



Finger on the pulse of new local markets

My name is André Jurrius and I am an organic farmer. For the past decade I have been farming in the Netherlands, a stones throw from the Rhine River, on the same alluvial soil upon which I was born. On my farm, *Eko boerderij de Lingehof*, we have 100 hectares of arable land. Stable income from my main cash crops – potatoes, onions, carrots, pumpkin, cereals and clover – provides the space I need to experiment with new species of annual legumes. I wanted to introduce legumes into my rotation to improve soil fertility on the flood plain and also to participate in emerging local markets. Decreasing meat consumption in the near future will be met with more plant-based proteins and people want locally-grown food.

I have always incorporated legumes into my double cropping system, starting with grass and clover. In 2008, I started growing lupins and have not looked back. Two years ago I started growing chickpeas and soybeans and this year I am intercropping with lentils and wheat. I'm also experimenting with heirloom

varieties of dry edible beans. Lupin is well adapted to our climate as it can handle a lot of moisture in the soil. However, with the other legumes, wet periods during flowering and harvest, and the relatively cool summers are constraints to be overcome. The climate is changing so perhaps working with legumes will be an advantage in the future.

Many consumers have little experience with different legume crops, making them expensive and risky for now. However, I am not alone in my pursuit of growing legumes and creating new markets for these crops. I collaborate with people who are developing innovative ways of processing legumes and reaching consumers. For example, I work with Jacqueline Castelijns who is developing different recipes and products with lupin. I also work with other farmers and researchers passionate about overcoming the challenges of growing more legumes in the Netherlands.

Interview by **Jesse Roberts**, an intern at ILEIA.
Photo: **Bert Beelen**