



# News from the European Chair

The European Chair in Food Safety Microbiology was installed in 1997 and is sponsored by five food companies: Danone, DSM Food Specialties, Mondelez International, Nestlé and Unilever.

The mission of the chair is to develop, provide and disseminate education, consultation and research in food safety microbiology and management of microbiological hazards for academic students and for employees of industry and government.

The chair is hosted by the Laboratory of Food Microbiology at Wageningen University in The Netherlands.

Recently prof. Han Joosten has succeeded prof. Leon Gorris as chair holder .

## INAUGURAL ADDRESS ON FEB. 27, 2014

**“The limits of testing for microbiological food safety” is the title of the inaugural address by prof. Han Joosten.**

Food producers conduct about 1 billion microbiological analysis per year, but the incidence of foodborne illness remains very high. Testing can be seen as an attempt to compensate for a lack of trust in the measures to keep pathogens under control during production. It is necessary to determine to what extent test results can restore trust. What are the scientific priorities? Develop **more reliable methods or rather strengthen the “food safety culture”?**

Venue: Auditorium of Wageningen University, Generaal Foulkesweg 1, 6703 BG, Wageningen, Feb 27th, 16h00 to 17h00.

The speech will be broadcasted live at [wurtv.wur.nl](http://wurtv.wur.nl)



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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- **Han Joosten's inaugural** address February 27, 2014
- Wageningen MSc students on lookout for internships
- Postgraduate course on Management of Microbial Hazards in Foods Nov 3-7, 2014

# Editorial

## “MAN VERSUS MICROBE” REVISITED

In the [editorial](#) of the latest issue of Nature Reviews Microbiology, stakeholders from academia, politics and pharmaceutical companies are urged to join forces in response to the threat that micro-organisms become invincible due to the spread of antibiotic resistance genes and lack of new antimicrobial agents. Our relationship with microorganisms is compared with a war that we may not be able to win.

If this is war, food safety microbiologists are the soldiers that are specialized in fighting the battles on the farm, in the kitchen and every place in between. When compared with our colleagues who try to cure infections we are lucky to have much more powerful weapons. Pasteurisation and HACCP will never let us down, but we still need the experts that know when and how to use them.

The European Chair in Food Safety Microbiology was installed more than 16 years ago at Wageningen University and has been very active in education of microbiologists from all over the world. Much progress has been made, but the mission is not over. Food safety microbiologists are still scarce, and it is laudable that the food companies that sponsored the previous terms of the Chair agreed to maintain their support. As the new Chair-holder I am grateful for being given the opportunity to train more soldiers and to develop new strategies.

Han Joosten



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*“The number of students at Wageningen University has increased sharply”*

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## INTERNSHIPS BY MSC STUDENTS

The Food Safety programme of Wageningen University has a unique integrated approach to the field of food safety, incorporating not only technical disciplines such as microbiology and toxicology, but also the legal, economic and communication aspects of food safety.

The programme is in English and the first year of the programme consists entirely of taught courses. The second year comprises of an individual research thesis and an internship ([www.mfs.wur.nl](http://www.mfs.wur.nl)).



The number of BSc and MSc students has increased sharply during the last years. On a yearly basis 60 to 65 MSc Food Safety students are looking for a place to perform an internship project of 4 to 6 months, most of them in the period March to July.

Internships can be done at a food company, in a research lab, intergovernmental organisation or an inspection body. Topics include validation of HACCP plans, safety assurance during product development, development of methods, etc.

If you have an opportunity for a student, please mail to [martine.reij@wur.nl](mailto:martine.reij@wur.nl).



*Six courses are available for distance learning via [www.dl-fsm.nl](http://www.dl-fsm.nl)*

## DIGITAL LEARNING PROGRAMME

The European Chair in Food Safety Microbiology has established a distance learning programme on some of the most important aspects of Food Safety Management. Through this programme, the Chair aims to strengthen the expertise and knowledge in food safety management of students and professionals around the world.

The Food Safety Management programme consists of the following courses:

- \* Food Related Hazards
- \* HACCP
- \* Food Preservation
- \* Good Hygienic Practices
- \* Hygienic Design
- \* Sampling & Monitoring

All courses contain theory, cases and closed questions. After answering a question, feedback will be provided and you may study and trial all questions as often as you like. The courses have a final test; upon successful completion a certificate of participation will be issued. The time needed to work through a **single course varies from 16 tot 30 hours depending on the participant's** background and experience.

The complete programme of six courses is available after registration for a period of three months. Courses are "stand-alone", allowing each course to be followed independently.

The programme is intended for participants at BSc or MSc level in Food Safety, Food Science or Food Technology or for those with more specialised science skills that are interested in strengthening their general knowledge in food safety management. It is relevant for people directly involved in food production and food service, but also for academia, government staff and researchers.

### HOW TO GET ACCESS

The Food Safety Management programme is available via [www.dl-fsm.nl](http://www.dl-fsm.nl).

You can register yourself by creating a new account. Subsequently you will get instructions via email on how to complete your registration.

After receiving your account confirmation you can choose to pay for one or more courses via:

- PayPal (with your PayPal account or credit card). Access is given within a couple of minutes.
- Transfer the fee through your local bank. When paying by bank transfer it may take a couple of weeks.

The price per course varies from 40 to 55 euro. The entire package of 6 courses is 135 € for 3 months of access including certificate of participation.

### POST-GRADUATE COURSE

The next (15th) edition of the International Advanced course **"Management of Microbiological Hazards in Foods"** will be given from 3 to 7 November 2014 in Wageningen .

It will be organised by Graduate School VLAG of Wageningen University in cooperation with the European Chair.

Lecturers from academia and private industry and regulatory authorities cover topics such as HACCP, GMP, microbiological criteria, risk assessment and crisis management.

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



## RESEARCH FOCUS

Current research of the European Chair is mostly done by MSc students, who work on a thesis topic for 4 to 6 months under supervision by staff members (see below). Topics are:

- Transmission routes of bacteria in food production environments
- Rapid identification of Enterobacteriaceae using MALDITOF-MS
- Statistical distributions underlying Most Probable Number (MPN)
- Maximum number of *Listeria monocytogenes* in food products.

## PHD THESES

Since the establishment of the Chair 4 PhD students have graduated under its supervision:

- **Esther van Asselt**
- **Chantal Kandhai**
- **Els Biesta-Peters**
- **Ida Jongenburger**

Their dissertations can be found at: [library.wur.nl/way](http://library.wur.nl/way)

Current PhD students are Lisa Gkogka and James Noah Ssemenda who expect to finish their thesis in 2014 and 2017, respectively.

### CONTACT DETAILS

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## TEAM OF EUROPEAN CHAIR

The European Chair is a part-time professorship that has been installed by Wageningen University in 1997 upon request of an external sponsoring consortium. It is hosted by the Laboratory of Food Microbiology at Wageningen University, The Netherlands which is headed by professor Marcel Zwietering.

The current chair-holder is prof.dr. Han Joosten, affiliated with Nestlé, who **spends 20% of his time leading the Chair's activities.**

Dr. Martine Reij has been co-worker of the Chair since 1999 and is responsible for teaching, distance learning and research.

Henry Dijkhoff takes care of the development and technical support of digital learning materials.

Gerrieke van Middendorp is a technician specialised in molecular microbiological techniques and MALDITOF-MS. She assists staff and students in teaching and research.