

Will there be an end to superfluous packaging?

Global network of multinationals wants to make products sustainable. | **p.12** |

Why are the students so quiet?

Minister replaces basic grant with a social loan system. The Malieveld is empty. | **p.18** |

Twenty metres is too far to walk

New attempt to tackle bike problem at Leeuwenborch. | **p.24** |

RESOURCE ^[ENG]

For students and employees of Wageningen UR

no 11 – 31 January 2013 – 7th Volume



Insect ambassador Marcel Dicke doesn't mind fighting his corner

When the going gets tough...

>> FRANS + BLUES

Frans van de Goot, financial controller Social Sciences

'Variety is our strong point'

Thursday evening practice with the guys has been a fixture in bass player Frans van de Goot's life for 17 years. And now and then a performance with his band Double-U-Blues (formerly Gazzary). It's all about having fun with music. Blues because it's so relaxing, and a wide variety of covers. The 'Double-U' stands for the W for Wageningen of course (see www.double-u-blues.com).  RK / Foto: Guy Ackermans

(Do you have a colleague with a passionate interest? Let us know: roelof.kleis@wur.nl)

>> CONTENTS

no 11 – 7th Volume



>> **4**

'CHERISH THE DISSIDENTS'

Outgoing education director: 'We should be more open to critical reflection.'



>> **20**

THE LONELY HALF

How do partners of international staff fare? 'Wageningen is not very lively.'



>> **27**

VERA COMES HOME

'Well, you've had one Tripel too many,' said Willem-Jan.

AND MORE...

- 2 Labour of love**
blues
- 4 News and opinion**
- 8 Science**
- 11 Resource.wur.nl**
- 12 Leading lights**
- 16 In the picture**
goose game
- 18 Sustainability**
- 20 The lonelier half**
- 22 IMO**
basic grant
- 24 Student**
- 29 Column**
- 32 Typical Dutch**
Dutch doctor

NO CHOICE

So that's how it goes when a merger is unscrambled. This is the last Resource to be distributed to VHL. There will be no more stories about the solar boat Sin-fretter, student research on barn fires or war relics in Mariëndaal, or lack of confidence between the VHL board and the staff council.

That's it, folks. Over and out. We have no choice, and that is how it feels too. We have built up relations with student reporters, administrators, teachers and the participatory bodies. Take Emma Holmes, for example. She lives in the Bennekom residence Beringhem. She knows the Wageningen pubs and the international student community. She cycles around the campus, attends lectures in the Forum. She is a columnist for Resource (see page 29) and writes with humour – often directed at herself – and verve. But she's out of a job now. Because Emma is a VHL student.

Emma, as far as we are concerned, you are welcome to pick up a copy of Resource in the Forum. But keep it under your hat!

Gaby van Caulil

>> And the goose gets away again. A reconstruction of Holland as a goose heaven – in the form of a goose game. | p. 16



GROEN: 'CHERISH YOUR DISSIDENTS'

- **'Managers become lazy if there's no resistance.'**
- **University consultations with students need to be more meaningful.**

Wageningen UR should have the courage to be more open to critical reflection and listen to the 'dissidents' within the organization.

That was the key message that education and research director Ab Groen put across in his farewell lecture on 24 January.

Groen was not afraid to reflect on the directors present in the room. For instance, he said it was 'hilarious' that university directors and researchers advocate autonomy and self-monitoring 'in view of the recent failures in self-monitoring in the case of directors' pay and scientific fraud.'

Such contradictions raise the suspicions of the general public. Groen thinks that you can only change this by paying more attention to the individual motivations of students and researchers. He is against the abolition of the basic grant, selective admissions and setting up so-called honours programmes. Such measures are turning the universities into 'Humboldt institutions' - ivory towers - whereas they should be developing into networking knowledge institutions.

Universities also need to make sure they do not lose contact with the students. 'The biggest challenge for universities now is to be aware of the trends among young people.' He mentions the use of IT as an example. 'A lecturer found it irritating that students were messing around with Facebook and Twitter during practicals. I don't agree. Sixty percent of new students have mobile internet. So it should be the other way around - the lecturer should start tweeting with them instead. Wageningen University should invest more in the use of social media in the learning environment so you are giving enough support to the IT

trendsetters among the students.'

That is why you need a structural dialogue between the university and its students 'starting with the acknowledgement that young people should have a say,' argues Groen. He feels consultations between the board and the student council are too much of a 'formal exercise' without 'the intrinsic willingness to discuss key policy decisions.'

The university directors should organize such questioning of its policy themselves, says Groen, who acted as an advisor to the board for the past seven years. 'Make sure there is sufficient critical reflection.' He says managers become lazy if they aren't confronted with resis-

tance or dissidents, or else they think they can get away with anything. 'A strong organization is prepared to make room for dissidents because they improve the quality of the decision-making process.' According to Groen, it is those very critics who throw a different light on matters and who can expose the weak points in policy choices. 'We must have the courage to have honest differences of opinion. There needs to be a culture grounded in commitment and creativity in which staff feel safe to take risks and take action. Resistance is about voicing your own views and seeking links with others based on your own sense of worth.' **AS**

FROM WAGENINGEN UR TO HELICON

Ab Groen has spent more than 30 years at Wageningen University, first as a student and then as a lecturer in the Animal Breeding and Genetics group and later head of teaching within Animal Sciences. He has spent the last seven years as director of Corporate Education, Research & Innovation at Wageningen UR. As of 1 February, he will be chairman of the board of Helicon, a centre for pre-vocational and vocational agricultural education.



WAITING FOR A FROST

Researcher Hans Verdaat is standing in the middle of a boat full of fish. They are sprats and about 3,000 kilos were caught in ten minutes. 'A big catch,' says Verdaat. Imares is doing research on the numbers of grebes along the northern Dutch coast. Grebes feed mainly on fish. So the aim of this expedition is to get an idea of fish stocks. Verdaat hopes then to be able to see the relation between the distribution of the birds and of their food supply. The researchers have been waiting months for a severe frost so that they could study the situation under wintry conditions. **DE**, photo Steve Geelhoed

ORGANIC COMPANY STOPS SUPPLYING WAGENINGEN UR

• 'People think Wageningen has turned into a bio-industry club.'

The continuing debate about intensive livestock farming has prompted a large organic poultry farm to end its relationship with Wageningen UR. This was

reported by professor of Entomology Marcel Dicke in an interview with Resource (see page 12). 'Last week one of our partners cancelled the collaboration because of Aalt Dijkhuizen's statements. The response was prompted by the article headed 'Organic farming damages environment', in the Telegraaf of 12 January, in which Dijkhuizen responded to the

animal rights organization Wakker Dier's campaign against force-fed chickens.

According to Dicke, relations with this company were good. The entomologists sourced chicken blood there for breeding mosquitoes that can spread the West Nile virus. Dicke wants to enter into dialogue to mend the relationship. 'Of course we will try to explain

that there are other perspectives in Wageningen than this one.'

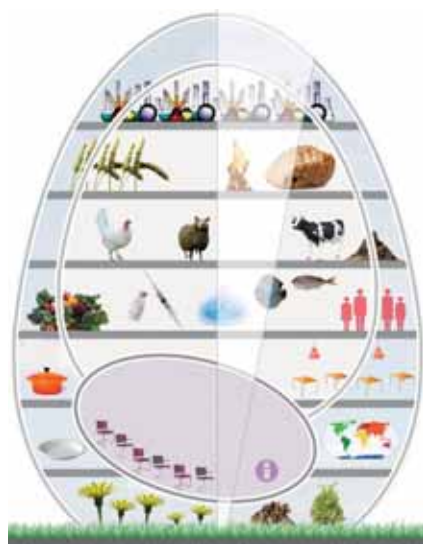
In Dicke's view, Wageningen is currently alienating itself from people who feel a bond with it. 'People we have worked with for years on sustainability issues can no longer relate to the noises coming from Wageningen. People feel Wageningen has turned into a bio-industry club.' **GvC**

kort

>> EXPO CENTRE

Egg full of food expertise

A seven-storey egg where knowledge is dispensed about nutrition, health and sustainability. Such a building should be a reality near Ede-Wageningen station in four years' time. It is to be the Dutch agrifood sector's international visiting card: the World Food Center Netherlands. The Association of World Food Centers named Ede as the site of the new expo centre last week. Rotterdam was in the running too, but it was the plan put forward by Ede and Wageningen councils, Wageningen UR, the Food Valley Foundation and Gelderland province that won the day. The egg will house knowledge institutions, companies and government bodies. **AS**



>> AGRICULTURE

Government wants thorough ammonia study

State secretary Sharon Dijksma and the Dutch parliament want Wageningen UR to do further research on ammonia emissions in agriculture. This follows a thesis by a student of agronomist Egbert Lantinga's, which casts doubt on the accuracy of the current model of ammonia emissions. This had led to consternation in the agricultural press. Dijksma has asked Wageningen UR and RIVM in writing to conduct further research, preferably at the European level, on the model that calculates the emissions. Wageningen researchers will consult European colleagues about this follow-up study soon. **AS**

>> SPOTTED: UB WUR

Flirting

No doubt it is something to do with the fact that it is exam revision time, but in one week the Facebook page 'Gespot: UB WUR' has grown from less than 1000 likes to more than 1500. Judging by the anonymous flirts flying around, the Forum library is bursting with hormones. There seems to be a new sport: trying to figure out who the flirter means when he or she talks about 'the yummy bear in room 507' or the 'cheery little curly-haired one'. And a new date looks likely thanks to a curious flirt about *E.coli* in the microbiology lab. **LvdN**



SCHAMINÉE <<

Elfstedentocht

We've had a wintry few weeks, with sub-zero temperatures day and night. And true to form, the Dutch soon started speculating as to whether it would freeze hard enough for the traditional eleven towns skating race, the *Elfstedentocht*. Previous heroes of the race Jan Uitham and Reiner Paping were on television most nights. It would take more time to view all the broadcast material on the grim race in the bitterly cold winter of 1963 than it did to skate it. I read about a farmer who put up eleven signboards on his flooded meadow and held his own *Elfstedentocht*. In Friesland, the pumps were shut down and there was a ban on sailing. The thaw was welcome, I was told, because it would get rid of the annoying cover of snow and then, if it freezes it February... But we all know, deep down, that the race will never happen because the winters these days are simply not cold enough.

A comparison with biodiversity is inescapable. The decline must stop, we all declare loudly, but we did not achieve our 2010 target. Now we are aiming at 2020, with the fine words of the *EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy*. So is it enough then to dream and hope against hope? No, because there is one big difference compared with the *Elfstedentocht*. Namely: it is up to us. During Bleker's era in charge of nature policy, nature conservation got a wake-up call, although a lot of damage was done too. The motto seemed to be: cut it back and break it up. At the moment, reestablishing sound policy is getting priority over reestablishing nature. But the potential is there; it is just a question of courage and wisdom. I wish the new secretary of state Sharon Dijksma a good dose of these qualities. **Joop Schaminée**

RECORD NUMBER OF ANIMALS IN UNIVERSITY EXPERIMENTS

- More behavioural research on chickens.
- DLO's use of animals to be made public too.

In 2011 the university used: 10,612 chickens, 1254 mice, 7558 fish, 367 pigs, 215 rats, 185 cows, 14 horses, 13 cat and 43 birds. Total: 19810 animals used in education and – above all – research. A record number, the university's average being about 15,000 animals per year.

The reason for this peak in 2011 was an increase in behavioural research on chickens. According to license-holder Rob Buré, this came

about partly as a result of the ban on battery chickens. In 2011, Wageningen studied the behaviour of nearly 15,000 chickens, including the positive effect of dust baths or pecking behaviour directed at members of the same species. According to Buré, this sort of research causes the animals mild distress. Blood is taken, for example, to measure levels of stress hormones, but no major operations are performed.

DLO

Wageningen does a lot of animal research compared with other Dutch universities. Only three universities used more animals in experiments: Utrecht, Groningen

and Nijmegen. DLO institutes such as CVI, Imares and Rikilt are not included in these statistics. But that is due to change. In 2008, a joint code of transparency about animal experiments was signed by the universities, academic hospitals and the Dutch academy of sciences. This will lead to greater transparency across Wageningen UR as well. Next Monday the executive board will be discussing a report on animal experiments and dilemmas in animal research. This includes data about the use of animals by DLO institutes. It is the first time the organization has made these figures public. **GvC**

VHL GOING SOLO ON COMMUNICATION

- End of merger becomes a reality.
- No more Resource for VHL.

Its own spokesperson, logo and presentations. And no more Resource. The hiving off of Van Hall Larenstein Applied Sciences University from Wageningen UR is starting to take shape. At the end of 2012, the applied sciences university got its own supervisory board and executive board. Negotiations are now going on about further steps to undo the merger. As of the beginning of 2013, VHL staff and students no longer receive Resource. VHL has plans for its own magazine, preferably to start as soon as possible. Nor will there be any more input from VHL for the alumni magazine Wageningen World. Furthermore, the applied sciences university will now do its own public relations and the Wageningen UR logo will no longer be on presentations and new brochures.

GOODBYE AND THANK YOU

'Some ties are easy to break,' says head of Communications Marc Lamers. 'Others take a little longer.' For example, people at Communications are still figuring out how VHL's access to the intranet can be cancelled. 'These are technical platforms and adjusting them takes a bit more than a push of a button.'

In other areas the ending of the merger is more complicated. Talks are going on, for instance, about ICT and other support services. As to how these negotiations are going, the university is keeping its mouth firmly shut. The only thing Lamers will say is that they are conducted in a very friendly spirit. 'It is not a question of pulling the plug out, and "goodbye and thank you". We are looking together for the most sensible way of organizing it.' **LvdN**



Now that the campus is soggy with rain, it is hard to imagine that only a week ago the Forum and other buildings with covered in snow. Wageningen got a taste of a harsh winter. The woolly hats have now made way for sturdy umbrellas and shapeless rain capes. Not nearly as photogenic as the headgear these students are sporting. The lady with the plaits knitted her hat herself. 'You can't get every hat over this hair.' **LvdN**, photo's: Rob Goossens

WANTED: STORIES ABOUT INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

- **Ex- HRM director leads study of intimidation.**
- **Staff invited to tell their stories.**

An investigation is planned into intimidation and other inappropriate behaviour within this organization. The investigation, announced back in June 2012, will be led by ex-HRM director Margaret Zijlstra. She will establish where and under which circumstances people encounter undesirable behaviour. Recommendations will be made in June.

This investigation is a response to contradictory figures from staff surveys. The figures from the staff survey of 2010 are very different to those of the 2012 survey, possibly because the questions were different. In the one survey less than 10 percent of the staff indicated that

they had experienced intimidation, while in the other survey the figure was 19 percent. There is also the matter of the complaint expressed by Kees van Diepen, member of the employees' council at the ESG. In the Dutch daily *De Volkskrant* of December 2011, van Diepen accused Aalt Dijkhuizen of creating a culture of fear. Dijkhuizen then demanded that Van Diepen provide examples, but he says he cannot do that because people talk to him confidentially.

The Zijlstra committee invites staff members to tell their stories anonymously and confidentially. A telephone number and an email address will be announced on the intranet. The committee emphasizes that it will not attempt to solve individual disputes. Its aim is to catalogue the grievances in order to get an overview. **© GvC**

TO ANTARCTICA WITH QUEEN BEATRIX



A 'special relationship'. In what way?

'I really got to know the queen when I was chairing the Commission for Polar Research. It clicked between us. After that I organized two symposiums for her. In 2011 I was honoured with the personal medal for services to the arts and sciences – the first physicist to receive it.'

What is she like close up?

'On the evening before a symposium we go over it at the palace, and then she really chats. She can gossip about people just like anyone else. And we talked about the wear and tear to my knee. She had two bad knees but with two knee replacements, she can ski again now.'

And the matter in hand?

'She really does her homework and can join in the discussion. She had seen the documentary *The end of the line*. She asked questions about that. She asked one researcher about the role of viruses in the sea. It was clear she had read about that study. I was never much of a royalist before, but Queen Beatrix is incredibly inspiring.'

Did her abdication come as a surprise?

'You knew it would come at some point. A couple of years ago I invited her to Antarctica but she turned down the invitation. 'Perhaps when I'm retired,' she said. **© NM**

Who? Han Lindeboom
What? Extraordinary professor of Marine Ecology and polar researcher

Why? He has a special relationship with Queen Beatrix, who has announced her abdication

BEE DEATH DEBATE CAUSING A BUZZ AGAIN

- **Zembla casts doubt on Wageningen researcher's integrity again.**

Wageningen is once again the subject of political debate in connection with the bee deaths affair. The new impetus came from a motion by the Dutch labour party that was passed on 24 January. It states that the Dutch government has a responsibility to campaign in Europe for a moratorium on the neonicotinoids, a new type of insecticide.

The same evening television magazine programme Zembla revisited the issues raised in the much-discussed 2011 programme: 'Murder of the honey bee'. In that edition of the programme it was alleged that government policy on neonicotinoids was overly based on the work of PRI researcher Tjeerd Blacquiere, who blames the

bee deaths largely on the Varroa mite. Zembla claimed that Blacquiere's research could not be independent, given his links with the chemical industry. At the time, there was sharp criticism of the programme from Wageningen: it was considered defamatory.

In the sequel last Thursday, a similar picture was painted. Wageningen UR did not collaborate on the programme after the 'bad experience' the last time. Zembla did show old footage of an interview with Blacquiere. Days after the programme Wageningen UR published a 'vision' on the research on bee deaths, emphasizing the complex interaction of causes of the bee deaths. New studies should provide more definitive answers. One of these is a long-term Wageningen study of the influence of insecticides, the Varroa mite and the availability of pollen. **© RR**

QUOTE

'Jeroen Dijsselbloem, prononcer: Yé-roun deille-seul-bloum, élu lundi soir nouveau président de l'Eurogroupe'

Wageningen's alumnus Deille-seul-bloum, new president of the Euro group, was in the French press too this week (AFP, 21 January)

KITO



Correct behaviour! / Are you trying to intimidate me? / Only if it's desirable.

FAECAL TRANSPLANT IN TOP JOURNAL

- **Transferring intestinal flora to diarrhoea patients has been a 'resounding success'.**
- **The method is not used much because of 'yuck factor'.**

Wageningen microbiologists get into top journals quite often. But a publication in a top medical journal is more unusual. This week, they and their Amsterdam medical colleagues explain in *The New England Journal of Medicine* how you can cure the most stubborn bowel infections. The secret? Faecal transplants.

The experiment revolved around a group of diarrhoea patients suffering from persistent bowel infections with the *Clostridium difficile* bacterium.

Doctors usually treat this ailment by blitzing it – repeatedly – with antibiotics. But about 20 percent of the patients do not respond and every time the infection comes back, their chances of recovery diminish.

An alternative to antibiotics is the faecal transplant, an intervention in which patients are given new gut flora from a healthy donor. In more graphic terms: diluted faeces are pumped into their intestines (after colonic irrigation) via a nasal tube. This treatment has been in sporadic use for decades but has never really caught on – possibly because of the 'yuck factor'. By 2011 there was still no verdict on it from the Cochrane collaboration, which assesses the evidence for the value of medical treatments.

However unappetizing the faecal transplant might sound, the test was a resounding success. Researchers compared three groups of patients who were healthy, apart from their diarrhoea. The first group took the usual antibiotics, the second was also put through colonic irrigation, and the last group received new gut flora after the antibiotics and the colonic irrigation.

MASSIVE

In the two control groups, between 23 and 31 percent of the patients got better. But in the group that got the transplant, the diarrhoea disappeared in a massive 81 percent of cases. In the second round, this figure went up to 92 percent.

The differences were so big that the experiment was stopped

halfway. With such big differences, it would be unethical to withhold the best treatment from two thirds of the patients. These patients were allowed the transplants as well.

In the microbiology department they were 'very pleased' with the publication and a bottle of champagne had already been uncorked in its honour, says Erwin Zoetendal, assistant professor of Microbiology. Their task was to identify the gut flora of patients and donors. 'In the patients you can see that their intestinal flora are totally disturbed,' explains Zoetendal. 'The composition is different and the diversity of bacteria is much lower. In the second round, after the transplant, they look much more like normal gut flora.' **RR**

WOMAN ARE THE REAL FORESTERS IN PAKISTAN

- **Disputes about forest fires in Pakistan.**
- **Only women are above suspicion.**

Fires are frequently started in the forests of the Pakistan province of Haripur. The government forest service blames the arson on livestock holders who are thought to start the fires in order to obtain grass for their stock. But sociologist Arjumand Nizami thinks otherwise. Nizami worked for years for NGOs in the field of forest management and got his PhD last week in the Rural Development Sociology chair group at Wageningen University.

Trying to get to the bottom of the fires is a complicated business, says Nizami. 'Everyone points to someone else as the culprit.' Livestock holders deny all involvement and say they only start fires on open ground. The landless poor point the finger at forest owners, who are forbidden by



Forest fires in Pakistan are often started deliberately. But who does it?

Pakistani law to fell young trees on their land. After a forest fire, however, the owner is allowed to

sell the wood from the now dead trees. So fire can be lucrative for him. Corrupt government foresters

could be implicated in the fires too.

SECURITY

According to Nizami, there is only one group that is above suspicion: women. Women also stand to benefit the most from the forests, the sociologist explains. All the firewood needed for cooking is collected by women. The forest also provides food in times of scarcity, when the women pick wild vegetables and herbs there. The forest also produces wild pomegranates, the seeds of which bring in an income as an ingredient in Asian spices.

So women are really the most important forest managers, concludes Nizami. 'I have seen them with my own eyes, putting out forest fires by hitting them with branches.' He therefore advises Pakistani foresters to improve their collaboration with women. But there is a very long way to go, he admits. 'In rural Pakistan, women hardly have a say in anything.' **JT**

'CULTURED MEAT COULD BREAK STALEMATE'

Why are meat-eaters blind to the down sides of meat and vegetarians to its advantages? Cor van der Weele is interested in idiosyncrasies in selective attention. Her main focus in recent years has been on cultured meat and what it might mean for the way we look at meat. The extraordinary professor of Humanist Philosophy talked about this at her inaugural lecture on 17 January.

You note that our thinking can be contradictory and irrational.

'I talk about ambivalence, contradictory values, and that is certainly not irrational in itself. Research shows, for instance, that many meat-eaters are ambivalent about meat: on the one hand they like it and they believe it to be healthy, but they do also see the negative sides related to animal welfare. Meat clearly does not have one straightforward meaning.'

So ambivalence isn't always a bad thing?

'On the contrary; I think it's a pity ambivalence has such a bad name in our society, and that we see it as indecision and feebleness. In fact it is fast, straightforward opinions that lead us to fast, oversimplified solutions. While there are serious and complex problems around meat.'

But we are not always honest in the way we deal with that contradictory information?

'That's right. Take meat-eaters for instance. They often maintain a strategic ignorance about animal welfare. And vegetarians are all too ready to believe that meat-eaters are slobs and that meat is unpleasant to eat. These are automatic mechanisms that

are in our systems. If we accepted our ambivalences it would be easier for us to weigh up our interests against those of others as more impartial observers.'

There is no room for ambivalence in the meat debate anymore: everyone is dug into their trenches. Why do you think in vitro meat could breathe new life into the debate?

'In vitro meat is impervious to the current polarization. It is meat, but it doesn't involve any animals as it is grown using tissue cultivation techniques with stem cells. So it lacks several of the disadvantages of meat – those related to animal welfare and to the use of resources such as land, energy and water. On the other hand, it does provoke a sense of alienation and raises questions, such as whether it isn't too high-tech. It generates a whole new discussion around meat.'

But cultured meat is still only an idea, isn't it?

'Yes. The Maastricht researcher Mark Post will be producing the first cultured hamburger later this year, but the main aim of that is to attract attention and more research funding. But this idea is already having a big impact, partly because it stimulates the imagination. You can see that in the ideas of Eindhoven students of industrial design who let their imaginations loose on what cultured meat might look like. Some of their images don't look like meat as we know it at all. Cultured meat will create a change of mood: who knows what other surprising new possibilities there might be?' **RR**



VISION <<

More geese again in five years' time

In a new agreement on geese, foraging grounds for winter geese are to become resting places – for which farmers get lower levels of compensation. There are also plans to cull half a million summer geese, but gassing is no longer an option. What does animal ecologist Dick Melman think of the plans?

There was a lot of public opposition to gassing.

'Sorry, but I can't say anything about that. As an animal ecologist, that is not my field of expertise.'

OK. Is the goose population going to shrink?

What surprises me in the text of the agreement is that it claims no effort is required to keep the goose population down. There will be no need to shake their eggs, for instance. But if you want to keep the goose population at a low level you really do have to maintain a continuous level of effort. If you stop shaking the eggs or other forms of population control, the population will increase at once.'

Will this agreement really be implemented?

'The nice thing about the agreement is that it was signed by the G7: seven stakeholders, including the Society for the Protection of Birds and LTO. This agreement expresses a joint policy for controlling the numbers of migrating geese in the winter and reducing the numbers of summer geese. But besides cutting numbers, the agreement is intended primarily as a way of controlling the costs better.'

Will it be cheaper?

'That is the aim. Currently farmers are paid for managing the foraging grounds for winter geese. Farmers make sure there is enough grass there for the geese. If these areas just become resting areas, the farmers no longer have to provide enough food for the birds. Instead of a management subsidy, damages will be paid as necessary. But it is hard to establish damage. In the winter the grass does not grow – or very little. It seems as if the main aim of this agreement is to control costs.' **ED**

PROPOSITION

'Making money with patents in poor countries is like a transfusion of blood drawn from a sick person to a healthy one'

Zeshan Hassan, who graduated with a PhD on 28 January in Wageningen

ORDER IN THE STATISTICAL CHAOS

- Statistical model from Wageningen conquers the world.
- New user-friendly version puts Canoco in layperson's reach too.

Thousands of ecologists the world over use Cajo ter Braak's statistical analysis model Canoco to process their research data. At the end of January he presented the latest version of his software: Canoco 5. Even researchers with little knowledge of statistics can work with this version.

So what does Canoco do exactly? An example. If you want to study the negative impact of pesticides on aquatic life, you will often be dealing with an ecosystem with at least 200 species in it. That means 200 graphs plotting the effect the poison has on all the little water creatures. And that is not what you want; you want an overview of the response of all the creatures at a glance. And you can only get that with Canoco, says ecotoxicologist Paul van den Brink. He uses the relevant method in Canoco, and indeed helped develop it, as a longstanding colleague of Cajo ter Braak's.

27,000 CITATIONS

Ter Braak, who works at PRI Biometris, laid the foundations for this software package back in the nineteen nineties. His publication from 1986, in which he combines several methods of statistical

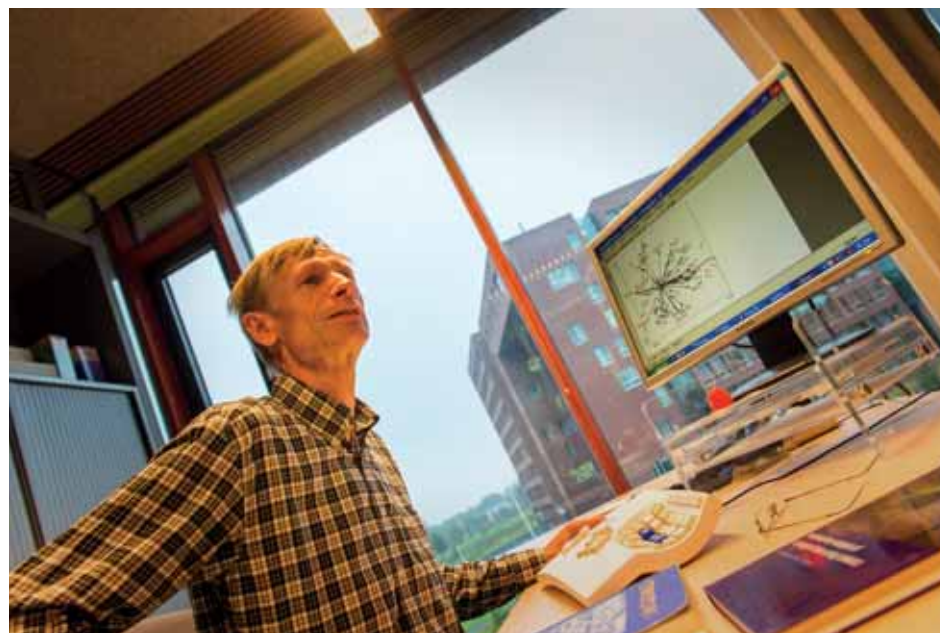


PHOTO: GUY ACKERMAN

Thanks to Canoco, 'Granddad' Cajo ter Braak is one of Wageningen's most cited scientists.

analysis with the prototype for Canoco, unleashed a revolution in the processing of research data. Together with Czech researcher Petr Šmilauer, he went on to develop better and more advanced versions of Canoco. Thousands of scientists make use of Ter Braak's software, witness the 4,000 licenses sold for it. In the EU, Canoco has become a fixture for the analysis of certain complex datasets. And the analysis model turns up in countless scientific articles, making Ter Braak, with about 27,000 citations, the most cited Wageningen scientist.

MORE USER-FRIENDLY

Nevertheless, previous versions of Canoco – up to version 4.5 – were

by no means child's play to use. For the connoisseurs: it was based on canonical correspondence analysis – hence Canoco – which Ter Braak combined with a handful of other statistical methods. 'You don't just get that under your belt on a Monday morning; it takes you a week to get to grips with the basics of Canoco,' says Van den Brink. 'But after that you can do something other people can't do.'

Van den Brink loses that advantage now, because Canoco 5 is considerably more user-friendly. Where researchers used to have to call on Ter Braak to advise them on a regular basis, the Canoco Adviser can do that job now. The digital adviser evaluates the research data, chooses suitable analysis

methods and tests the research outcomes, complete with a reliability check. 'You no longer need to be an expert to be able to use the software,' says Ter Braak. Canoco has come of age, 'and I am its grandfather.' In recent years, the programming has been done by Šmilauer, with Ter Braak checking his work and helping to write the new manual.

And what is the grandfather of Canoco doing now? Solving crosswords? No: he has been working on genetic algorithms for years with the aim of extracting information from vast and complex datasets. Using the Markov Chain Monte Carlo version of an algorithm, with the aid of Bayesian theory. Ah, yes of course. **AS**

MORE WITCHCRAFT WHERE CULTURES CLASH

- Traditionalists may be using old customs against pioneers.

When modern life clashes with tradition in Africa, the number of accusations of witchcraft increases, suggests research in Sierra Leone. A team of Wageningen development economists and anthropologists published their findings in the

January edition of *African Affairs*.

The researchers worked in an area in which small villages have traditionally been the fiefdoms of polygamous 'big men' who also owned most of the land. Other men worked on the land – formerly as slaves and later as a punishment or as a service to be rewarded after about 10 years with marriage to one of the chief's daughters. The arrival of the market economy

offers these 'marginal' men an escape route. They become wage labourers on plantations or they grow cash crops, which leaves the big men with less free labour at their disposal.

In villages where the market economy clashed with the old patriarchy, there were more accusations of witchcraft and witch doctors were consulted more often. In villages where one set of values was

dominant – whether the traditional or the market-oriented one – these things happened less often.

The study does not offer an explanation of the phenomenon. In the literature the researchers encountered two hypotheses: traditionalists use old customs to discourage the pioneers, or these pioneers resort to accusations of witchcraft because they feel guilty towards the community. **RR**

>> RESOURCE.WUR.NL

Our online readers wrote about pretty minor pleasures and pains this week. There was kudos for the **Teacher of the Year**, while opinions about our **serial** were divided. There were students up in arms about **Idealis's** misdemeanours too. The story continues.

Got something to say too? Email your views to resource@wur.nl

RUBBISH POLICY

After three surveys, the message is crystal clear: Dijkgraaf occupants want to retain the garbage collection service. But Idealis does not, and is intent on giving new tenants amended contracts. Angry comments were flung about online like the garbage bags from Dijkgraaf balconies.

'I'm absolutely disappointed with Idealis,' says **Kees**. 'If you insist on getting your way in this underhand manner, why conduct a survey in the first place?' His comments are peanuts compared to the fury unleashed by JH: 'It's disgraceful and disgusting. Idealis has again shown a complete disregard for its tenants.' It reminds him of the European constitution which was rejected on the one hand and rammed down the throats of the electorate on the other. The hyperbole in the attacks on Idealis was accompanied by irony. **Blue Bear** suggests buying Dijkgraaf. If all the students just pool their bunker tokens... 'Since I don't have to take my rubbish downstairs right now,' **Maarten** begins, 'I have some time to post a comment.' His analysis of the situation shows in fact that there is no problem and therefore no need for solutions. According to him, Idealis has more pressing problems, such as kitchen hoods which have broken down. Amidst this verbal violence, **Marlies** tries to adopt a tone of moderation: 'I'm not really an Idealis fan, [but] Idealis has a right to stop this service if it's too troublesome.' JH cannot believe that Marlies speaks up for Idealis, which bullies students and forgets who the customer is and who the supplier. In the meantime, Resource journalists are trying to prise a statement from Idealis. Go online to see if we have succeeded yet.

PARENTAL PRIDE

Dolf Weijers is thrilled to bits. Besides being a successful plant scientist, he is also the best teacher in Wageningen this year. The jury praised his enthu-

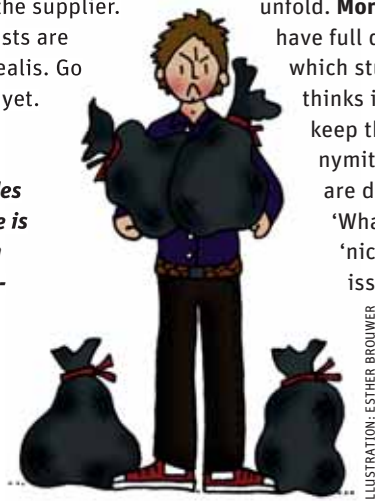
siasm, passion for science and dedication to making Wageningen an interesting place.

It seems that everyone supports him. No protests from angry students or offended fellow contenders can be traced online. Instead, two congratulations graced our comments page: 'The best teacher at the Netherlands' best teaching university,' says Resource editor-in-chief **Gaby van Caulil**. 'That is something to be proud of!' Besides Weijers, he is referring to the study guide evaluation of the Bachelor's programmes, with their small classes. But it is not just university staff who keep an eye on the website. The next comment is: 'We as parents are extremely proud of our son who not only excels in his role as a father but also in the teaching and scientific arenas!' say **Henk and Ellen Weijers**. And he is a good son and a source of parental pride as well. It will come as a surprise that this Mr Perfect was spoken for a long time ago.

THE PLOT THICKENS

In the last Resource, we began a serial about Mortierstraat 14B. We will continue to keep track of the ins and outs of the occupants of this student house. And we're being followed closely by several readers:

'Mortierstraat 14B? In Wageningen???' questions reader **Gebr. Grimm**. 'I don't think so. Nice try, but mention this the next time.' Has this whistle blower uncovered deception and scandal with one click on Google maps? Dear reader, be patient. The mystery will soon unfold. **Mortierstraat 14B** retorts: 'We want to have full deniability of course...' It's uncertain which student house has written this. **Kees** thinks it's pathetic. Anonymous writers should keep their mouths shut or maintain their anonymity. The opinions about the first episode are divided, anyway: 'Huh?' remarks Jur. 'What a lousy story...' Luckily **DyR** finds it 'nice'. Curious? The story unfolds in this issue. Read the next episode on page 27.



colophon

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

Subscriptions

A subscription to the magazine costs €58 (overseas: €131) per academic year. Cancellations before 1 August.

Address

Akkermaalsbos 12, 6708 WB Wageningen (Actio, Building 116, bode 31). POBox 409, 6700 AK Wageningen. Secretariat: Thea Kuijpers, resource@wur.nl. T 0317 484020 Website: resource.wur.nl. ISSN 1389-7756

Editorial staff

• Gaby van Caulil (editor-in-chief)
gaby.vancaulil@wur.nl, T 0317 482997
• Rob Goossens (editor)
rob.goossens@wur.nl, T 0317 485320
• Roelof Kleis (ecology, social sciences, economy), roelof.kleis@wur.nl, T 0317 481723
• Nicolette Meerstadt (web editor)
nicolette.meerstadt@wur.nl, T 0317 488190
• Linda van der Nat (students, education, VHL), linda.vandernat@wur.nl, T 0317 481725
• Rob Ramaker (nutrition, fisheries), rob.ramaker@wur.nl, T 0317 481709
• Albert Sikkema (plant sciences, animal sciences, organization)
albert.sikkema@wur.nl, T 0317 481724

Layout

• Hans Weggen, hans.weggen@wur.nl, T 0317 485272; basic design of magazine: Nies & Partners bno Nijmegen

Freelance journalists

Alexandra Branderhorst, Jeroen Bok, Stijn van Gils, Simone Herrewijn, ir. Yvonne de Hilster, Emma Holmes, Vita Hommersen, Milou van der Horst, Sander de Kraker, Karin de Mik, ir. Rik Nijland, Suzanne Overbeek, Pan Deli, ir. Astrid Smit, ir. Joris Tielens, Hoger Onderwijs Persbureau

Translators

Clare McGregor, Keen-Mun Poon, Clare Wilkinson, Susie Day

Photography

Guy Ackermans, Manon Bruininga, Bart de Gouw, Sjoerd Sijsma, Emma Teuling, Hoge Noorden

Illustrations

Esther Brouwer, Miesjel van Gerwen, Guido de Groot, Yvonne Kroese, Henk van Ruitenbeek

Editorial board

ir. Martijn de Groot (voorzitter); ir. Ad Bot, ir. Marianne Heselmans, ir. Marco Hoffman, dr. ir. Patrick Jansen, Suzanne Jansze. redactieraad.resource@wur.nl

Advertising

External: Bureau van Vliet, T 023-5714745, m.dewit@bureauvanvliet.com
Internal (reduced rate): Hans Weggen, T 0317-485272, hans.weggen@wur.nl

Publisher

Corporate Communications & Marketing Wageningen UR



Resource is printed on paper sourced from sustainably managed forests



Wageningen's leading lights: entomoloog Marcel Dicke

When the going gets tough...

He had to fight to get his ideas about communicating plants accepted. When he couldn't find anyone to give a lecture on insects in art, he reinvented himself as an art connoisseur. After being told hardly anyone was interested in insects, he drew 20,000 people to Wageningen. Marcel Dicke really gets going when the going gets tough.

text: Gaby van Caulil / photos: Manon Bruininga

It is a strange admission, coming from the world's biggest ambassador for insects: the man who put an insect festival on the national map, and who has told CNN and Reuters how healthy insect protein is. The man who drinks tea from a mug with a locust on the side and who usually sports a butterfly brooch. This is the man who now coolly announces that he could just as easily have got enthusiastic about viruses or proteins. 'Yes, I got into insects quite by chance. I could equally well have ended up working on the bacteriophages – viruses that infect bacteria, which I found endlessly fascinating when I was doing my year of biochemistry. If I had been offered a PhD place at that point, I would probably now be doing exactly the same with bacteriophages.'

'Well, I wouldn't have liked that as much,' interjects his wife Alida from the dining table. The interview is taking place in his detached home in a quiet road in Wageningen-Hoog. There is insect art hanging on the wall, including a reproduction of a work by the German artist Maria Sibylla Merian. Around 1700, she was one of the first artists to depict insects together with their host plants.

Alida relates how in the mid 1990s his passion for insects found common ground with her passion for art. 'I was already a regular visitor to art museums, but suddenly Marcel took the lead. He started digging up insects in art works. Until after three months he had launched a whole

new specialism in art history.' Dick described, for example, how flies stand for the transitory nature of life on earth, while butterflies stand for eternal life.

His sudden interest was born of necessity. For some time, he and his colleague Arnold van Huis were looking for an art expert who could give a lecture on insects in modern art. And they couldn't find one. I'll do it myself, then, thought Dicke. And there were no half measures – he tackled the task with all the thoroughness of a scientist, ending up with a publication in *American Entomologist* (*Insects in Western Art*). The table with the European museums he went to – from the Tate to the Uffizi, from Westbroek to Weimar – takes up a whole page.

DIJKHUIZEN

Insects became his life's work, although it would seem that they are above all a vehicle with which he can transmit his passion for life to other people. 'It doesn't matter to me whether people start to look differently at insects, or at bacteria, proteins or any other life form. The earth is made up of life. More insight into life forms contributes to a better understanding of the world and of what we should and shouldn't be doing with it.'

With this attitude, Dick fits his own definition of a Wageningen: someone who 'is passionate about contributing something to the world'. But he also notes that Wage-

Marcel Dicke (Dordrecht, 1957)

1982 MSc Entomology (cum laude) from Leiden
1988 PhD Entomology Wageningen (cum laude)
1997 launches lecture series Insects and Society
2002 Professor of Entomology
2002 receives British Rank Prize and a Vici grant
2006 wins Annual Academic Prize and organizes insect festival in Wageningen
2007 wins Spinoza award ('the Dutch Nobel Prize')
Textbook: *Insect-Plant Biology*; popular books: *Blij met een dooie mug*; *Muggenzifters & mierenneukers*, *Het insectenkookboek*



ningen UR is now distancing itself from such people. And that hurts. 'I am not happy with the way the organization has been in the news recently.' One of the developments this is a reference to is the recent discussion about food security and the media image of Wageningen as standing for a heedless intensification of agriculture. Dicke: 'There are all sorts of problems in the world, and Wageningen is trying to contribute to solving them. At Entomology, for example, we are trying to find solutions to the malaria pro-

'I know people we have been working with for years on sustainability issues, who can no longer relate to the noises coming from Wageningen'

blem and to the problems of crop protection and the world food supply. These are complex issues and by definition the solutions to them are manifold. But at the moment it seems as though Wageningen looks as what is perhaps the most complex problem of them all, how to feed the world, and puts forward one simple solution. Namely, that you can do it by just increasing production.'

In Dicke's opinion, Wageningen is alienating itself from the people who feel a bond with it. 'I know people we have worked with for years on sustainability issues who can no

longer relate to the noises coming from Wageningen. There are even partners who say: I don't want to have anything more to do with an organization like that.'

Dicke talks a bit about the collaboration between his group and a large organic chicken producer. The entomologists get chicken blood from the company in which to breed the mosquitoes which can spread the West Nile virus. 'You have to have bird blood for that. So you need a company that breeds organic chickens, because we don't want any pesticides or hormones in the blood. But last week our partner abandoned the collaboration because of Aalt Dijkhuizen's statements.

A real pity, says Dicke. 'It was not that easy to get hold of a company of this kind and we had built up a good working relationship. Of course we are going to explain that there are other perspectives at Wageningen UR than this one, but this just shows how fragile it is. I find that hard to take. This will definitely have a broader impact, with people thinking Wageningen has turned into a bio-industry club.'

As far as Dicke is concerned, Dijkhuizen has every right to say that intensive livestock farming is in some ways more sustainable than organic farming. 'There are arguments to support that. But he neglects to add that lots of other developments could contribute to a solution. There are many examples - let me take one that is close to home for me. A life cycle analysis of mealworms shows that it

ERIK POELMAN, FORMER PHD STUDENT OF DICKE'S, NOW ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

'I see him as my great teacher. He is accessible and enthusiastic. He creates an open, non-hierarchical structure. He is clear about his rules and demands commitment to each other and to the science. He likes to be in control, and he could leave things to others more often, and let them solve problems themselves.'

ERNST VAN DEN ENDE, DIRECTOR OF PLANT SCIENCES GROUP

'Marcel is always looking for innovations in his research, he has a good sense of what is going on in society, and he is extremely driven. He will tear down walls if necessary. He had an uphill struggle to get his field of research on the map. If things get tough, he gets fired up. In some ways Marcel is dominant, too. He really stands up for his ideas. Whether it concerns his chair group or the Myportal website, he always has clear ideas. He is not afraid.'

ARNOLD VAN HUIS, PROFESSOR OF ENTOMOPHAGY, HAS WORKED WITH DICKE FOR 30 YEARS

'He replies to emails promptly and with great precision. Sometimes I wonder how he does it. He notices everything. In terms of science, but also in terms of social issues in the chair group. In the higher echelons you sometimes see managers losing touch with reality. Not him. We talk regularly, and he asks me if he's doing things right. He has the courage to examine his own performance.'

takes much less land and feed to produce the same amount of mealworm protein as you could get from meat, and with much lower greenhouse gas emissions. I don't hear Dijkhuizen talking about that, and that means he doesn't do this organization justice. It is precisely the wide range of possibilities we have for effectively addressing complex problems that fairly reflect our wonderful organization.'

Marcel Dicke is a highflier. His chair group gets the maximum possible score from visitations, and he brought Wageningen its first Spinoza award. On several occasions, his colleagues have feared he might leave. And not without reason, given that at least one Dutch University and a Max Planck Institute have had their sights on him. But: 'I don't think I will leave. I'm a loyal soul. There is a strong scientific base here and a collegial atmosphere. There is a spirit of putting your shoulders to the plough together, both during working hours and outside them. Years ago, for instance, we had evenings when we would meet at someone's house to talk about predators and parasites. We called them the 'pre-par' meetings.' Alida lets out a shriek of laughter at the memory.

Dicke's colleagues are full of praise for his enthusiasm and commitment to promoting entomology. Admittedly, he could sometimes relax his grip on things. 'I am not a control freak but I do like to hold the reins,' is Dicke's response to that. 'I make sure what we have agreed on happens.'


CHALLENGES

In 2006, Dicke and his team won the first Annual Academic Prize, a competition run by the Dutch royal academy of sciences and the newspaper NRC Handelsblad for an activity aimed at making top research accessible to a broader public. Dicke was able to use the prize money of

100,000 euros to finance the City of Insects festival. The entomologists' original plan was to publish a book, but the jury found that too traditional. That set Dicke thinking. He proposed a public festival about insects – to run for a whole week. Jury member Piet Borst was sceptical: he did not think the entomologists would manage to reach a broad audience. 'At the most the odd landlady,' he added somewhat dismissively. Dicke: 'If someone says, "you are not going to make it," I see it as a challenge.' In the end, 20,000 people came to the insect week.

Which is typical Dicke: he likes a challenge. The best way to get Dicke to do something is to tell him it's impossible. Then he goes into top gear. He had this experience with his PhD thesis, which – in retrospect – opened up a new field of studies. He discovered that a plant that is being nibbled at by a mite gives off an odour that attracts the mite's natural enemies, ensuring that the mite gets devoured in its turn. This was a revolutionary idea, that plants defend themselves against predators by communication.

What Dicke was claiming, in fact, was that plants can talk. There were many critics of the idea, who proposed alternative explanations. For example, could the odour perhaps come from the faeces of the plant-eater? It took him five years of control experiments to get his idea accepted. 'That discussion helped me to make more progress,' says Dicke now.

The idea that was so innovative then has now almost become a paradigm. Dicke is sometimes sent articles to evaluate, which describe a similar interaction between other plants and insects. In his view, some people are extremely quick to draw conclusions, in which case he is the one to ask for control experiments. Because he knows from experience that it makes for better science if you don't always have the wind in your sails. 

INSECTS AND SOCIETY

Marcel Dicke and Arnold van Huis are organizing the lecture series Insects and Society for the eleventh time this year, from 9 January to 27 February. The topic on 16 January was insects as spreaders of diseases (malaria, Lyme's disease), while the other lectures look on the bright side – at insects as pollinators, as toys, as food, as Hollywood film stars and as sources of inspiration for architecture and for espionage.



16

22

21

2000. Honk honk! A family gathering. Every year 50,000 North European species overwinter here.

2001. Ban on goose hunting. Farmers are to be compensated for damage in future. A nice surprise: waddle on four places.

Hunters fear for their image and withdraw for consultations. The G8 becomes the G7. Yippee. Waddle on to 49.

The costs of maintaining hangout spots for geese go sky high. Foraging areas is too expensive. Option, according to the government, is to move back three squares.

2012. The goose survives a hunter's bullet, which hits a Wageningen GPS transmitter on a collar around its neck. Free as a bird! Move on three squares.

2005. Special foraging areas are allocated to you. A peaceful place to spend the winter, with the table laid for you. It's lovely here: skip a turn.

On Texel island, Alterra proves that hunting does not help. The only way to reduce goose populations is to catch them or gas them. A period of inaction: skip a turn.

2009. Alterra says you are cheating: four out of ten geese spend the winter outside the designated areas. Silly goose! Wait here until another player overtakes you.

Until 1900. You like to overwinter in the Netherlands. The climate is mild and there is plenty of water and grass. Fly on three squares.



2010. How do you conduct a mass cull of geese in a bird-friendly way? Gas 'em, advises Livestock Research. Get out of here. Jump to 34.



January 2013 -- RESOURCE

You have a personality! When it comes to foraging, there are pioneers and followers, according to the university. So choose: throw again or move on four places.

Sustainability at the top

How do you measure sustainability? Companies, NGOs and scientists are working on this question in something called The Sustainability Consortium. Wageningen UR has been coordinating this global collaboration for over a year now. Time for an introduction.

text: Roelof Kleis / **illustration:** Yvonne Kroese

TSC is an important development. Since Wageningen UR was designated European coordination centre, Aalt Dijkhuizen wastes no opportunity to announce this. Confirmation came recently from an unexpected quarter, when *Scientific American* pronounced TSC one of the top ten 'world-changing ideas' of 2012. Game changers that 'make the impossible possible', said the science magazine. Koen Boone (LEI) is leading the team that coordinates TSC in Europe. Here is his story in seven key words.

MEASURABLE

TSC wants consumer products to become more sustainable. Measurably more sustainable. A key task for the consortium is therefore to develop a measuring system for sustainability, with indicators for different types of product. In other words, to obtain measurable data: target figures that buyers and suppliers can work towards together. With the whole world speaking the same 'language'. In practice it boils down to TSC measuring the sustainability of each product category on the basis of the available scientific research. Boone: 'We find out which aspects of sustainability are relevant, to what extent, and what the prospects are for making improvements. And not just to one part of the process, but throughout the entire chain. On the basis of this dossier, indicators are established. This has now been done for the first group of 70 categories. Walmart is working on that now in discussions with suppliers. And retail chains in Europe are setting to work on it too. Ahold will soon be starting a pilot scheme in the Netherlands.'

TOYS

An example: packaging is a source of frustration and waste. The packaging of toys is particularly notorious. You have just given your daughter a lovely doll and you cannot get the thing out of its package, which it is tied into with countless fine wires. Infuriating, and very wasteful into the bargain. Walmart talked to suppliers about this and the problem was solved, says Boone. Peanuts? Not at all.

Every year the company saves enough wire to circle the earth eight times. There are advantages to large scale: 'Because Walmart buys in such massive quantities, the environmental impact of this saving is big. So it is about relatively simple things, precisely because there is so much that can be improved.'

LABEL

Will TSC's work lead to another ecolabel? No and yes. TSC is first and foremost a business-to-business initiative, to borrow a bit of management jargon. And in terms of sustainability, the biggest potential gains are short-term, according to Boone. Suppliers and retailers egg each other on produce their goods in more sustainable ways. And it can make them look good in the eyes of their customers too. Boone: 'On the basis of our indicators, Walmart wants to put a sustainability score on its products, a kind of weighted average between 1 and 100. They can do that, but it is an individual member's action. A score of that kind does not automatically come out of our indicators. A retailer is keen to stand out from the crowd for consumers.' Communication with consumers is indeed the TSC's ultimate aim, says Boone. 'But the chances of our launching a label that indicates which products are sustainable are very small indeed.'

MEMBERSHIP

TSC started in 2009 as an initiative by Walmart. There are currently 107 members worldwide, including giants such as Tesco, Disney, BASF, Coca-Cola and L'Oréal. The Dutch members are DSM, Unilever, PRE Consultancy, Grodan (steel wool suppliers) and Ahold. And on the NGO side, the WWF and People 4 Earth, which have their headquarters in the Netherlands. Ahold has ambitious plans for TSC, and will be revealing them soon, says Boone, who hopes Ahold will be a motor of change in the Netherlands and Europe as a whole. As Walmart has become in the United States.

DILEMMA

Any company, institution or organization with its sights



set on sustainability can join TSC. There were some eyebrows raised, however, when a tobacco company expressed interest. Some heated internal debate ensued, as TSC takes social issues such as health into account alongside environmental ones. Boone sums up the problem: 'What are the options for improvement if the best option is actually to close down the company?' But where do you draw the line? Would Heineken be allowed to join, for example? Yes, it would. Alcohol is not unhealthy by definition, explains Boone. 'It depends on how you use it.' The tobacco giant dropped out of its own accord anyway.

EXCLUSIVE

Membership of TSC does not come free. Large companies pay 100,000 dollars, and smaller ones pay 25,000 dollars per year for first-class membership. These amounts give them access to still exclusive knowledge about sustainability, not to mention influence. Which counts. But Boone acknowledges the criticism that TSC knowledge ought to be made more widely accessible. 'I would prefer to throw open our knowledge so that everyone can see what we do, keep tabs on us and benefit from our knowledge.' To this end, TSC is working on a way of becoming less dependent

on membership fees. Through grants, for example, or by knocking on the door of institutions such as the Postcode Lottery or the Gates Foundation. The Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs has already coughed up, which has doubled the budget for Wageningen UR from half a million to one million at a go.

PRESTIGE

Wageningen UR has been leading the European branch of TSC for one and a half years now. As a member of the board of directors of TSC, Aalt Dijkhuizen holds discussions with managers from Walmart, DSM, Mars, WWF and Unilever. But what do we stand to gain from all this? A great deal, says Boone. Prestige, for a start. 'TSC is a global network of trendsetting companies. So we are exposed to that, as well as being part of an extensive network of companies, NGOs and universities. Very many Wageningers are working on sustainability in one form or another. It is very easy for us to link up parts of Wageningen UR with companies wanting to do something about sustainability. So it brings us assignments and money. When you are doing acquisition you can refer to the fact that we are working intensively with all sorts of global players.' ⑩

The lonelier half

More and more international staff bring their partners along to Wageningen. But without the social network that comes with a job, it tends to take a long time before they feel at home. 'Wageningen is not very lively. If you don't have a job, you are pretty much on your own.'

text: Alexandra Branderhorst / **foto:** Guy Ackermans

‘We knew beforehand that it would be tough going for me in the Netherlands,’ says María Eugenia Maldonado Hernández. The 36-year-old from Mexico met her Dutch husband in Mexico nine years ago when she was doing research for her Master’s in Social Anthropology and he for his PhD. They married and stayed in Mexico City for another four years before his academic career took them to Wageningen via the United States. They have been in Wageningen since August 2012.

Every morning, Maria has breakfast with her husband and then goes shopping by bike. In the afternoon she takes Dutch lessons or does voluntary work as the refugee centre. Once a week she goes to a flamenco class. And she reads a lot. This is the first time Maria has been out of work. ‘I had always worked and had my own income and my own friends. When you have a job you integrate faster and you get to know people, as well as the language and

culture. I don’t care about status but I do want to keep on developing.’

So Maria is frustrated that it is hard to get a job. ‘We used to live in Mexico City, a hectic, bustling city full of art, culture, good food and night life. Wageningen is not very lively. If you don’t have a job, you are pretty much on your own,’ she admits.

FAR-FLUNG CORNERS

Maria is not the only one to go through this. ‘More and more staff and students from overseas bring their partners along,’ says Marijke Bouma, policy officer at Corporate HR. In 2011, the Corporate HR department International Advice & Support received a total of 60 applications from staff from outside the EU wishing to bring their partners with them. And then there are quite a number of Wageningen scientists – as in Maria’s case – who met their foreign partners in far-flung corners of the world.

It is not easy for international partners of staff members to integrate in the Netherlands, explains Bouma. ‘The image that you get from studies is that expats find the Dutch open, friendly and helpful. But at the end of the working day, that’s it. People here do not automatically do sports or go out in the evenings with their colleagues.’

The Netherlands is a difficult country for partners because of cultural difference, agrees Astrid van den Heuvel, policy officer for internal internationalization. ‘The Dutch are fairly individualistic. But if the partner and the family are not happy, the staff members do not stay long.’

GET-TOGETHERS

In an attempt to help partners to start feeling at home in the Netherlands a bit sooner, Van den Heuvel and Bouma

From left on:
Muna, Gabriela and
Maria Eugenis.



'After work that's it for the day. People here do not automatically do sports or go out in the evenings with their colleagues'

organize monthly get-togethers. They got the idea from Eindhoven Technical University, which has been holding get-togethers for partners for two years. Eleven people came to the first meeting in Wageningen in June 2012. Now the 'partner network' has 27 members from 14 countries, including Bangladesh, Mexico, China and South Korea. Most of the partners (21) are women.

'Some of the members were a little hesitant at first, but now they are relaxing. Friendships are developing, and people take initiatives to cook and eat together or to do sports,' Van den Heuvel reports. The meetings start with an informative morning session about topics such as health care, the Dutch language or job-hunting. Then, after lunch in the Restaurant of the Future, there is a cultural or sporting activity in the afternoon. This might be a walk around historic Wageningen, a tour of the campus or a visit to an art exhibition or the library.

NEIGHBOURS

Maria is grateful for the partner programme. 'The information about subjects such as working in the Netherlands is useful, and it is very nice to meet people who are in the same boat. I have made a Spanish speaking friend and we do things together now.'

Muna Udas (36) from Nepal has made friends too, including one from England, one from Germany and one from India. 'My husband is very pleased too, since I am at home alone for a lot of the time.' Muna's husband works for the Centre for Development Innovation so his work takes him abroad a lot. That leaves Muna, who has been in the Netherlands for a year now, alone here with her 8-year-old daughter and 3-year-old son. She is in touch with her family in Nepal every day, on Skype. She is also on very good terms with her neighbours, who have children the


same age. 'They help us with all sorts of things and we have lunch or dinner together regularly.'

Her husband's contract runs until 2015, so she is thinking of learning Dutch. 'I was happy in Nepal, but I am happy here too. My husband is doing well here, and that has an effect on me too.'

KEEP ON GROWING

Gabriela Ignacio (32) from Argentina has been living in Wageningen for over three years. Her husband had already been here a year, while she was still finishing her degree in Computer Systems Engineering in Argentina. In her first few months in Wageningen she brushed up her English by doing a course and she did freelance jobs for Argentinian companies. Then she soon found work as a systems engineer with a Wageningen company that develops software for research on human and animal behavior. 'It is a very nice company with a nice atmosphere. This is the best way for me to integrate. Nowadays I even attend Dutch language meetings.'

But she finds the social life in the Netherlands a bit disappointing. 'It is much easier to meet new people in Argentina. We occasionally eat with my husband's colleagues, but you have to plan that and it doesn't happen often. And I have made a Venezuelan friend at my Dutch course.'

Her husband is due to get his PhD this month, but it is not clear what their next step will be. 'We are following his career because it is much easier for me to find work. As long as I can keep growing professionally, that's fine by me.' Gabriela wouldn't mind going to a sunnier country though. 'We haven't got attached to the Netherlands, perhaps because we haven't got to know very many people.' 

PARTNERS GET TOGETHER

Every first Friday of the month there is a get-together for partners of international staff and students, at which they can meet each other and learn more about the Netherlands. The meetings are held from 10.00 to 14.30 in Impulse on campus. Partners can sign up by sending an email to Astrid van den Heuvel, astrid.vandenheuvel@wur.nl, or joining the coming event on the Facebook page: Wageningen UR Partner Network.



HELLO...?

The basic grant awarded to all Dutch higher education students is to be replaced with a social loan system from 2014. Minister Bussemaker confirmed this plan, laid out in the coalition agreement, in a letter to the Dutch parliament last week. The provision for free public transport for students is also to be cut down. Student organizations are up in arms about the plans, but the average student goes no further than a bit of grumbling. Have students already thrown in the towel on this one?

text: Rob Ramaker en Linda van der Nat / photo: Suzanne Overbeek

Wouter-Jan van Roosmalen



Member of the Student Council (VeSte)

'Before we go into action we first want to know what we are protesting against. There is still no clarity at all about the contents of the loan system, and exactly how social it is going to be. The national organizations are still in the throes of talks with the government and as long as there is dialogue going on, you don't start protesting. You don't want to have used up all your ammunition too soon, of course.

I have my doubts as to whether there will be a big demonstration on the Malieveld in The Hague. The demos against the slow students' fine attracted a lot of troublemakers. And that is not good for the image of students. But if it does come to a Malieveld demonstration VeSte would certainly try to get as many Wageningen students as possible to take part. **I was very proud of myself for demonstrating last time.'**

Eva Thuijsman



Second year, Biology

'I noticed too that there weren't any initiatives coming from student societies and unions. Personally I would be keen to join in if demonstrations were organized, because you cannot do much as a solitary student. But I don't organize anything myself either – which is not very good of me, really.

I do discuss with my fellow students how badly the plans are going to affect the students coming after us. I would like us to make clear that we don't agree – even if it's not going to affect us. **A visible demonstration strikes me as the**

most effective way. A big demonstration with banners – that would give the right signal. Meanwhile, I hope the unions are busy lobbying behind the scenes now.'

Martijn van Gerven



First year, Nutrition and Health

'I think students have calmed down because the slow students' fine is not going ahead. Three thousand euros sounded shocking but actually the current plans will be even more costly. As soon as the social loan system

is really brought in, students will probably be up in arms. I think old-fashioned demonstrations do help. You could see that during the campaign against the slow students' fine: the secretary of state came along and there was a lot of media attention.

If there are protests I will go along to the Malieveld but only because my parents live next door to it. Otherwise I probably wouldn't go beyond signing petitions. This measure won't affect me anyway for the next couple of years: I will keep my grant and for my Master's there is enough time for me to make arrangements to cope with this. If the plans affected me directly, I would certainly protest.'

Kai Heijneman



Chair Dutch student's union LSVb

'Students have not yet thrown in the towel. After this was announced we got a lot of emails and phone calls. But it is still far too early to speculate about a big campaign. **We first want to wait and see what comes out of the**

parliamentary debates and to what extent the minister is



Malieveld 2011: the last great student demo.

prepared to negotiate. It's anyone's guess at the moment. In the case of the slow students' fine, the mass protests and the indignation were primarily caused by the unfairness of the implementation. That will be the case now too. If the legal proposal is unfair or if there are mistakes in it, then both higher education and high school students will make themselves heard.'

Ilse Kornegoor



Second year Biology

'I haven't gone into this subject much. The slow students' fine disappeared all of a sudden, so I just wanted to wait and see. I am against the abolition of the basic grant. Everyone should have the chance of higher education. What is more, people are going to be obliged to take out loans, whereas I would rather graduate without a debt. And it is already difficult not to borrow money. I do think we should demonstrate if they do go ahead with the plans. So many students will be affected. And **the demonstrations against the slow students' fine worked.** Although I must admit, I wasn't there. I can't remember exactly why

not, but I think I just wasn't very bothered about it because it didn't affect me.'

Thijs van Reekum



Chair of the Intercity Students' Council (ISO)

'In my experience it is difficult to get students to go into action against a measure that doesn't affect them directly. The problem with the social loan system is that it only affects students starting on a new degree course in 2014. They are still at school now. It is difficult to persuade today's students that they should go and stand on the Malieveld, not for themselves but for their fellow students.

Loud protests are pointless. **It looks as though the social loan system is going to be a political fact.** We can shout 'no' as hard as we like, but the only effect will be that we will soon be negotiating with a very defensive minister. You don't achieve anything like that. It is better to wait and see how it will work out in practice. That is why we are very active behind the scenes to influence how it is implemented.'

IN THE RACKS PLEASE

We mean no harm, of course. But sometimes we are in a hurry. Quite often in fact. And then we like to park our bikes close to the entrance of the uni. And not in the racks. Then other people come back to find their bikes hemmed in. Irritating. I am sure you recognize the problem. The management at the Leeuwenborch hopes to tackle it with signs painted on the pavement.

PHOTO: ROB GOOSSENS



Students don't seem to take much notice of the new signs.

Leeuwenborch caretaker Jork de Vries understands what makes students park so messily. 'Students arrive at the last minute; I'm the same myself. Then they just want to leave their bikes in front of the sheds; they don't want to look for a space.' Pity, he says, because in the racks towards the back there is nearly always plenty of space.

Student Nadieh Tubben acknowledges the bike problem, but in her view it's because there are not enough bike racks. 'There are never enough spaces. It is a tug of war to get your bike out again, and you damage your bike in the process.'

A LOSING BATTLE

Whatever the reasons for it, it is

always hard to get students to change their behavior. The traditions signboards threatening that 'bicycles parks outside the racks will be removed,' are certainly not effective. Staff member Maya Slingerland knows why not. 'Everyone knows by now that those signs are nonsense. Bicycles are never removed.' The new texts on the pavements do not threaten any sanctions. They simply say, 'No bicycles here'. Who knows whether that will help? This

week there was too much snow for the signs to be visible. But Nadieh has her doubts. If you ask her, it would have been a better idea to remove the posts in front of the bike sheds to create more spaces. 'No one takes any notice at all of those signs. Me neither. If there isn't enough space, there isn't enough space.' The caretaker is not so sure about that. 'It is a losing battle, but let's hope it works.' **RR** MvdH

ARGO REVEALS KEY TO SUCCESS



Who? Madeleen Brouwer

What? Argo jubilee symposium committee member for PR

Where? The rowing club is holding a symposium as part of its celebrations of its 100th anniversary

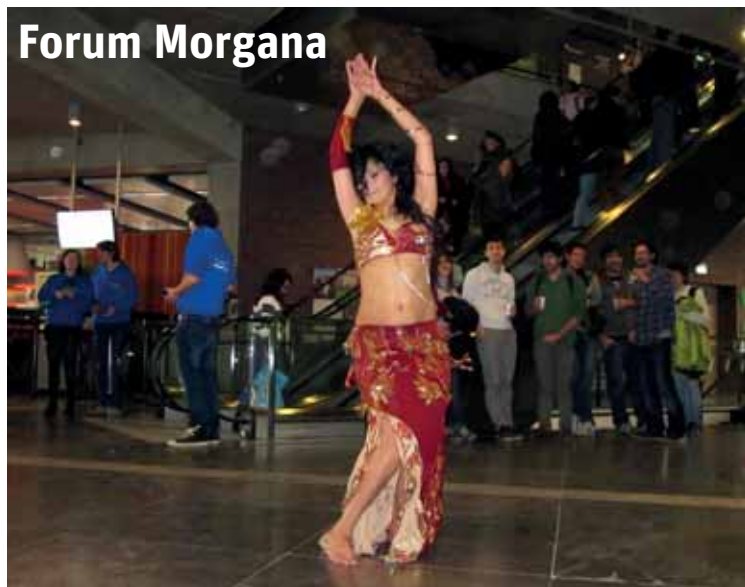
It's not every day that you hear of a sport club organizing a symposium!

'No. We had a look and it does seem that Argo has never organized anything like this before. We have invited four different speakers who will be telling us what they see as the key to success at the top in rowing and other sports. The theme is mainly about sport but we think that what they have to say will be applicable in other areas too. Your career, for instance. The speakers will cover subjects like the role of mental aspects, diet, coaching and the individual athlete. Of course it's also nice to see where you might end up as a former Argonaut: the symposium is being chaired by Gerrit Hiemstra, who is a former Argonaut, for example.'

How many people are you expecting?

'About 200. They will mainly be members and former members but hopefully we'll get other students and Wageningen residents as well. Former Argonauts are still very involved, which is nice to see. All the speakers at the symposium said 'yes' without hesitation when we asked them. Afterwards Alexander Pechtold will be auctioning artworks: four works made especially for the jubilee celebrations will be going under the hammer. Unfortunately he never rowed with Argo.' **RR** LvdN

Forum Morgana



Lunching students couldn't believe their eyes. Suddenly, to the tune of Arab music, a beauty straight out of the Arabian Nights began to perform a steamy belly dance. Judging by the expressions on the faces in the background, it was a much pleasanter sight than your mates munching their sarnies. It turned out to be a stunt organized by AIESEC, whose Nour project aims to promote understanding between the western and the Arab worlds. Relations between them have been under pressure since the attacks on the World Trade Centre. This summer, 25 talented students will leave for the Middle East and North Africa to work on a summer project. Interested? Registration is open until 4 February.

RR, foto RG

VeSte acts on danger at crossing Bornsesteeg

It is risky crossing the road at the Bornsesteeg intersection. Every day, hundreds of students and cars have to get through the traffic lights, with long queues as a result. That is asking for trouble, says student council party VeSte.

There have not yet been any serious accidents but the student representatives say there have been dangerous situations. 'People have been waiting for a while, are late for lectures and may end up cycling through a red light,' says VeSte council member Anneriek Simons.

That is why the student council is organizing a crossing campaign in the week of 18 March. During that week, student council members will lead cyclists to the university via a different route. Cyclists coming from Asserpark and Leeuwenborch will be taken via the Thybos path. Cyclists from the town centre will be sent straight on at the roundabout down Rooseveltweg and along Dijkgraaf and Akkermaalsbos. 'You can hardly call it a diversion,' says Anneriek. 'It's about 200 metres further but you



Long queues at the traffic lights at the Bornsesteeg junction.

get to lectures earlier because you avoid the queues at the traffic lights.'

CREATURES OF HABIT

VeSte is hoping this action will make students more aware of the alternatives. 'Students are creatures

of habit — they do what they have always done. If we offer them alternative routes, they may change their habits and go a different way. That would make the intersection a lot less busy during the rush hour.' But the main purpose of the campaign is to put pressure on the

town council and university to solve the problem. 'We have brought this up regularly with them but they keep pointing to each other instead of working together constructively on a solution. Students, schoolchildren and drivers are losing out because of this.' **® LvdN**

Unfair fine for foreign student without insurance

Many foreign students are unfairly fined for not having a health insurance in the Netherlands. The Dutch labour party is concerned and has asked questions in parliament.

All 15,000 international students in the country are required to take out health insurance, writes *Transfer*, the magazine on internationalization in higher education. The magazine approached eight universities, including Wageningen,

and concluded that some students no longer want to study here because of problems with the Dutch health insurance laws.

So what is going on? Since 2006 everyone living or working in the Netherlands is required to take out a basic health insurance. An exception was made then for foreign students under the age of 30, because they usually have a health insurance at home which covers treatment here. But as soon as they start earning any money from a job on the

side or an internship, foreigners are expected to take out a Dutch insurance.

350 EUROS

The problems started in 2011 when the Health Care Insurance Board (CVZ) started tracking down people who didn't have a basic health insurance. But because the CVZ cannot see which students do not have a job, a large group of foreign students found an unjustified fine for 350 euros on their

doormats. It is possible to appeal against the fine, but it is a time-consuming process. What is more, it is complicated for anyone who doesn't speak Dutch.

All this, claims Transfer, makes the Netherlands less attractive to foreign students. For this reason, MPs Mohammed Mohandis (Education) and Lea Bouwmeester (Health) have asked the cabinet how students who do not need to have a Dutch health insurance can be filtered out of the system. **® HOP**

KEEPING ABREAST

Victoria's Secret is taking a radical step: all the lingerie chain's bras are going green. Well, greener. In the wake of a Greenpeace campaign, the company is banning toxic substances from its underwear. Ironically enough, one category is the phthalates, which have been linked with hormonal disruption. Causing girls to develop breasts at a younger age.



SPERM

Students, donate your sperm! The fertility clinic at the Catholic University of Leuven is calling on students and staff to donate sperm. The demand for more sperm is mainly down to the fact that the clinic now caters for lesbian couples. In exchange, donors can expect to pocket the generous sum of 50 euros.

LOO ROLL

Students at Mahanoy Area High School in Pennsylvania must now sign for receipt of a loo roll and hand it back after they've 'been'. Don't suppose they like that much. Thing was, the boys' toilets were continually getting blocked with toilet paper. So headmaster Thomas Smith came up with this ingenious way of teaching the students a lesson.

TOP OF THE EVENING TO YOU!

Drinking laws in the Irish province of Kerry have recently changed to make it legal to drive after 2 or 3 tankards of beer. Many Kerry folk live in remote areas and have no option but to go to the pub by car. The law is intended to prevent people from drinking alone at home, which is said to lead to depression and suicides. The more lenient law, passed on 21 January, was proposed by councilor Healy-Rae. Who happens to run a pub.

Housing association turns away Students

The Wageningen housing association no longer provides housing for students, in a new ruling that came into force on 1 January. Students may still register with the association but they will no longer be offered housing designated for young people in employment. An unfair ruling, says VeSte. The student party is considering possible courses of action.

As of 2011, the housing association allocates 20 percent of its housing by lottery (compared with 8 percent before). How long you have been on the waiting list (generally at least 4-5 years) is no longer the deciding factor and the lottery is done with registration numbers. 'This was meant to help starters,' says Marion Gorlach, head of Rentals and Sales. These are young people who are not in higher edu-

cation but who want to leave their parental homes. 'But increasingly we were seeing students,' says Gorlach. 'Then we thought, this is crazy. We are not a student housing provider.'

Student party VeSte has expressed annoyance at the ruling. 'Not fair,' is the opinion of spokesperson Anneriek Simons. In her view it is not fair 'just to exclude all students'. She understands that the housing market is not kind to starters, but 'there are not enough rooms for all the students either.'

Idealis has enough on offer for students, retorts Gorlach, pointing to the (temporarily) empty units in Ede. 'We think we are within our rights,' she adds. It is stated several times in the business plan that the association is not intended to cater for students.

'We think it was bad that the ruling was not clearly communi-

cated,' complains Simons. Most students who have registered with the housing association do not know that they don't stand a chance. The

'It is not fair to exclude all students.'

ruling is stated on the website and on housing adverts, however. As well as being clearly stated in all brochures, adds Gorlach. 'And we never communicated to students that we would offer them housing in the first place.'

The housing association lets about 350 houses a year. A tally in 2012 revealed that about 7 percent of these houses went to students. The association decided to monitor this. Gorlach estimates that a total of about 60 to 65 houses are let to students. These sitting tenants can stay put. **RR**



COME DANCING. Whether you had two left feet or were an experienced dancer, you were welcome at sports foundation Thymos's annual Dance Evening. The programme included jazz dance, showdance, hiphop and pole dancing.

A total of about 200 enthusiasts turned up – numbers

which Thymos chair Marianne Benning was agreeably surprised by. 'We do get between 150 and 200 students at this activity every year, but what with the weather we thought more people would stay at home this time. Luckily for Marianne, the students were not put off by the snow. **LvdN**

EPISODE #2 - MORTIERSTRAAT 14B <<

Ghost

Willem-Jan had already been slumped on the sofa for half an hour. On the telly Matthijs van Nieuwkerk was rabbiting on about the hype of the day, but mentally he had already zapped on to another topic. Namely the new girl who had been living in the attic for three weeks now, but whom he had only seen once since she moved in. 'Thanks for the nice new housemate you found us,' he shouted out to Derk, who was cooking. 'A great gal. A real gem.' Derk was mildly annoyed.

'What do you mean, man? Vera is a very nice girl. She is probably busy with a project or something.'

'Bullshit, she is never here. I have never seen her in the living room.'

'Oh, so, at last you are sitting on the sofa full time. Great stuff, boy.' Willem-Jan ignored this sneer, switched off the TV and walked over to the beer fridge.

'I am telling you, she is another ghost in the attic, just like Berend. I hoped that at last we would have a more sociable housemate.'

Derk shrugged and turned up the radio. End of conversation, was the message. While Willem-Jan was taking his pizza out of its packaging, the kitchen slowly filled up. Meanwhile, the front door opened and someone came clattering up the stairs. Just as Willem-Jan wanted to go and have a look, a head emerged.

'Look,' he growled. 'There is our new girl.' All eyes turned to the staircase. She is cute, thought


ILLUSTRATIE: MEREL DE GRAAF

Willem-Jan, although the second-years get younger looking every year. For a moment he thought she was blushing from all the attention but it seemed she was actually flushed.

'Looks like you had one Tripel too many,' said Willem-Jan

'So what have you been up to?' asked Derk in astonishment.

'A drink at the Vlaamsche Reus,' Vera mumbled, shedding her snow-covered jacket as she staggered

into the room and sank onto the sofa, causing her sweater to ride up.

'Well, looks like you had one Tripel too many,' said Willem-Jan, his gaze alighting on the expanse of exposed midriff. Vera closed her eyes with a sigh. 'Everything is spinning around,' she groaned. By now, Willem-Jan had butterflies in his stomach. Suddenly Vera jumped up and ran to the loo. As the Belgian beer was emptied into the pot, the assembled company burst out laughing. 'What do you mean, a ghost in the attic?' said Derk, grinning at Willem-Jan. 'She is totally your type.'

Next time, read about Vera's housemate Bianca and the double hangover

VeSte wants current FOS extended

Student council party VeSte has asked the university to postpone the review of the FOS agreement on compensation for extra-curricular commitments planned for this year. VeSte's argument is that a review of the system would generate a lot of stress in the student societies.

The FOS regulation provides for financial compensation for students taking time off from their studies to help run student organizations. The amount is


linked to the basic grant. The allocation of funding is reviewed every two years, but VeSte would now like to see the current agreement extended by one year. VeSte member Wouter Jan van Roosmalen: 'The possible cancellation of the basic grant is creating a lot of uncertainty about what is going to happen to the FOS. We can only guarantee any new agreement that is reached now for one year. Which means a lot of stress for student societies. It is very time-consuming for them to

collect all the data for a new agreement that will only be in effect for a short time.'

SOCIAL LOAN

The university will decide shortly whether to review the FOS this year. Spokesperson Simon Vink agrees that there is 'no point' putting a great deal of effort into a new FOS agreement. 'If changes are made they will only apply for one year. So you won't make great changes.'

Meanwhile VeSte is holding

talks with national educational organizations with a view to influencing the conditions of the planned social loan system. Wouter Jan: 'We would prefer not to see a social loan system being put in place at all but if it is inevitable, we want to take the edge off it. We are holding out for a change to the law so that the FOS is no longer tied to the basic grant. If students are no longer compensated for a year spent on a board, no one will want to do it anymore.'  LvdN

>> CULT

Who? Popcultuur Wageningen **What?** Live music with OIIO, Koschka and Wolves Dressed in Sheep **Where?** Impulse, building 115 on campus **When?** 21 February en 21 March **Costs?** Free **How?** See: popcultuur-wageningen.blogspot.nl



Cool shit at Impulse – at last

At its formal opening Impulse did not yet look convincingly like a meeting place for the whole academic community. Plenty of big shots and business people but no students and no draft beer. Popcultuur Wageningen hopes to redress the balance. On 21 February and 21 March, they are holding two trial concerts. Don't worry, they will do something about the corporate aura of the place, says organizer Marjanne Zander. At previous concerts Popcultuur succeeded in turning the rather bare BBLTHK (the town library) into an intimate living room, with the help of soft lighting and Persian carpets.

It promises to be interesting musically, too. On 21 February, good old OIIO are playing. They played their acoustic Indie folk to a full and enthusiastic house in the BBLTHK in September 2011. Zander most looks forward to Koschka, a pianist who is lit as she plays by an artist with a projector. If it's a success, such performances will be organized at Impulse 'a couple of times a year'. And although she still cannot promise anything, there should be no problem getting a beer, draft or otherwise. **RR**

Koschka

>> THE WORKS

CROQUETTES FROM THE 'DUTCH TOKO'

Who? Elise Mennes, MSc Nutritional Physiology & Health Status
What? Research on the effect of aging on fat metabolism
Where? University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada

'Canada is vast. To go home for Christmas, students have to fly several hours. Or their parents have to drive for 20 hours to come and visit them. That made me realize how little we Dutch take advantage of the fact that there are so many beautiful countries and cities less than a day's drive away from us.

I wanted to go to an English-speaking country and I thought Canadians were probably nice. And they were. They are incredibly polite. If two Canadians bump into each other, they both say sorry. In the Netherlands, the standard response is, 'Watch where you are walking'. My friend and I were known as 'the European girls'. A Russian friend of mine though we had more sense of style than the Canadians, who in her view all wear joggers, hoodies and Uggs. She did have a point. The students at the lab have a very informal relationship with their supervisors. They crack jokes and chat like equals. I had to get used to that, as I am used to a much more formal relationship with my supervisor. And in Canada it doesn't matter what time you arrive or what time you leave, as long as you do what you are supposed to do. There isn't a nine-to-five mentality. It is much less structured, there are fewer rules and no one wears a lab coat.



The Canadian accent too some getting used to. They say 'aboot' instead of 'about' and 'oot' instead of 'out'. It sounds strange at first. And they'll put all kinds of things in the toaster. From potato cakes to a raspberry and cream cheese toaster strudel. I tried out all sorts of strange products that were for sale in the supermarket. Great fun. And if I was tired of trying out new things and wanted some typical Dutch food, I could go to a deli in Guelph called the Dutch Toko. They even had croquettes there, although they were meant for the oven because they have never heard of a deep fryer in Canada. That was a bit of a disappointment. The first thing I ate when I got back to the Netherlands was a real, deep-fried croquette. Delicious.' **RR Suzanne Overbeek**



EMMA <<

The Final Goodbye

Incredibly sad as it is to say, this will be my last column.

A friend of mine once said that the best part of being a manager was firing the employees. I cannot say I agree, I felt a great sympathy for Nicolette, my editor. I don't feel she enjoyed breaking the news to me, any more than I enjoyed receiving it.

Over the phone, Nicolette explained to me that, due to the VHL-WUR demerge, Resource would no longer be writing about VHL. Hence, a VHL international columnist was rather illogical. In other words, I was out. My initial reaction was a genuine, profound sadness.

With a smile, I sit here remembering the first time I met the Resource team in the Actio building. Being a magnet for awkward situations, I had to try and justify why only one of my hands had painted nails and why my profile picture on Facebook consisted of me looking like a gangster at a urinal.


I have nothing but good words for the Resource. I'll be forever thankful for the opportunity offered to me, because it was one of the most enjoyable experiences of my life. Whoever takes over my job should feel very lucky, and I hope they enjoy it as much as I have.

I must admit though, I feel completely let down by the people responsible for my education. Both VHL and WUR management have once again disappointed me. Their arrogance continues to baffle me. Were all those promises made back in June, to my fellow students and me, about continuous cooperation and 'nothing changing', just a façade? Hiding the ugly truth that neither side seems to be capable of negotiating their way out of a paper bag.

We have now lost Resource. Will we lose our Sports, Housing and University Building rights too? Is this the beginning of the end or simply a logical step in a happy, cooperative, demerge? So many unanswered questions...

Sometimes, one can only hope for the best and accept that agreements cannot always be maintained. I have no intention of this being the end of my writing career.

To conclude, I will simply say the following, I have thoroughly enjoyed writing for you all and I hope you have enjoyed sharing my International Student life.

Goodbye, and thank you.  Emma Holmes

announcements

Announcements for and by students and staff. Send no more than 75 words to resource@wur.nl, with 'Announcement' as subject, on the Thursday before publication.

Student Council election

The Student Council 2013/2014 election will be held from Monday 13 May 2013, 00.00 to Wednesday 22 May 2013, 23.59 inclusive. The full schedule for the Student Council election can be consulted at SSC online, EDUweb and Studentnet WU. A copy of the decision of the Student Council will be available for inspection at the office of the Secretary of the Student Council.

Any person concerned may lodge a notice of objection to this decision until 7 February 2013 inclusive with the Secretary of the Student Council, Hermijn Speelman, Droevendaalsesteeg 4 (Room D.107), P.O. Box 9101, 6700 HB Wageningen.

WUR Introduction to Canoco 5

Canoco 5 is the latest generation of the CANOCO software, the most popular program for constrained and unconstrained ordination in ecological applications. Canoco 5 integrates ordination in regression and permutation methodology to enable sound statistical modelling of ecological data. Canoco 5 works with both linear and unimodal methods. Prof. Cajo J.F. ter Braak will introduce Canoco on Tuesday 5 February at 14.00 in lecture room C92 in Radix, and there will be a demonstration at 15.00 in PC93.

REGISTRATION A.S.A.P.: BIOMETRIS@WUR.NL
INFO: WWW.WAGENINGENUR.NL/EN/SHOW/CANOCO-FOR-VISUALIZATION-OF-MULTIVARIATE-DATA.HTM

Wageningen Spy Run

The Spy Run is an exciting chase through the Wageningen woods. It will take place on Wednesday 13 February from 19.30 to 22.30, starting at Die Wiltgraeff, Geertjesweg/Scheidingslaan intersection, Wageningen. Teams of Russians and Americans compete in the Spy Run. The Russians try to win points by finding all the code words hidden in the area as quickly and tac-

tically as possible. They need to be skilled at map-reading but they also need to keep a lookout because their rivals will be hard on their heels. The goal of the Americans is to thwart the Russians by tracking them down, which scores the Americans points. The game is played in teams of two to three people. You can also register on an individual basis. There is no charge for taking part.

INFO AND REGISTRATION: WWW.YGGDRASIL-STAM.NL / BOOMSTAM13@HOTMAIL.COM

Student Residence of the Year

Student residences from all over the Netherlands can register for the Student Residence of the Year competition. Each year, Studentnet goes in search of the ultimate student residence: piles of washing and dirty dishes, a fridge full of beer, a small fortune in change in the hall, fruit flies around the bin... but above all a great atmosphere.

Students anywhere in the Netherlands who share a house, corridor or floor can enter via the website www.studentenhuisvanhetjaar.nl. They will have to answer questions about the house and its occupants and they can upload photos. It is not necessary for all occupants to take part in the competition – the minimum is three. That means more student units will be able to take part. There will be prizes for both the house and the participating occupants if they win the award.

SEE WWW.STUDENTENHUISVANHETJAAR.NL

Martial Arts Evening

Thymos will be organizing a Martial Arts Evening on Tuesday 19 February! During this evening you can join several martial arts workshops, like Aikido, Capoeira, Jiu Jitsu and Kendo. This event will start with a warming up at 19.00 and after that the first round starts at 19.15. Everybody can join without subscription and participation is free!

MORE INFO: WWW.SWUTHYMOS.NL

agenda

Thursday 31 January, 20.00

THE REUSE OF BUILDINGS AND BUILDING MATERIALS

Pieter Roza from the design firm Roza will be talking about the reuse of buildings and building materials at the invitation of the Sustainable Wageningen Platform and Transition Towns Valley. Location: upstairs room of café-restaurant H41 (Heerenstraat 41 in Wageningen). Free admission, food and drinks at your own expense.

INFO: WWW.DUURZAAMWAGENINGEN.NL/LOKALEAGENDA.HTML

Friday 1 February, 20.00

HAPPYDANCE

Happiness4all will be organizing a HappyDance in Duivendaal 7 in Wageningen (admission from 19.45). We will start with a Timeless Journey, a group meditation session that takes you on a surprising experience. This is a nice way of taking a cosmic journey and experiencing what it is like to be more than human. From 21.00 you can boogie on down to music both old and new, from the 70s, 80s, 90s and now. Entrance 10 euros, including drinks and snacks.

INFO: WWW.HAPPINESS4ALL.NL

Wednesday 6 February, 20.00

INSECTS AND HEALTH

The demand for meat will have doubled by 2050 but there is not enough agricultural land for a doubling of meat production, so does that mean we will all have to eat insects? In the series of talks in Forum (room C222) Dr Johan Toonstra (Dermatology Department, UMC Utrecht) will be talking about all kinds of bugs and the current threats. Prof. Marcel Dicke (Laboratory of Entomology, Wageningen University) will talk about maggot therapy.

Thursday 7 February, 13.30

CONFERENCE ON 'CHOICES FOR AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK FARMING'

There has been fierce debate in the media over the past few months about the increase in intensive farming in relation to global food security. The professional groups, or-

ganized in the Dutch Zootechnical Association (NVZ) and the Development Issues Study Group (SKOV), feel a need to delve deeper. Strategists in the fields of food provision, livestock farming and sustainability will be talking together on 7 February in the conference 'Choices for agriculture and livestock farming: local or global, intensive or ecological?' With support from Wageningen UR

INFO: WWW.NZVNET.NL/OVER-NZV/DEBAT-7-FEB-2013

Thursday 7 February, 20.45

JAZZ IN WAGENINGEN

Jazz in Wageningen presents the Jasper Somen Group, 7 February 2013 at 20.45 in Schouwburg Junushoff. They play creative lyrical European jazz with an American 'bite'. On 7 February they will also be presenting their new CD 'Sardigna' composed by Jasper Somsen and Bert Lochs - dedicated to the breath-taking beauty of the Italian island of Sardinia. Admission is €15 or €10 for students (on presenting a student card).

INFO: WWW.JAZZINWAGENINGEN.COM

Thursday 9 February, 13.15

WSR ARGO SYMPOSIUM

WSR Argo is organizing 'The key to success in top-level rowing and other sports' in the Aula to celebrate its 100th anniversary. With Gerrit Hiemstra in the chair, various speakers will share their 'keys to success' in sport. Various aspects will be discussed, such as mindset, coaching and the importance of good nutrition. This will be followed by an auction of artwork. Alexander Pechtold will be auctioning various unique works of art with the proceeds going to the renovation of Argo.

INFO: WSR-ARGO.NL/SYMPOSIUM

Tuesday 12 February, 19.00

DEBATING TRAINING

If you want to know what debating techniques there are, if you are interested in the art of persuasion or if you want to learn how you can become a practiced debater then come to the Young KLV debating training session, the Art of Persuasion, at Impulse (campus).

INFO: WWW.KLV.NL

Wednesday 13 February, 20.00

INSECTS ON FILM AND IN PHOTOGRAPHY

As part of the Insects and Society series of lectures (room C222), Dr Nina Fatouros (Laboratory of Entomology, Wageningen University) will speak on 'Bugs in the picture' and Prof. Urs Wyss (Christian-Albrechts-University, Kiel, Germany) will give a talk entitled 'Filming insect behaviour: the dangerous life of aphids'.

Sunday 17 February, 14.15

ANGELS & DEMONS CONCERT

Heavenly choir music and devilish students combine in the Angels & Demons concert by the Dutch stu-

dent chamber choir (NSK), touring various major Dutch towns from 15 February to 2 March. On Sunday 17 February in the afternoon, the NSK will be singing in the Arboretum church in Wageningen. Kurt Bikkembergs will be conducting the NSK for the first time, bringing an individual touch to modern classical music. The central theme in Angels & Demons is the contrast between good and evil. Angelic choirs and devilish harmonies intermingle in a programme that includes works by Benjamin Britten, John Tavener, Veljo Tormis and Robbie Williams.

INFORMATION AND TICKETS: WWW.NSKK.NL

Working on the quality of life

Wageningen UR zoekt:

Assistant Professor (Tenure Track) Algal Biorefinery

AFSG Bioprocesstechnologie, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: AFSG-BPE-0007

Laboratorium assistant Milieutechnologie

AFSG Milieutechnologie, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: AFSG-ETE-0017

Managementassistent(e)

BC Wageningen International, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: BC-0004-2

PhD Soil Information for Regional Land Use Analysis

ESG Centrum Landschap, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: ESG-CL-0180

Jurist Vastgoed

FB Real Estate Construction & Maintenance, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: FB-0000-18

Applicatie Ontwikkelaar.NET

FB IT Information Systems, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: FB-0029

Enthusiaste en gedreven VMware / PowerCLI specialist

FB IT Infrastructure, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: FB-0008-1

Afdeling coördinator/Senior Netwerkspecialist

FB IT Infrastructure, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: FB-0009-1

Postdoctoral Researcher in Farming Systems Analysis

PSG Farming System Ecology, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: PSG-FSE-0007

PhD position: African Economic History

SSG Agrarische Geschiedenis, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: SSG-RHI-0003

Lecturer research methodology (0.8 – 1.0 Fte)

SSG Educatie & Competentiestudies, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: SSG-ECS-0014



WAGENINGEN UR
For quality of life

www.wageningenur.nl/werkenbij

Language courses


Start 18 February & 4 March

Dutch
(Academic) English
Cambridge English
French
Spanish

We also offer:

Chinese, German, Russian, Portuguese,
Italian, Arabic, Japanese, Polish, Swedish
and Dutch sign language.

Visiting address Forum building



www.wageningenUR.nl/into

Wageningen in'to Languages

formerly known as Language Services

>>TYPICAL DUTCH

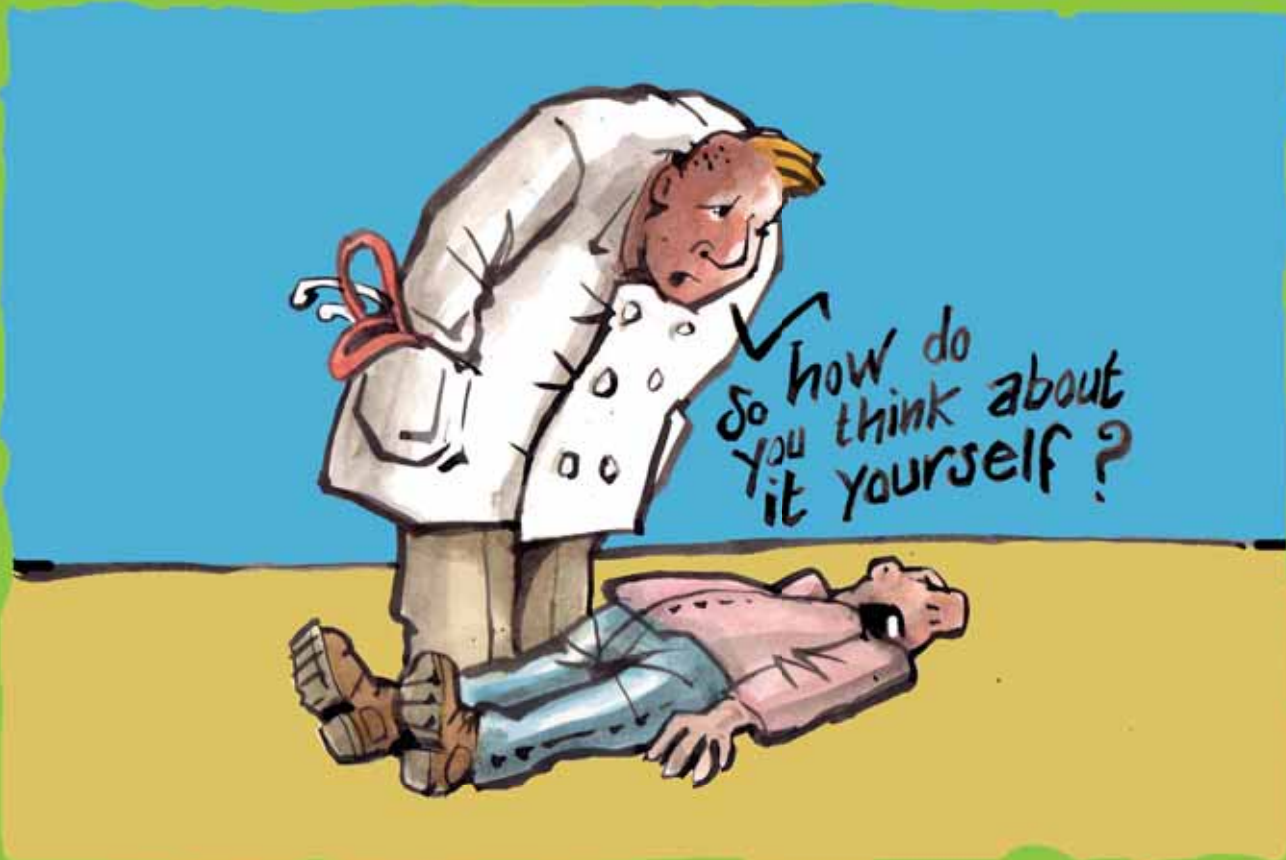


ILLUSTRATION: HENK VAN RUITENBEEK

Don't ask me, I'm a (Dutch) doctor

Having lived in the Netherlands for six years I have gone through my fair share of visits to Dutch doctors.

One of the first visits was about a problem which brought me one too many headaches. My GP sent me to several specialists for consultations. After several months of meetings and negative tests I found myself sitting in front of a dermatologist. She had done a test on her first guess at the problem, which came out negative. When I arrived to pick up the results she casually said, 'I don't know what's wrong.' Silence. I asked if it could be an allergy. She praised my analytical skills, saying I might be right and sent me off to do the tests. That was somewhat confusing for me - I grew up with the notion that it is the doctor who knows best. Yet now I ended up diagnosing myself.

In another consultation I came prepared with a diagnosis. That took me some time, doing the reading beforehand. The doctor wasn't getting very far so I offered my suggestion. He said I might be right and checked it on Google, just in case. He concluded that I was indeed on the right track and I could do the test.

I told a Dutch friend of mine about this, expecting to see her shocked. Yet she regarded it as appropriate that the doctors were listening to me as a patient. Had I known about the listening skills of the Dutch doctors, I would have known about my allergy a bit quicker than after six months... However, one question still remains: What if I were unconscious? **Latina Percheva,** Bulgarian MSc student of Environmental Sciences

I offered my diagnosis and the doctor checked it on Google

Do you have a nice anecdote about your experience of going Dutch? Send it in! Describe an encounter with Dutch culture in detail and comment on it briefly. 300 words max. Send it to resource@wur.nl and earn fifty euro and Dutch candy.