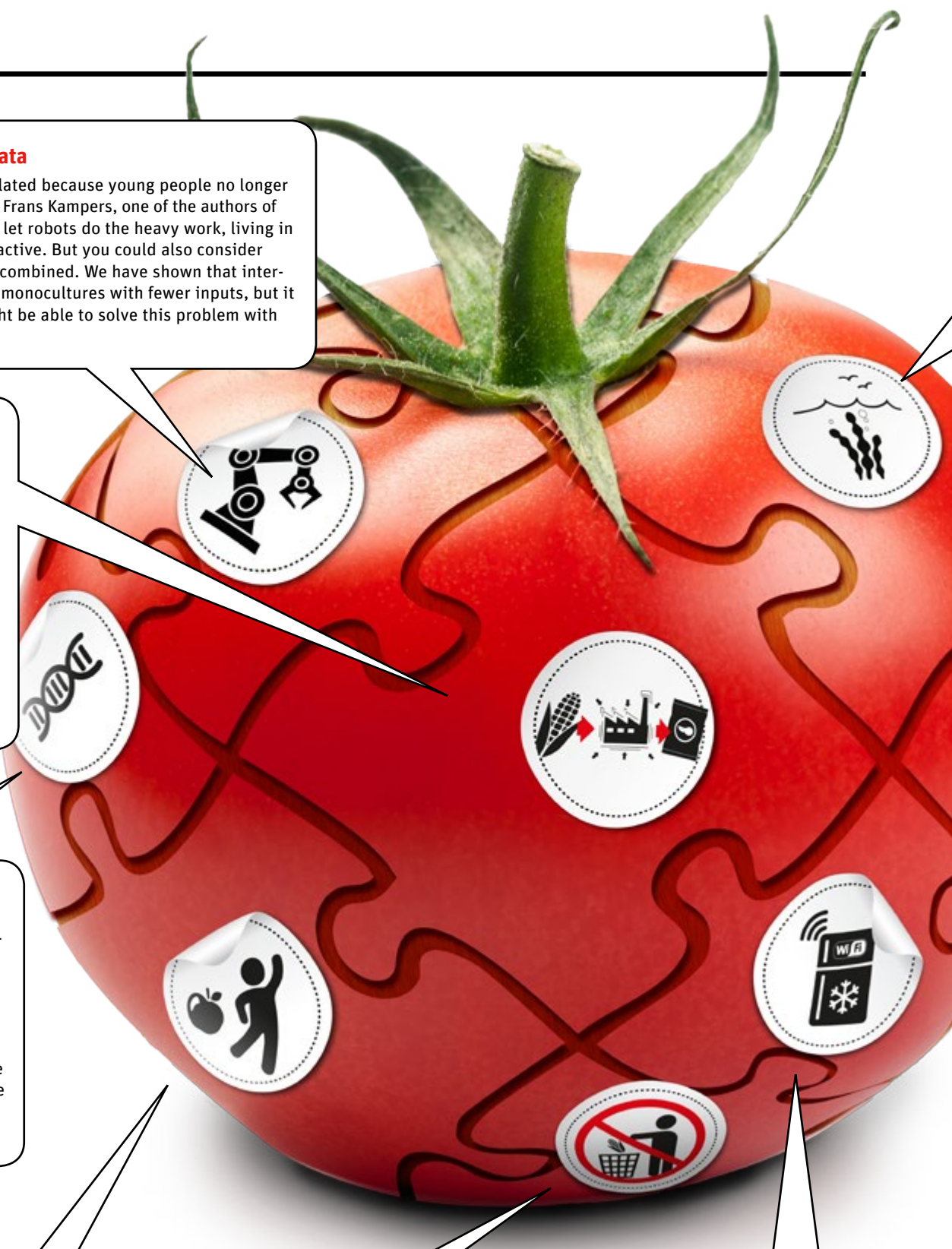
The final research area is all about the link between nutrition and health. What diet suits the biochemistry of our bodies? 'Research into the relationship between gene expression and biochemistry and between diet and our intestinal flora is still in its infancy,' explains Kampers. 'You really want to find patterns between nutrition and health and work out how you can steer health through nutrition.'

**Reducing food waste**

This research area focuses on such questions as why so much food is thrown away and what we can do to prevent this. Kampers: 'We often make the wrong choices in our use of food. This touches upon the issue of good food education.'

**Digitization**

The advance of digitization is giving media companies and food companies lots of data about our lifestyles. 'I think the Googles of this world already know the contents of our fridges, or they will do in ten years' time,' says Kampers. 'That means you can adjust your food to suit your lifestyle or have the fridge communicate with the delivery service. That will affect the entire food sector. We have to make sure that digitization serves public goals such as health and welfare.'





# Research agenda to improve food system

The second Mansholt lecture, on 20 September in Brussels, will be all about sustainable production of healthy food. In this lecture, WUR will explain to the European Commission what needs to happen to get European food system ready for the future. One element of the approach it will be proposing is an extensive research agenda with eight themes.

text Albert Sikkema illustration Paul Gerlach

## Blue Growth: producing food in the water

An example would be seaweed cultivation in deltas where the water contains many nutrients, says Kampers. The seaweed can then be processed in various food products. 'However, you first need to have a good look at the amino acids in the seaweed to see whether they are appropriate in a healthy diet.'

## From animal to vegetable food

Livestock farming *can* play a role in sustainable food systems but meat production is not sustainable at present. 'The question is, what is the optimum combination of meat production and plant production?' asks Kampers. 'This transition also concerns consumers. I think we will only be eating meat once a week in 30 years' time and meat substitutes once or twice a week. The challenge is how to implement this transition in terms of consumers' food behaviour.'

**T**he EU research programme Horizon 2020 is due to end in 2020. The European Commission is working on the successor to this programme and asked Wageningen University & Research what the new research goals should be for food research. WUR's answer can be found in two publications, both of which will be dealt with in the Mansholt lecture on 20 September. In the first publication, *Towards a European Food and Nutrition Policy*, the authors Pieter van 't Veer, Krijn Poppe and Louise Fresco stress that future European policy needs to connect up agriculture, nutrition and health and to set goals in partnership with the food industry. The policy on nutrition and health should not only establish guidelines for preventing disease but also encourage learning behaviour in the social environment because your diet is determined in part by your environment. The authors urge governments and industry to play a more active role.


### FOOD TRANSITIONS

In the second publication, entitled *Food Transitions 2030*, Frans Kampers and Louise Fresco sketch the research directions and innovations that are needed over the next ten years in order to implement this integrated policy on nutrition and health. The European Commission had given them four topics: nutrition, climate, circularity and innovation. Frans Kampers, research strategist in the WUR Corporate Value Crea-

tion department, toured the Wageningen research domains and came up with eight areas of research. Together they form the *Food Transitions 2030* research agenda (see illustration).

Kampers says there is a lot at stake for the food sector over the next few years. 'We use too many natural resources in the production of food, we are eating into biodiversity, soil quality and fossil fuels and we are ruining the atmosphere with an excess of CO<sub>2</sub>. Food producers need a 'licence to produce' from the general public and at the same time they need acceptable profit margins.' The idea is that the eight research areas will provide solutions for these issues.

### SCIENCE CONSORTIA

Science institutes and companies need to set joint long-term objectives so that the eight research themes can be worked out in detail, says Kampers. 'For example, let's say WUR, Unilever and FrieslandCampina jointly aim to reduce the amount of salt in food products by 30 percent over the next 20 years. If you want to do that, what needs to happen in five years? Or two years? Then you set interim goals and come up with research projects to achieve them. You could get SMEs involved in those short-term goals. This would lead to science consortia that formulate common objectives. The challenges are too big for individual parties. But if we join forces and the EU encourages this with substantial financial contributions, we can make this transition.' 

**‘The focus is often on individual ingredients, but nutrition is much more complex’**

**‘We want to explain more clearly that nutrition research is complex, and so are the results.’**



# ‘We want to do more research on real food’

Chocolate and red wine are good for you. Or aren't they? Contradictory messages are not good for consumer confidence in nutrition science. Nor is the fact that some of the funding comes from the industry. So nutrition research needs a makeover, said Professor Edith Feskens and her colleagues recently in the *European Journal of Nutrition*.

text Tessa Louwerens photo Guy Ackermans

## ***In an editorial you and your colleagues expose the mismatch between the nutrition sciences and society. What do you mean?***

‘The nutrition sciences do not sufficiently address key current issues for society such as ageing, lifestyle diseases and sustainability. This mismatch means that nutrition science is not applied very much in efforts to improve health and wellbeing. Currently the focus lies on evidence-based research and the results are mainly used to underpin guidelines, health claims and policy. Another factor is the approach to research. The focus now is often on individual ingredients, such as the role of vitamins or minerals. But nutrition is much more complex and it is not just the sum of the separate molecules and chemical reactions.’

## ***Consumers are losing faith in the nutrition sciences. Why is that?***

‘The results of nutrition research are only visible after a long time and it is often not clear to consumers what the immediate relevance is. Health effects of eating habits and products are just much harder to measure, so the results can be contradictory. People would rather simply be told what is healthy and what isn't. Should I or shouldn't I eat this? But it's difficult to make such hard and fast statements. When nutrition scientists succumb to the temptation to do so, they are contradicted later. This confuses consumers, who then have no idea what to believe. The image of the nutrition sciences also suffers from its private funding. Consumers often have a sceptical attitude to research on topics like the health effects of milk, if it is funded by the dairy industry.’

## ***What do you and your colleagues want to do about it?***


‘Communication with consumers can be improved. We want to become more transparent and explain more clearly that nutrition research just is complex, and so are the results. We also want to interact with more people, through public lectures and forums, for instance. Or by responding through the media more often in order to counter persistent myths. A working party has been set up in the department of Human Nutrition at WUR, which will look into how we can improve our communication and take things into our own hands. Perhaps we can also organize meetings for journalists through the branch associations, to promote better mutual understanding. At present there is a lot of pressure always to do something with research results, and to communicate everything. That also has to do with certain perverse incentives, because you are supposed to market yourself as a scientist: by frequently getting into the media you'll get funding again for research. But at times it might be more sensible not to approach the media with every publication. By compiling the results over a longer period, you get more reliable conclusions and run less risk of your results being contradicted at a later date.’

## ***You and your colleagues argue for a different approach to research. How do you envisage that?***

‘In future we would like to focus on research on how people can lead longer and healthier lives. We want to do more research on real food, in the context of daily life and not in the lab. We also want to collaborate more, including with non-academ-

ics such as patient and consumer organizations. It is not easy to make that shift as long as nutrition research is largely funded by the industry, which is more interested in products and nutrients than in diets and eating habits. That is mainly because their focus is on supporting health claims for a product.’

## ***If private funding runs out because of this, who is to fund research then?***

‘That remains a tricky question. If you apply for a grant from NWO or ZonMW, for example, one of the conditions is that there is some private funding, at least. Dutch policy is geared to knowledge valorisation for the business world. That private funding doesn't necessarily mean a study isn't properly conducted or the results are tampered with. A company has nothing to gain from that itself, certainly not established companies with a reputation to keep up. Nor is it always the case that companies are only interested in applied research. There are companies that want to finance research with a long-term vision. A good example of this is the Top Institute Food & Nutrition (TIFN). Companies can invest in the institute, and then it will do research on particular themes. On the basis of the results a company can decide for itself whether it wants to pursue further development towards an application. But the fact is that not much money is made available for curiosity-driven research. Perhaps it will be possible to get some funding for it from patient and consumer organizations. But they have relatively small budgets.’ 



## CATCHING WEEVILS

On the table in of one of the Nergena greenhouses stand long rows of potted astilbes. Healthy plants with plenty of leaves and a robust root ball. This is the nursery for entomologist Rob van Tol's black vine weevils. Van Tol,

a researcher at Bio-interactions and Plant Health, Wageningen Research, carefully inserts between 10 and 30 miniscule orange eggs into each clump. 'My material for next year.' The adult beetles can then be called on to do their

job. In this case: walking into a trap. In collaboration with businesses, Van Tol has developed a new insect trap. It couldn't be photographed: trade secret. Biological pest control is Van Tol's core business. Since 1991 he has been working





on ways of conquering this weevil, so dreaded by horticulturalists. First using odours, and recently working mainly with traps. With the latest trap he thinks he stands a good chance of winning the battle against the black vine wee-

vil. The design is the result of trial and error. At dawn after a night of feeding, the weevils go looking for a hiding place. The trap provides one, only it proves to allow only one-way traffic. How effective the trap will prove should become

clear next year when Van Tol releases the weevils into cages containing a small rhododendron, to feed and... walk into the trap. 'Exciting. The proof of principle after a year of testing and developing.'  RK, photo Margriet van Vianen





# A Delta Plan for Bangladesh

Bangladesh suffers from flooding every year, but this year's floods have been exceptionally extensive. High time for a Dutch-style Delta Plan. Work has been going into this for years, and WUR is on board. But there is more to this Delta Plan than dykes, says researcher Catharien Terwisscha van Scheltinga. A central component of it is Bangladesh's land use planning.

text Albert Sikkema photo Sk Hasan Ali / Shutterstock.com

**Neither dykes  
nor anything  
else are a  
silver bullet  
which solves  
everything**

**H**ow many deaths have been caused by the recent flooding in South Asia is not yet known. Estimates range from 1200 to 1600 victims. But this was not a major item of world news; more media attention went to the flooding in the American city of Houston, which caused a handful of deaths. One of the main reasons for this, says Catharien Terwisscha van Scheltinga, is that there are floods and drownings every year in Bangladesh. She lived there for five years to implement education and research projects in the fields of climate change, water management and food security for Wageningen University & Research. She is also one of the architects of a Delta Plan for Bangladesh.

'The residents of the Bangladeshi capital Dhaka don't realize there is a huge flooding disaster in their country,' says Terwisscha van Scheltinga. 'They don't suffer much from it. A dyke was built around Dhaka in the 1970s, so the river water no longer flows into the city. Dhaka does still get regular flooding, but that is because of the poor drainage. The present flooding disaster affects the poor in the countryside most. Small farmers who don't have any food because their land is flooded. And to make matters worse, they are suffering from a failed harvest. Wage labourers are stuck in their villages, so they have no work, no income and therefore no food.'

Bangladesh is as flat as the Netherlands and is carved up by three very large rivers – the Ganges, Brahmaputra

and Meghna – which bring huge volumes of water down from the Himalaya every year. At this time of year the annual monsoon rains are added to that. This year the monsoon started early and went on for a very long time, so by the end of August half of Bangladesh was inundated.

## WATER MANAGEMENT

Ten years ago, Prime Minister Balkenende proposed to his Bangladeshi colleagues that thought be given to a Delta Plan for Bangladesh. A few years later, Terwisscha van Scheltinga was involved in a preliminary study by WUR, in which the fundamental question was posed: does Bangladesh need a Delta Plan? 'We talked to people and came across a lot of dissatisfaction. There were already plans, but they had got stuck at the planning stage, were not integrated with plans in other sectors, and depended largely on the ambitions and ideas of those in power. There was no long-term vision, and you need that if you want to improve the water management for the decades to come.'

And yet Terwisscha van Scheltinga also saw that the time was ripe for a Delta Plan. 'Bangladesh has been through a long period of economic growth and is on the way to becoming a middle income country. There are still a lot of poor people who live from hand to mouth, but many Bangladeshis are gradually getting into a position where they have the latitude and the money to





make long-term plans.'

The preliminary study led in 2014 to the assignment from the Bangladeshi government to draw up a Delta Plan – with Dutch funding. This plan is now under construction by a consortium led by Twynstra Gudde consultants and with other parties including Euroconsult, Deltares, WUR and leading Bangladeshi institutes. The draft is ready. 'What we are talking about now is the broad lines of a plan. If it is approved, the Bangladeshi government wants to launch an investment programme, with support from the World Bank. That is why the World Bank is already involved in the planning now, so as to avoid delays at a later stage.'

#### REPLACING RICE


Central to the Delta Plan is land use planning as part of adaptive water management. 'We take an integral view of both food and water supplies, which vary from region to region. Part of Bangladesh is very dry, and there the water table is sinking. In that area you want to retain more water and adapt agriculture to the dry conditions, by replacing rice with crops that need less water, for instance. And irrigating more with surface water. This leads to a

particular kind of land use which in turn determines what kind of water management you need, where dykes should be built, and how high they should be.'

The issues in the south of Bangladesh, on the Indian Ocean, are completely different. 'In that area there is a lot of fish farming, especially shrimp farming, which makes use of salt water that comes in with the tide. But there are also rice farmers here who use fresh water and for whom the tide is a problem.' Here too, you've got to come to agreements about land use planning before you can start talking about dykes, explains the researcher. Another element in the Delta Plan is the Ganges Barrage, a large dam with a reservoir intended to capture the monsoon water in the west of Bangladesh. This water can be used in the dry season. The construction of the dam has been postponed for the time being for lack of agreement on a suitable location. Terwisscha van Scheltinga has her doubts about the dam. 'A dam is structural so you should only construct dams if they offer advantages in all circumstances. If not, you'd better opt for another form of adaptive delta management. That gives you the flexibility to respond to changing circumstances.'

#### SUMMER DYKES

In this regard, there is another Dutch invention that could be useful in Bangladesh: winter and summer dykes, with water meadows between them. 'In Bangladesh they are not familiar with the idea of high and low dykes, with farming being allowed in the water meadows but no houses. That could fit well into the Bangladesh situation, but again, this hasn't been worked out yet. Neither dykes nor anything else are a silver bullet which solves everything. Our main task is to get a combination of measures which improve both agriculture and water management, and to anticipate the expected climate change.'

As to climate change, Terwisscha van Scheltinga isn't giving anything away at this point. 'We must collect facts and data, above all. On the basis of baseline studies I can safely say there is climate change is going on. And then I don't just mean that the weather in Bangladesh has become more extreme, because climate conditions in this country always varied widely. From our analyses it appears that the rainy season is shifting, so the rains no longer coincide with the farmers' sowing calendar. In that way, climate change has a direct impact on the food supply.' 

# ARE THERE GROUNDS FOR OPTIMISM?

At the opening of the academic year, guest speaker Matt Ridley took up the cudgels for more optimism. Human beings are faring better than ever and the environment is rallying too. *Resource* asked members of the audience whether they share Ridley's optimism.

text Roelof Kleis en Albert Sikkema illustration Henk van Ruitenbeek

## Gert-Jan Hofstede



**Professor of Applied Information Technology**

**'I thought what Ridley said made sense. He is a rational man who presents optimistic statistics and says: a lot can still be done.'**

I've read his *The Evolution of Everything*, a great book. In it he explains the idea of path-dependence: things happen, and then other things happen, at random. Human beings cannot handle that; they want to ascribe events to a God or a director. If you are a nit-picker, you can easily pick holes in his lecture, because it wasn't watertight, but I am noticing something else among scientists; a feeling of "Hey, you're on our patch". They don't like that. I am optimistic about the achievements of science, but not so much about the way it is being conducted. People are cramping each other's style. Disciplines are like fenced-off gardens in a new neighbourhood. Great that Louise Fresco is trying to open it up.'

## Bettina Bock



**Teacher of Rural Sociology**

'Students of Development Studies frequently feel frustrated when, yet again, there is criticism of development projects and teachers say: it is complex and tricky. The students want to achieve something. I'm with them there. I want to contribute to a better world with my scientific work. I

think most of the people at WUR feel that way. We hope we can contribute something, but we don't have a naïve faith in progress, and we do keep a careful, critical eye on what is going on. We have to find out what the intended and the unintended effects of our actions are. **But in the end, I think we have enough commitment and optimism to contribute to the university's mission.** That is the strength of this institution.'

## Svenja van Vugt



**MSc student of International Development Studies**

'I think Ridley does a bit of cherry picking. That makes you tend towards being really convinced by his optimism, but I am

sceptical about his conclusions. **There are a lot of things going wrong in the world too. Ridley skates over that by spouting lots of facts, and I don't know if they are correct.** Personally, I am optimistic about science. But science alone won't get us there. The world of politics and the world of science have got to come together.'

## Pieter Zuidema



**Personal professor of Tropical Forests**

'In itself, I do share Ridley's optimism, even though I am an ecologist who studies tropical forests. And if there

is one thing you could be justified in being pessimistic about, it is the future of tropical forests. And yet I am optimistic that science will come up with solutions on many fronts. But science plays several roles. You ought to use knowledge to warn people too. **I definitely don't share Ridley's optimism about the environment. The predictions about the impact of climate change point in a very different direction to what he shows us.** He presents a pretty selective set of scientific results. The scientific consensus in many fields is very different to what he suggests.'

## Martin Scholten



**Director of the Animal Sciences Group**

'I am an optimist. I can relate to a number of things Ridley talks about. I too was trained as an ecologist in the 1970s, when a

dogmatic doom and gloom scenario prevailed. I recognize the examples he gives. **I agree that we can feed the world with the biomass we grow. And we will certainly do that even better in future.** But Ridley does get carried away. On the subject of the impact of climate change, he goes too far and his examples are far-fetched. Then he becomes just as dogmatic as the doomsayers. It's nice to have a speaker like him to balance out the discussion, but I don't follow his optimism blindly. Nevertheless, it is inspiring in the sense that not everything in the world is getting worse.'





## Robert Kamphuis



Artist

**'I like it when someone looks at things from a different angle. And that it's done with an optimistic attitude.** As an artist, I try to ask myself every day whether there is another way to go about things. Of

course I am curious to know how accurate Ridley's data and claims are, and I hope Wageningen scientists will check them. I think it's good that we get to hear this different perspective in Wageningen. I'm quite proud of that actually. Generally I see WUR as a very traditional university. I get the feeling we're in second gear, while the world around us got into fifth gear long ago. Internal communication is poor, I feel, and I think most of us have very little idea about the new ideas and insights being discovered at WUR. I would like to see a creative motor on campus. A building or place where ideas are exchanged and where people demonstrate new ways of doing things. And as far as I'm concerned, people like Ridley could be invited more often.'

## Patrick Jansen



Professor of Resource Ecology

'There was a lack of neutrality in Ridley's address. I saw examples of lying with statistics. Expressing problems such as hunger, poverty and natural resource consumption in percentages instead of absolute figures creates a falsely positive impression. **Stressing that the global forest cover is constant covers up the problem that the old tropical forests, where most of the biodiversity is found, are still being destroyed on a large scale.** The wolf is doing well because we are doing well. But that wellbeing is based on the import of natural resources from less developed countries, which is one of the reasons large predators there are not doing well. So I am uneasy about this eco-modernism. I am open to discussion but I get cross if you only mention the positive points. Because when I look at biodiversity, I see no grounds for optimism.' ®









# Seven secrets of the long-distance lover

Wageningen students are keen travellers. It is not at all unusual for them to do their internship or thesis research abroad. All very exciting and enriching, but what if your beloved stays behind in Wageningen? Seven tips for keeping a long-distance relationship going.

*text* Milou van der Horst *illustration* Eva van Schijndel

**TIP  
1**

## CREATE A STRONG BASIS

To be able to wave each other goodbye without any qualms, you have to know what you mean to each other. Some of our veterans had only got together not long before they had to part company for a while, which can be worrying. That was the case for Merel and Rik, who had been together for seven months when Rik went away for three months. Merel: 'I had never had a long-distance relationship before and of course I was up for it, but I honestly didn't know how I would like it.' Merel's advice is to talk it through at length when there are plans to be apart for an extended period. 'I think it's good to be honest about it if you have doubts. If your relationship has been going on longer, that is often less of an issue, because then you already have a stronger basis.' Rik's advice is to assume the best and trust that things will work out. 'You should have faith in the quality of your relationship, and not make negative assumptions and start wondering whether she still thinks about you. If you can't do that, you don't have a very good relationship.'

**TIP  
2**

## KEEP IN TOUCH (BUT DON'T OVERDO IT)

Keeping in touch is the key. Onnika: 'It is important to share your experiences; otherwise I think you can drift apart. The other person might be going through a lot, or their thinking may have changed in some way. Without a lot of contact

you won't understand each other or be able to put things in context.' Sharing the little things by WhatsApp or text messaging is crucial to this. 'A relationship is made up of memories to a great extent, so I think it's important to keep on sharing the little things,' says Onnika.

A lot of photos get shared, especially by the person who went away. That helps the one who stayed at home to picture their partner's life. Bram: 'I usually showed Kelly photos of the weekend on Monday, so she could see what I had been up to. But I liked knowing what she was doing in the Netherlands, too.'

You can overdo keeping in touch, though, too, warns Hidde. 'If you always tell your partner about what you are doing as you do it, you don't build up as much contact in the place where you are. You are constantly waiting for a reply, or you are interrupted by a reply, which makes you think about her all the time.' Hidde was forced to discover the advantages of limited messaging when he didn't have Wi-Fi. 'With Wi-Fi you are sending WhatsApps back and forth all evening, without really talking to each other or saying what you want, and it just makes you miss each other even more.' Rick also felt that WhatsApp messages are open to misinterpretation. 'You interpret messages on WhatsApp differently. So it is very important to talk over a tiff or a bone of contention straightaway, because a misunderstanding can easily arise when you are far apart.'


**TIP 3** **SKYPE IS YOUR FRIEND  
(EVEN WHEN YOU'RE QUIET)**

Skype proved to be the best medium of communication, as long as the internet connection was good enough. 'I like Skype, because you can see each other's facial expressions and you can talk a bit better than on the phone. After we had Skyped, it felt as though we were closer again,' says Hidde. 'You are better off with fewer, but better quality contact moments than with a lot of semi-contact through WhatsApp.' Onnika was sometimes on Skype without saying anything. 'I might be studying and Jorick might start doing something else, but we could look at each other now and then.' But Skype is not much more than a sticking plaster, says Merel. 'Skype and WhatsApp are great, but it's still just virtual. Sometimes a hug says more than an hour of talking.' Which brings us to tip 4.


**TIP 4** **PAY A VISIT**

'I think it has added value if you visit your partner,' says Bram. Then you won't just have heard the stories, but will have seen for yourself what it's like there.' Planning a visit was also a nice distraction from missing Kelly. 'That helps you see the plus side of the period apart, that you've got something to look forward to.' Bram really enjoyed seeing what

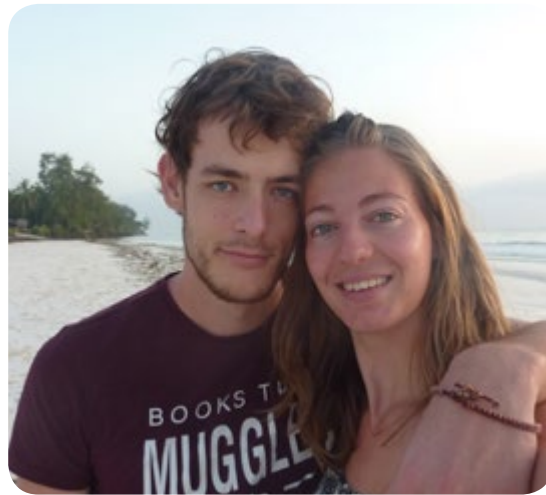

**TIP 5** **KEEP BUSY  
(ESPECIALLY ON THE HOME FRONT)**

It is usually easiest for the partner who goes abroad, reckon the veterans. They arrive in a whole new environment which their partner is not part of. Thanks to all the new impressions, they don't have much time to feel they are missing them, and all their spare time goes into exploring the country. Bram: 'In Canada I did all sorts of nice things at the weekends, like climbing and snowboarding, so I didn't really have time to stop and think about it. Only at night when I went to bed alone did I often think: it would have been nice if she was here too.'

Staying at home is harder. Life goes on as usual, except suddenly without your boyfriend or girlfriend. The best distraction is to keep busy, says Merel. She herself did a year on a student organization board when Rik was away. Her advice: 'Don't sit around waiting, because you should lead your own life too. And even if he is an important part of it, he isn't the whole of your life.' Onnika looked for distraction too. 'I filled my evenings with all sorts of activities, in order not to be home alone.'

## THE VETERANS

The tips in this article came from four Wageningen couples. All eight students and graduates have been apart from their loved ones for trips abroad several times. And all four relationships survived.



**Who:** Rik Heinen and Merel Scheltema  
**Degrees:** International Development Studies (graduate) and Urban Environmental Management  
**Relationship:** 3 years

**Experience abroad:**  
 Experience abroad: Rik 3.5 months in Bangladesh and 2 months in Vietnam; Merel 3.5 months in Kenya for her MSc thesis and 1 month in Uganda for a consultancy project



**Who:** Onnika van Oosterbosch and Jorick van de Water  
**Degrees:** Animal Sciences and International Land and Water Management (both graduates)  
**Relationship:** nearly 7 years

**Experience abroad:**  
 Onnika 3 months in Malawi for her MSc internship and 3 months in South Africa for her thesis; Jorick 3 months in Vietnam for his BSc internship, 4 months in India and Sri Lanka for his MSc internship, 1 month in Spain for a course and 6 months in Brazil for a job.



TIP  
6**BE CREATIVE**


Skyping, texting and messaging day in day out can get a bit boring after a few months, and a dose of creativity is needed to find new ways of getting in touch. Onnika and Jorick gave each other presents to take along. 'Jorick has made a selection of songs for me, and I was to listen to one a day. And I once folded a load of paper stars and wrote a text on each star. Just sweet nothings, to let him know I hadn't forgotten him.' On Merel's birthday Rik had a big bunch of flowers delivered. Merel: 'That was very nice because even though he was far away, I did know he was thinking of me.' Merel suggests keeping in touch with the other person's housemates and friends, too, because they can lend a hand if you want to surprise your loved one. Together with Rik's housemates, Merel covered his bedroom floor with balloons when he got back from Bangladesh.

TIP  
7**GIVE EACH OTHER YOUR BLESSING**

'The experience of living abroad makes you more independent and mature, and I think you should allow each other the opportunity for that,' says Hidde. 'If you hold the other person back you deprive them of an opportunity.' Merel agrees that it is important to give the adventurer your blessing, however hard it might be to stay at home on

your own. 'If you can put yourself in the other person's shoes, it is much easier to deal with these kinds of things. And if I ever want to go away, I will know that Rik knows how nice that is for me.'

Travelling promotes personal growth and your relationship can be strengthened by that, says Hidde. 'I think you have a stronger and more stable relationship after a stay abroad because you are stronger and more stable yourself.' Onnika agrees. 'The first time Jorick went away our relationship had only been going for three months, but I think it made our relationship stronger. We got to know each other, we saw how the other person makes decisions or deals with tricky situations. When you share that, you can grow in it together and you know why a person has difficulty with something.'

A temporary long-distance relationship is also a good test for the future, especially if you don't know whether you will be able to find work in the same town or the same country. Merel: 'I think that being apart for a while has made us more flexible, we are used to coping with more situations. We are not as scared of being apart or of living in different cities. We can handle that.' 



**Who:** Kelly Nijhuis and Bram Wennekes  
**Degrees:** both graduates in Earth and Environment

**Relationship:** 2.5 years

**Experience abroad:**

Experience abroad: Kelly 2 months (twice) in the UK for her MSc thesis; Bram 4 months in Canada for his MSc thesis.



**Who:** Hidde Hofhuis and Michelle Janssen  
**Degrees:** both studying Forest and Nature Conservation; Michelle doing Environmental Sciences as well

**Relationship:** nearly 3 years

**Experience abroad:**

Hidde 4 months in India for his thesis; Michelle 1 month in Curaçao for courses and 4 months in Spain for her MSc internship.

**TIPS FOR TOOLS**

Did you know that, even if there is an ocean between you and your boyfriend or girlfriend, you can watch a movie together, even seeing each other on the webcam? This can be done using *letsgaze.com*. But this not the only tool for making long-distance relationships more enjoyable. With the help of various websites and apps you can sing, draw, write, read or go online-shopping together at a distance. You can find all these possibilities under 'tools' on *ldrmagazine.com*.



## EMOTION

There is more to human emotions that feeling happy, sad, angry, surprised, scared or disgusted. This list of six basic emotions does not cover our full palette of responses, say researchers from Berkeley. They distinguish at least 27 different emotions in a large number of test subjects who watched 200 short films. Emotions, like colours, shade into each other. All we need now is to find the right words for all those gradations.

## GLUE

Neanderthals invented glue, say Leiden researchers. The prehistoric people obtained tar by heating birch bark over a fire. The 'proof' lies in the fact that the Leiden team succeeded in doing this themselves. The sticky tar was used by Neanderthals to glue a spearhead onto a stick. For hunting or for waging war.

## HEEL!

The Japanese company Next Technology is bringing out a robotic dog that can detect sweaty feet. The small dog, Hana-chan, is equipped with a sensor which registers odours, and it even faints if the smell is unbearable. The robot sprays a pleasant aroma if that is likely to help. Hana-chan will go on sale next year for a mere 9000 euros.

## HAPPY

Of all the MOOCs you can take at edX, including many Wageningen courses, this one jumps out at you: The Science of Happiness. A free eight-week course on how to be happy, offered by UC Berkeley. For 49 dollars you even get a diploma. And best of all, no prior experience is required. Go for it!

# Student to become professional cyclist

**Soil, Water & Atmosphere student Jan-Willem van Schip is to become a professional cyclist. He will join the Roompot-Nederlandse Loterij team on 1 January. This means that he now has to work hard to finish his degree on time.**

Van Schip is doing one more module in period 1. 'Then I have to sort out my thesis, after which I'm done.' He would like to finish by 1 February. 'But a bit of a delay is not a problem. As a prof I may have to train somewhat more than now but I'll probably also spend much more time resting and hanging out on the sofa. It's all about the optimum balance between exertion and rest.'

Van Schip expects to get more experience and to toughen up at Roompot-De Nederlandse Loterij. 'At first I wasn't totally enthusiastic as I wanted to get into the World Tour. That's basically the Champions League of cycling. But the more I get used to the idea, the more opportunities I see. I can take part in the Tour of Flanders,



Jan-Willem van Schip in action.

Paris-Roubaix and the Amstel Gold. Those are good races.'

Van Schip competed in the 2016 Olympic Games as a track cyclist and won the Tour of Drenthe last March. This summer, he won the hearts of cycling fans

with his authentic performance in the Tour de France programme Avondetappe. His 1000 kilometre bike ride back home from France following his TV appearance got a lot of attention on social media. [LvdN](#)

PHOTO: HENRI SANTING

## 'Many international students homeless'

**According to the National Union of Students (LSVb) and the Groningen Students' Union, hundreds of international students in the Netherlands are still without accommodation. The problem is most severe in the big university towns. International students in Wageningen seem to have got away lightly so far.**

All sorts of horror stories have been coming out on Facebook and the LSVb's Housing Hotline over the last week and a half. In one case, a British student who had been looking for a room for weeks dropped out of his university and went home. 'The stories seem to be exceptions, but there are plenty of them in the cities with big student populations,' writes the LSVb.

From the Groningen Students Union (GSb) too, we hear that overseas students are homeless because the higher education institutions are not doing enough to help them find accommodation. The University of Groningen and Hanze University of Applied Sciences have established 100 temporary housing units, but that is not a permanent solution, says the GSb. So chairperson Sjoerd Kalisvaart urges the institutions to take action: 'Start by making sure students have a roof over their heads. How can you focus on your studies if you don't know where you are going to sleep?'

Last week the student housing providers' umbrella organization, Kences, announced that the shortage of accommodation for international students is probably

smaller than it was. Director Ardin Mourik says there are still big problems in Utrecht and the big cities but there are 'fewer extreme cases'.

The room shortage in Wageningen mainly affects Dutch first-years. Nearly 40 percent of the Dutch students who want a room had not found one yet during the AID. The figure for international students is 10 percent.

Student housing provider Idealis says that as far as it know, there are no international WUR students without a roof over their heads. Spokesperson Marisca Wind; 'All the international students sent to us from WUR are catered for. And we haven't heard any tales of international students who are still homeless or have gone home.' [HOP/LvdN](#)



## ‘Regreening’ in Ppauw eco-village

The Dutch for hazing (*ontgroening*) literally means ‘degreening’. Now students can experience a very Wageningen alternative: Regreening. Green-minded students learnt how to do even more for nature and the environment at the Ppauw eco-village on Wageningse Berg.

In the past few weeks, 40 students were introduced to a variety of green initiatives in Wageningen during this Regreening. It was organized for the first time this year by the Green Active Network (GAN), the network for all the local nature and environmental organizations.

Instead of being ‘degreened’ in hazing rituals, the students are ‘regreened’. The focus is on sharing green ideas and formulating a common vision. All very different to the introductory period in a student society, says GAN coordinator Mirjam Turk, although they do have one thing in common. ‘We also wanted to cultivate a sense of community. And we certainly managed that.’

Participant Josua Münch, an International Land and Water Management Master’s student, looks back with pleasure at a week full of working together, swapping ideas *and* delicious food, courtesy of Foodsharing Wageningen. ‘From the start there was an open atmosphere. Everyone has similar interests and at the same time you can learn a lot from one another. I could level with everyone immediately. The Regreening worked better for me than the AID.’

The participants slept in tents for the duration of a four-day trip to Ppauw. They dug drainage ditches around the eco-village’s festival grounds and helped build a tiny house. Organizer Rose Akkermans said this killed two birds with one stone: ‘You can get a job done quickly with such a large group and it’s a nice way of getting to know one another.’ The programme included a ‘weed-dating’ session in the Ommuurde Tuin (an organic market garden in Renkum). Crouched in a large border, the students had dates lasting a few minutes while they weeded the entire bed. **LH**



PHOTO: GUIDO BARTELS

Regreening participants digging drainage ditches in eco-village Ppauw.

## MEANWHILE IN... SOUTH KOREA

### ‘My generation is immune to the threats’

On 3 September, North Korea launched its sixth test missile. It is estimated that the country can now launch missiles over 10,000 kilometers, across half the globe. Meanwhile, the rhetoric in international politics against the North Korean regime is becoming harsher. Is a military response the solution? South Korean Je-Seung Jeon does not think so.

‘In my opinion the portrayal of North Korea in the media as an increasing threat increases support for conservative politicians in South Korea. In the past year, the conservatives have proven that continuous power has made them corrupt, as is shown by the President Park and Samsung scandal. Also, I blame them for the worsening relations with North Korea, especially by cutting off diplomatic communication. Contrary to what American president Trump says, constructive diplomatic communication needs to be resumed.



Je-Seung Jeon, a PhD student of Microbial Ecology at NIOO-KNAW, talks about the effects of the North Korean situation on his homeland, South Korea.

The young generation of South Korea has grown up with frequent threats from North Korea. Although we recognize how bad the situation is and how annoyed the North Kore-



PHOTO: KCNA

ans are, we have become immune to it. We have realized that stability in the Korean conflict is in everybody’s interests. We believe that a strong military power neutralizes the provocations of North Korea. At the same time, we feel that the Koreans are one people. I think a solution should be focused on reuniting the north and the south. For two years, I was in military service, patrolling the border. Although the living conditions in service were rather poor, I felt proud to serve my country. It was a useful experience for me, because it made me realize how severe a war situation really is and that escalation of the conflict is completely undesirable. When I talk to my friends about it, we never make jokes about the subject. This topic is too serious for jokes.’ **TF**

# YOU ON CAMPUS

**Joeri Messelink (29) is starting on his thesis this month. Nothing unusual about that, except that this is his third attempt. The Master's student has had setbacks – lymph node cancer and depression – and has numerous other interests in addition to environmental technology, such as politics, philosophy and religion.**

Joeri takes a critical view of the world around him. Take religion. It creates false expectations, says the Master's student. 'I don't want to hold a God responsible for what happens here.' Personally, he is interested in the mystical strands of Islam such as Sufism. 'It's not so dogmatic, it's a more poetic approach to belief, focusing on philosophical ideas rather than rules.'

Joeri also has a critical take on modern Western society. 'We have so much freedom that people have forgotten what freedom means. We have created a society where people are tolerated rather than accepted.' Joeri

thinks it is crazy that working indoors has a higher status these days whereas it does not necessarily make people happy and 'humans are designed to move around'.

Joeri likes long-distance running, often going off road for distances of more than 30 kilometres. 'If you run for long enough, you stop caring about what the rest of the world is doing. Time becomes a

**'It was only when I was hit by depression that I could see how you might give up all hope'**

blur and you get into your zone.' Such spells are particularly important when you are depressed, as Joeri knows from experience. He suffered from depression a couple of years ago. 'I got lymphoma when I was 12. Just after I had been cured, there were several suicides at my school. I had just got my life back and I couldn't understand this. It was only when I



PHOTO: ANNE VAN DER HEIJDEN

was hit by depression that I could see how you might give up all hope.'

Joeri talks candidly about how the disease changed him. Physically — the cancer has made him infertile — and mentally — 'you just look at life differently'. He says that you can't understand who he is without this information. 'One thing I know for sure: I've had more good fortune in my life than bad fortune.'

Joeri wants to complete his degree. 'I'm not worried by the fact that other people my age may already have two children. That's not my goal in life because I can't reproduce, so I will have to find something else that makes me happy.' Travelling the world, for example. But first there's that Master's thesis... **AvdH**

## PARTIES

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



### WAGENINGEN CITY CENTRE - PUB CRAWL AND PARTY

**Friday 15 September from 20.00 to 02.00**

The first international pub crawl of the academic year is facilitated by IxESN and ISOW. Members pay 10 euros, non-members 15 for a free drink in five different cafés. A great deal. It is also an opportunity to get to know Wageningen town centre, and of course your fellow party-loving students.

### KSV – OPEN PARTY

**Thursday 21 September from 23.00 to 05.00**

Open parties at KSV are always packed out. Make sure you come early so you don't have to queue for long. And don't forget your student card!

### WAGENINGEN - POPRONDE

**Thursday 28 September from 16.00 to 04.000**

Popronde comes to Wageningen every year. A fantastic music festival in the middle of town. Put it in your diary now and invite your friends from far and near. **AvdH**



PHOTO: GUY ACKERMANS

Having a ball at Balfolk in the Junushoff on Sunday 10 september.



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

## Lentamente per favore

'I wanted to do my internship in Italy. I'd often been there on holiday but now I really wanted to immerse myself in the culture and see what Italian science is like. I got the opportunity to go to Verona University through the BioNano-Technology chair group, where I did my thesis.

I worked on a method for producing particles in a microwave. Not your ordinary everyday microwave but a professional one in which you can set various parameters. I used it to make powders that can light up red and green. I then used lasers to test when they gave off light and how much. The main significance of my work was in how the particles were made. It would have taken three days at least with the usual synthesis, but now it only took 15 minutes thanks to the microwave. The Nanomaterials group didn't have any experience with this and so I was allowed to try it out.

### THERE'S ALWAYS TOMORROW

The biggest cultural difference that I found with Wageningen was that there was even less of a divide between students and professors than here. For example, I shared an office with the professor and I could always ask any questions directly. They were much more approachable. The pace of work was also very different. The mindset there was that you can always do something tomorrow rather than today. Or as the Italians put it: *lentamente per favore*. It took ages before the chemicals I needed were ordered, for example, and I only found out what equipment was available after I'd been there two months. On the other hand, I was given the freedom to work on a project that was new for the department. A really cool opportunity. Eventually, I was the only person in the department who knew how to make particles in the microwave.

### COFFEE

I had the money to visit a few Italian cities thanks to the Erasmus scholarship and some savings. I needed that money too because sandwiches and drinks are definitely more expensive in the cities than here. Except for the coffee. You rarely pay more than one euro for your coffee in Italy. In the end, I mainly did a lot of things with people from the group. Peo-

ple in Italy are very open-hearted and they are always up for doing something. A barbecue at someone's house, parties or exploring a city. I do miss that open-hearted nature. I'll definitely go back to look the people up who I met there. They have become true friends.' **© CN**



## THE WORKS

**Who?** Laura Schijven  
**What?** Internship with the Nanomaterials group at Verona University  
**Where?** Verona, Italy

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





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## Science Cafe Wageningen

[www.sciencecafewageningen.nl](http://www.sciencecafewageningen.nl)

### ORGANS ON A CHIP

Thursday, September 14<sup>th</sup>  
19:45 - Live music  
20:15 - Science  
Café Loburg  
FREE ENTRANCE

prof. Albert van den Berg  
(University of Twente.)

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Student Challenge: "Design the Ultimate Urban Greenhouse"

## Looking for a team? Join our match-making event!

**Date** 20 September 2017  
**Time** 18:00 – 20:00  
**Venue** Impulse

**Registration**  
[www.wur.eu/studentchallenges](http://www.wur.eu/studentchallenges)





## announcements

### ENTER FOR THE ANNUAL NVVL THESIS PRIZE

The NVVL Network for Food Experts awards two thesis prizes annually on students of Food Technology, Nutrition or Dietetics, with the aim of stimulating applied research. The best theses are rewarded with 500 euros and a trophy. The theses must have been written between 1 October 2016 and 1 October 2017, and relate to applied nutrition, nutrition physiology, food preparation, food chemistry, food technology, food microbiology and food legislation. Preferably with a social component. Deadline for submissions: 15 October. Conditions and procedure on: [nvvl.nl/nvvl-jaarprijz](http://nvvl.nl/nvvl-jaarprijz).

### RUGBY INTRODUCTION TRAINING

Always wanted to try a new sport? Between Tuesday 12 September and Tuesday 17 October Wageningen Rugby Club is running introductory training sessions for those who want to try rugby. Our teams are made up of students and non-students of different nationalities. In six weeks you will learn everything there is to know about rugby. And you can join activities at the club. We'll start on the 12th of September at 19.45. Venue: Sport Park De Zoom, Zoomweg 6 Wageningen. Info: [intro@rcwageningen.nl](mailto:intro@rcwageningen.nl) / [rcwageningen.nl](http://rcwageningen.nl).

### FOOD BANK SEEKS DRIVERS (CATEGORY BE DRIVING LICENCE)

Volunteers at the Neder-Veluwe Food Bank pick up food that is still good but cannot be sold from supermarkets in Rhenen, Wageningen and Renkum on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings. Food is handed out on Monday afternoon in Rhenen and Elst, on Wednesday afternoon in Doorwerth and Oosterbeek, and on Friday afternoon in Renkum and Wageningen. Food banks are entirely run by volunteers. Unfortunately, several volunteers have suddenly dropped out for health reasons. To be able to go on helping, our team urgently needs reinforcements in the form of drivers

(with category BE licences for cars, vans and trailers) and drivers' mates. On average we ask you to commit to a half-day every two weeks. What could be nicer than doing something for a good cause in an enthusiastic team? Interested? Email [vrijwilliger@voed-selbanknederveluwe.nl](mailto:vrijwilliger@voed-selbanknederveluwe.nl).

## agenda

### Thursday 14 to Wednesday 27 September

#### FILMS FOR STUDENTS

*Donkeyote*: a slow-moving portrait of a dreamy pensioner wandering through Andalusia with a donkey and a dog. *Retour en Bourgogne*: the family, the vineyard and the future (screening with wine!) *Taxi Driver*: the classic, with Robert de Niro as the psychotic New Yorker. *Wakefield*: a man in a midlife crisis spies on his family. *Una*: a subtle drama of illicit love. *Silent Land*: about a Cambodian farmer fighting for her land. Venue:

[WWW.MOVIE-W.NL](http://WWW.MOVIE-W.NL)

### Thursday 14 September, 19.30-22.15

#### OPEN REHEARSAL OF STUDENT ORCHESTRA DE ONTZETTING

Do you play a brass band instrument and do you fancy playing with the nicest student orchestra in Wageningen? Come along to the open rehearsal, then. Do email us first at [ontzetting@wur.nl](mailto:ontzetting@wur.nl), so we know you're coming. De Ontzetting is an international, culturally diverse musicians' association. The orchestra currently has about 60 members, most of them students. Location: Orion, room C1032.

[ONTZETTING.WUR.NL](http://ONTZETTING.WUR.NL)

### Saturday 16 September, 16.00 PERFORMANCE BY THE WIND ENSEMBLE OF STUDENT ORCHESTRA DE ONTZETTING

This concert will feature clarinets, trumpets, horns, tubas, trombones, flutes and drums. So bring your earplugs and prepare to swing! The Serreplein concert is one of the band's first performances. An hour's worth of upbeat, often familiar music in Wageningen town centre. Location: Serreplein, opposite the library.

### Tuesday 19 September, 14.00-17.00

#### OPEN MARKET SPACE – CLIMATE SMART TECHNOLOGIES

Want to learn more about Climate Smart Technologies? We have just the thing for you. Join us at our lively Open Market Space at Wageningen University Campus, where you can link up with Dutch companies and start-ups who will share and demonstrate climate-related technologies. Organized by: Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation. Venue: Forum building, ground floor. Contact: [ilse.hennemann@wur.nl](mailto:ilse.hennemann@wur.nl).

### Thursday 21 September, 12.30-13.20

#### LUNCH WORKSHOP WAGENINGEN WRITING LAB / WUR LIBRARY 'SEARCH EFFICIENTLY IN THE RIGHT DATABASE'

There are many ways to search for information. Knowledge of databases and search strategies will help you to find scientific publications on your topic in an efficient and systematic way. Learn about tips and tricks in this workshop. You can bring your own research question to get advice. Be on time, as participant numbers are limited to 20. Free admission. Venue: CO106 Forum PC0725. Info: [info.wageningen-writingLab@wur.nl](mailto:info.wageningen-writingLab@wur.nl).

### Saturday 23 September: 9.30 FOOD SYMPOSIUM 11<sup>TH</sup> JUBILEE NICOLAS APPERT: 'FUNDAMENTAL TRANSITION OF OUR FOOD SYSTEM'

Several speakers will discuss the problems of our current food industry and the opportunities it offers for the future. Among them: Professor Tim Lang (City University of London) & Professor Rob Hamer (Unilever). Venue: Orion. Tickets via: [foodsymposium.nl](http://foodsymposium.nl).

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

## colophon

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# >>TYPICAL DUTCH




ILLUSTRATION: HENK VAN RUITENBEEK

## Licking the index finger

I was having a group discussion with my ACT team. We were struggling with a calculation when a Dutch teammate said: 'If we can't figure it out, we can just do this.' Then he quickly licked his index finger and lifted it up in the air, as if he was pointing at the ceiling.

Seeing that the other international student in our group and I were both quite confused, he explained what he meant. The gesture of licking the index finger and raising it in the air means 'making a rough estimation'. It has to do with the typical windy weather in the Netherlands. In the past, when the Dutch wanted to know which direction the wind was blowing from, they would lick their index fingers and raise them. The wet finger would feel coldest and dry fastest on the side the wind was coming from, and so a rough estimation of the wind direction could be made. Over time, the meaning of this action extended beyond estimating the wind direction to any kind of 'guesstimation'.

Of course wind direction in the Netherlands is no longer measured in this way nowadays, either due to the huge uncertainty of this method or the widespread use of wind vanes. But it's still an interesting example of how even a small gesture can have a deep bond with a country, its climate and its people.  Yinci Yan, 1st year MSc student of Forest and Nature Conservation, from China

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

**The gesture of licking and raising the index finger has to do with the windy Dutch weather**