

**All students are equal
from 2016**

Idealis boss Van Medenbach
speaks. | p.18 |

Up in smoke

The frankincense tree
under threat. | p.20 |

WSO rises from the ashes

A new incarnation as Pulse,
together with PSF. | p.26 |

RESOURCE ^[ENG]

For students and employees of Wageningen UR

nr. 12 – 9 February 2012 – 6th Volume

**INTERNATIONAL
EDITION**




Harvard on the Rhine?

The perfect academic climate – p.12

>> LAAN + OCEAN SAILING

Laan van Staalduinen, acting director of the SSG

'I like rough conditions best'

Oh, a life on the ocean wave! The space all around you, the demands it makes on you. The need to be constantly on the alert. For Laan van Staalduinen, sailing on the open sea is 'the ultimate in freedom and self-reliance'. The sea is your biggest friend and your enemy at the same time. Here she is in wind force 9 on the North Sea, heading for England. Note the wave in the background.  RK / Foto: Rob Bonte

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NEW THEORY ABOUT MASS EXTINCTIONS

$L = aN + bM + cI$ explains it all.



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'WHEN I CAME WE STILL WORKED WITH NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS'

Departing head of Communications Viola Peulen looks back.



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DANCING IN THE SNOW

How the pioneer international students are weathering the winter in Ede.

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ENVY

A recent visit to Cambridge brought out the worst in me. How casually the students strolled around their centuries-old colleague. I looked on in envy. There they were, all the brainboxes together, with their world-famous professors and superb facilities. The stories my hostess told me added fuel to the fire. Open bar balls with unlimited caviar and *Dom Perignon*, secret societies... I wouldn't have minding studying somewhere like this. On page 12, ambitious Wageningen researchers tell us about their ideal academic climate, drawing on their international experience. It seems that Harvard and Cambridge are not the holy grail after all. It is tough at the top. Researchers have to compete with their colleagues just to keep their jobs, professors hog the limelight and there is little space for human warmth. Perhaps the climate during my student days was not so bad after all. I'll try and remember that next time I'm sitting in a Cambridge teashop, whining over my scone.

Rob Ramaker



>> Picture: Fun on the ice in Wageningen. P.16

STUDENTS OFTEN IGNORE COURSE EVALUATIONS

- **Response to evaluation surveys 'desperately poor'.**
- **Number of students filling in questionnaire has been falling for years.**

Food Technology professor Marcel Zwietering has published a letter calling on students to give feedback about their courses. For year, they have been able to do this in the Evasys survey at the end of each course, but Zwietering says the response can be 'desperately poor'. Zwietering writes that lecturers and teaching programme committees always use the feedback, indeed they need it. 'We really do listen to you.' That is why he is calling on students to give serious attention to the questionnaires.

Henk Vegter in the Education and Research department recognizes the problem. 'The response to course evaluations used to be around 45 percent but unfortunately it has dropped in recent years. We are going to look at what we can do about this.' Vegter emphasizes that it is important for stu-

dents to fill in those questionnaires. 'We use the results to improve teaching.'

Students and lecturers say the poor response is because the questionnaire is now sent electronically rather than being handed out on paper after the exam, as in the past. But Vegter has his doubts. 'That was eight years ago', he says. 'And the problem then is that you leave out students who don't take the exam whereas they are important too. Another advantage of electronic evaluations is the small amount of work involved, which means we can evaluate every course every year.'

Vegter points out that Wageningen students have a high response to other digital surveys. 'The university has a response of nearly 50 percent for the National Student Survey, the highest score of any university.' So Vegter has faith in the current method. 'We do however want to give the course evaluation results more publicity among students so they can see the progress being made.' **RM NM**

See too Zwietering's letter on page 11

50 MILLION LESS FOR DLO

- **Cabinet is scrapping 400 million in funds for science.**
- **University in the clear for the time being.**

The government will be making severe cuts in science research funding over the next few years. There will be 400 million less for research between 2012 and 2016, with 50 million of that coming from the DLO institutes, says the Rathenau Institute, which has calculated the effects of measures in the coalition agreement. That 400 million comes on top of the 300 million in cuts over recent years. It is not yet clear what the implicati-

ons of the measures will be for organizations like DLO, TNO and ECN. Minister Verhagen has set up a priority sector policy in which government and businesses are to join forces in investing in knowledge. Verhagen is giving businesses tax allowances totalling 500 million if they invest more in knowledge. That should compensate for the cut of 400 million in government funding.

Expenditure on universities will remain untouched for the years ahead. The universities will get combined funding of 2.3 billion this year, rising to 2.4 billion in 2016. The cabinet is considering more cutbacks, however. **RM AS**

MEATBALL ON LEGS



FOTO: GUY ACKERMANS

Meatballs made of mealworms and chips made of insects. One wonders whether the average Dutch diner will be queueing up for them. But students of Food Innovation and Management tucked in with relish last week. And they are hopeful that their product, part of their graduation assignment, will get us all hooked on the 'protein of the future'. Just to get everyone used to the idea, the mealworms are clearly visible in the meatballs. So you may need a toothpick after enjoying this 'de luxe product, or delicacy even'. Insects as a 'unique selling proposition'? Well, let's keep an eye on snack bar menus in the next couple of years, to see if they are a runaway success. **RM RR**

BLOGGING SHARPENS THE MIND

If you like writing and have an idiosyncratic take on the world around you, then you are in luck! Resource is looking for a blogger. We are looking for a student with distinctive views on things and the ability to present them in good Dutch. Someone who can be provocative, is prepared to share their insecurities and likes to seek out interesting, wacky or informative links.

Your blogs must be clearly linked to your life as a student but can certainly also deal with topical issues. The idea is to provoke reactions from your readers while illuminating various aspects of student life.

If you think you can do this, send an e-mail to our web editor: nicollette.meerstadt@wur.nl

'STOP PUTTING STUDENTS IN BOXES'

- **Idealis is introducing a new rental model.**
- **All students will be treated equally, no fixed allocations.**

In future, students will be able to apply for any of the rooms managed by Idealis. That will mean an end to the age-old policy where-

by different kinds of rooms are on offer for first years, foreign students, PhD students and so on.

The policy reversal is outlined in the new Idealis business plan and is explained in more detail by director Hans van Medenbach later on in this edition. Van Medenbach says Idealis was getting a lot of criticism for 'compartmentalizing the different target groups', which

he himself terms '1970s policy'.

In the new situation any student, regardless of their nationality, will be able to apply for any room in any Idealis complex, with furniture as an option. It will no longer matter whether you are a first year or PhD student, or where you come from. 'It will be first come, first served', says Medenbach. 'So a first year from Uganda can

choose a luxury apartment if he can afford it, while a Dutch PhD student on a tight budget can opt for a smaller room on a corridor.'

The new policy will be introduced step by step over the next few years. The real turning point will be 1 January 2016, when Idealis will get possession of 1,200 rooms that the university currently rents for international students. **RG**

in brief

>> STUDENT CHOIR

Ontzetting in China

Wageningen student orchestra De Ontzetting will be making a two-week tour of China at the end of the year, during which it will give five concerts in the Shanghai area. If all the concerts are sold out more than 10,000 Chinese will get the chance to enjoy the orchestra's music. The tour is being arranged and financed by S&L Cultural Exchange Holland. The students only have to pay their own travel costs, and they are hoping to find sponsors for this. De Ontzetting leaves for Shanghai on 26 December 2012. **SO**



>> IDEALIS

First wind turbine in Wageningen

The planned new student residence Rijnveste will boast the first (modern) windmill in Wageningen. It will not be a huge turbine, says Wim van Alphen from student housing provider Idealis. 'But it will provide enough electricity to light up the paths around the complex.' Work will start on Rijnveste on the Rijnsteeg in February. It will have a total of 345 units of varying sizes. The building is expected to be ready sometime in 2013. Besides the wind turbine on the fifth floor, each unit or apartment will have its own solar thermal collector for heating tap water. **NM**

>> FORUM

Extra study areas

Besides the existing study areas, from the beginning of February students are also allowed to make use of classrooms on the sixth floor of the Forum. This is a response to a shortage of study areas, a growing problem in the Forum, according to student council party VeSte. The rooms will be made available not only during resits week, but also in the fourth week of the next period. Willemijn Snelter of VeSte is happy with the arrangement, which she would like to see being followed through. 'This is in line with our efforts to create more study areas. If this works well, the rooms will be opened again in future during the busiest weeks.' **KvdA**



SCHAMINÉE <<

Loch Ness

Some time ago my wife, our two children and I visited the village of Drumnadrochit, on the northern banks of Loch Ness. Everything in the village revolves around the famous monster. Special attractions, shops, cruises, a museum... you name it, it's there. A complete fantasy world. And yet... As we drove east towards Inverness along the lake shore, we were all gazing over the water in case we might catch a glimpse of Nessie.

Where does truth end and fiction begin? Who can say? Maybe the Netherlands really did not win the world cup in 1978, and Rensenbrink's kick in the last minute of extra time did hit the goal post. And maybe the party in the Buenos Aires football stadium that day was real. Maybe there really are politicians who talk about Moslem citizens in insulting terms and describe a colleague and compatriot as a bit of regurgitated halal meat. Maybe there really are people who think Vitesse will be the national champions in two years' time.

And can he really exist, a State Secretary for nature who values a pheasant on his beet field as much as a wet dune valley full of marsh grass in bloom; for whom a grassy field full of dandelions is worth the same as a chalk hill covered in quaking briza grasses and gentians? Who gives instructions to sell off nature areas to be turned into rich pastures. Who tries to wriggle out of international agreements on nature conservation. And who passes me a note asking, 'Shall we go out for some goose shooting some time?' **Joop Schaminée**

VICI GRANT FOR CAMOUFLAGED FUNGI

- **New light on camouflage technique in fungi.**
- **Vici grants getting harder to obtain.**

Plant researcher Bart Thomma is to receive a Vici grant worth 1.5 million euros from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) for his research on pathogenic fungi. 'I'm extremely happy', says Thomma, assistant professor of Phytopathologist, in

response to the news. 'A sum like this makes it possible for me to take this research a stage further.' Thomma's award-winning project builds upon a discovery made in 2010, when Thomma proved that a fungus which infects tomato plants makes use of camouflage. The fungus's cell walls are made of chitin, a substance which is not found in plants and therefore activates their immune systems. To prevent this, the fungus covers its cell walls with proteins it produces itself.

Meanwhile, Thomma has learnt that this mechanism is not unique, but is common to many fungi, including those which can make humans and animals sick. His project examines which role the protein plays in other pairs of pathogenic fungus and host. In addition, Thomma is curious to know whether fungal diseases can be combated in this way. It will therefore be imperative that the project work in a multidisciplinary fashion with other disciplines such as medical mycology. He also thinks there

may be another complex mechanism at work. Thomma: 'The fungus has to defend itself too against pathogens; another reason for making itself invisible could be to escape its enemies.' Thanks to the Vici grant, Thomma thinks he will be able to find out more in the coming years.

It has become harder to get hold of a Vici grant in recent years. This year, NWO has awarded grants to only 31 out of the 236 scientists who applied. In 2003, 20 percent of the proposals were selected. **AS**

GRYLLUS HOUSE GOES UP IN SMOKE



A penetrating smell of smoke and a red glow on the horizon prompted someone out on a paper round to sound the alarm in the early hours of 26 January. And rightly so: it was a fire. The fire brigade came out in force, from both Wageningen and Bennekom stations. Necessary, says a spokesman, as it was not immediately clear where the fire had started. It turned out to be the empty house known as Gryllus (Latin for field cricket). Once they had made sure there was no one inside, the firemen let the fire burn itself out 'under control'. Arson is suspected. Gryllus has been empty since New Year's Eve, when the last resident decamped. It had seen long service as a student house but had to make way for new buildings on the campus. **RK**

ANALYSIS

A GOOD ACADEMIC CLIMATE STARTS FROM BELOW

When Nutrition professor Martijn Katan and Plant Sciences director Raoul Bino left for the big cities (in 2006 and 2009 respectively; Bino soon came back), one of the push factors was the lack of academic culture and intellectual debate. But with three new initiatives recently – Impulse, the Science Café and the Young Academy – it seems as though Wageningen's academic culture is getting richer by the day. Let's start with Impulse, the new venue on campus for business and social get-togethers. The meeting point will open in April. Impulse is partly based on ideas raised in biologist Marten Scheffer's speech at the academic year opening of 2010, when he argued passionately for creating space for shared out-of-the-box thinking.

And then there's Wageningen's Science Café, launched last year to provide a forum for discussing the rise of China or the value of climate models. All the first four sessions at the Loburg Café were packed out. The Science Café was started by researchers and students (together with Resource) and is now being supported financially by Wageningen UR.

The newest contribution to the academic atmosphere is the Jong College (Young Academy). The first meeting in January was promising: 17 ambitious young scientists seem quite determined to attract top researchers and editors to come and speak at Wageningen. The idea came from two highfliers, David Lentink and Dolf Weijers, and was quickly embraced by rector Martin Kropff and supported

by dean Johan van Arendonk, Wageningen Spinosa Prize winners and Dutch Academy professors.

Strikingly, this kind of initiative always seems to come from below, and subsequently to be welcomed at the top. Researchers are the ones who have had first-hand experience of the dynamism of institutes such as Caltech or MIT, and who are now trying to inject the key ingredients of it into Wageningen life. During a round table discussion on the academic climate (see page 12), Dolf Weijers mentions Wageningen's evolution from an agricultural college to a university and research centre. This institution is still developing apace and an appropriate slogan might be: a better academic climate starts with you. **Gaby van Caulil**

NATURE'S LOVELIEST SOUNDS

- **Blackbird at number 1.**
- **'You understand what he's saying.'**

There is no denying it, even for the nature sounds man, Henk Meeuwssen: the blackbird is top of the pops. But after that, his taste deviates considerably from that of the average Dutch person. Henk Meeuwssen was a guest on the Vara radio talk show Vroege Vogels (Early Birds) last Sunday, when the Top 40 Nature Sounds was announced. Some of the recordings on which Dutch listeners could vote over the past month were his work. Meeuwssen has gradually made a name for himself as an authority in this field. No one who wants to do something related to natural sounds can afford to ignore him.



The blackbird is the undisputed number one, on that Meeuwssen agrees. 'That sound is not just beautiful, but you feel as though you understand what a blackbird is saying.' After the blackbird, the Dutch chose the sound of the surf, the nightingale, field birds and a purring cat. Meeuwssen prefers the sounds of the midwife toad, the crane and a barking deer. The full top 40 can be seen and heard on the Vroege Vogels website. **RK**

BOARD TO SCRAP TWO CHAIRS

- **Chairs to merge in Soil Science and Communication & Innovation.**
- **Room for new chairs.**

The Executive Board has decided to get rid of two chairs. In ESG, Land Degradation and Development is to merge with Soil Physics, Ecohydrology and Groundwater Management to form the new chair of Soil Physics and Land Management. That means a fall in the number of soil research chairs from five to four. The reduction is possible as three of the four professors are retiring.

The social sciences are also losing a chair without any far-reaching consequences for staff. The Communication & Innovation group headed by Cees Leeuwis is

to merge with Technology & Rural Development, where Professor Paul Richards retired two years ago.

These losses create room for new professorships. The strategic policy plan for 2011-2014 announced three new chairs: Urban Environment, Biorefining and Marine Systems Ecology. They have not yet been filled. The so-called chair plan works on the principle of new for old: there is room for a new chair if an old one goes somewhere else. So room still needs to be created for a third chair but it is not yet clear where. A chair is eligible for abolition if the opportunity arises (a professor leaves), the teaching burden is relatively low, or the subject area becomes less relevant or overlaps considerably with another chair. **GvC**

ONE SHOT AT THE ELEVEN TOWNS TOUR



Is it likely to go ahead?

'I very much doubt it still, but we have to take the possibility seriously. Mental preparations have definitely begun. I've been checking my diary to see what I might have to change. My provisions will consist of currant and muesli rolls and energy bars. But they can't work wonders, and I am trying to keep to my usual eating habits as much as possible.'

Have you already arranged somewhere to sleep?

'Not finalized yet, but I do have family close to Leeuwarden, so it shouldn't take more than a phone call.'

Are you fit enough?

'I was among the draw winners, but I still have a way to go. Basically, I am pretty fit, but my stamina and skating form are not great. I feel good on the skates, but I haven't done much real distance training. I don't want to over-train, but I will try to put in a few hours this week on the inlet down by the Rhine.'

Is that enough?

'If it does happen, I certainly won't have skated more than 100 kilometres at one go. So at around 130 kilometres it will start getting really tough. But it is one of my dearest wishes to skate in this race. If it goes ahead, I will set aside everything else for it. I am 61 and I think this will be my only chance.' **R NM**

QUOTE

'You would expect Wageningen University, with all its proud farmers' sons, would have the fewest female students. But no, it has the most: 56 percent.'

Prem Radhakishun in his programme Premtime, on the feminization of universities.

KITO



Typical Dutch on ice: 'My eyes are frozen. Yippee!'

Who? Klaas Swart, 61, assistant professor of Genetics
What? He has sharpened his skates and he's getting psyched up
Why? He is a winner in the draw to skate in the elfstedentocht
When? That's the million dollar question. Sunday?

THE HISTORY OF AN UNDERGROUND TREASURE TROVE

- Isric has exceptional Russian soil profiles.
- Brazilian postdoc: 'This is unique'.

It just looks like sand to a lay person. Pretty, with those graduated layers of brown. And impressively large: the profile in the temporary exhibition in Gaia is two metres high. But for experts this soil sample is a real piece of underground treasure. One of the experts is Brazilian researcher Cristine Muggler. The profile is a prominent exhibit in Isric's Glinka Memorial Collection, which Muggler considers a unique collection of Russian soil profiles.

The twenty profiles in this collection still in the possession of Isric were collected in the Soviet Union around 1924. They give a cross-section of Russian soil characteristics at that time, before the land became polluted by heavy industry and radioactive waste. This makes the profiles literally a piece of soil history. They provide soil scientists with valuable material for comparison.

WORLD EXHIBITION

But the history of the collection itself is just as interesting. The profiles are what remains of the collection the Russian soil scientist Konstantin Glinka created from 1924 onwards. The idea was that the profiles would steal the show at the first International Congress of Soil Science, held in Washington in 1927. The congress included an exhibition of soil samples from around the world.

Soil science was still in its infancy and Muggler says the Russians were leading the way. Glinka was a pupil of



The Russian soil scientist Konstantin Glinka created the collection in 1924.

Dokuchaev, who is seen as the founder of soil science. Glinka led the Russian delegation of 22 people attending the congress in Washington in June. The collection, which was later named after him, was transported along the trans-Siberian railway line and across the Pacific to the New World. The soil profiles arrived intact, but not on time - the congress had already ended.

SOIL TREASURE

Despite that, Glinka was elected the first president of the International Soil Science Society. He died suddenly three months later, aged 61. The profiles went into storage, where they remained until they were donated to Isric in 1980. There were then still 55 profiles remaining of the estimated 60 to 70 in the original collection. Now there are only 20 left, and the rest have been returned to Russia or donated to other museums and universities.

Muggler says the Glinka collection is a fine example of Isric's soil treasures. The museum should value these treasures and take good care of them. That is why she has unearthed and documented their history. **RK**

AGRICULTURAL POLICY REFORM AFFECTS GREECE

- LEI calculated impact of redistribution of EU agriculture subsidies.
- Holland stands to lose 288 million.

The European Commission wants to redistribute agricultural subsidies in Europe. This will affect countries already suffering from the euro crisis, according to calculations by researcher Roel Jongeneel of the Agricultural Economic Institute LEI. Farmers across Europe receive different levels of subsidy per hectare of farmland. The proposal made by the European Commission last autumn is intended to reduce these differences. No one had yet calculated exactly what this would mean for the various countries.

Jongeneel calculated the effects of the change in the hectare subsidy. He found that Italy stands to lose the most: over 1.5 billion euros between 2014 and 2020. But in proportion to its national income, Greece will lose the most, as the country will receive more than one billions euros less over the rest of the decade. The Netherlands will be receiving 288 million euros less, according to the LEI calculations.

WINNERS

Other older member states such as France, Germany, Belgium, the UK, Denmark and Spain will lose too. The big winners in the proposed redistribution are the new eastern European member states. Within the EU, more than 900 million a year will shift from the older member states to the new member states in eastern Europe. A modest redistribution in the light of the total budget for the European agricultural policy: 60 billion per year. **IT**

FORMULA EXPLAINS MASS EXTINCTIONS

- Wageningen emeritus prof proposes new theory on mass extinctions.
- Mutations caused by sunlight behind stable growth.

Once in 85 million years, life on Earth comes in for a shock. Entire species are wiped out almost simultaneously. There are numerous theories at large as to why this is, but none of them fully explain the mass extinctions. Wageningen emeritus professor Piet van den Noort (Agricultural Economics) thinks he has found the key. His extinction theory – and the formula that comes with it – explains the time, size and frequency of all known extinctions.

Van den Noort's formula is actually a simple one. According to him, there is a link between mass extinction (L), the number of species (N), the number of mutations (M) and disastrous impacts (I). His formula is: $L = aN + bM + cI$ (plus a statistical constant). The driving force behind this is mutations. Van den Noort expounds his ideas in the December issue of *The Journal of Ecology and the Natural Environment*.

CHAOS

Van den Noort's ideas are based on the logistic growth theory. Under certain conditions, this type of growth leads to instability and chaotic growth behaviour. Only by continuous mutation can species avoid extinction. Van den Noort demonstrated this

in the mid-nineteen nineties in his book, *Complexity and Survival*. Now he adds a new chapter to the story with his formula.

But that is not all. Van den Noort also explains what makes mutations vary across the various geological periods. The cause of this is the chaos in the solar system. Chaos causes the elliptical orbit of the Earth around the sun to shrink and expand continuously in a chaotic way. The bigger the orbit, the weaker the radiation and therefore, the smaller the chances of mutations and the more unstable the growth. Moreover, a bigger orbit raises the chances of meteorite impacts (the I in the formula), which sometimes lead to mass extinctions.

PREDICTION

Chaos in the solar system is the cause of mass extinctions, then. According to Van den Noort, fluctuations in the orbits of planets are a well-known phenomenon in astronomy. He even attributes the lack of life on Mars and Venus to this chaos. 'Any form of life on these planets is wiped out as a result. The Earth has been lucky. Life has never vanished completely from here. The lack of life on Mars and Venus in fact confirms my theory.'

The extinction formula explains more than just past events, however. To some extent, it also predicts the next mass extinction. Not that we need to worry unduly about that, though. According to Van den Noort, that will only happen some thirty million years from now. **Ⓜ RK**



Impression of the Chicxulub crater in Mexico, formed by a meteorite about 10 km in diameter which wiped out the dinosaurs 65 million years ago.

VISION <<

'A five is a fail'

In order to keep students progressing through the system, more and more Dutch universities are allowing first year students to pass the year in spite of one five among their grades. The students do have to balance the five with a seven for another course. But Martin Mulder, chair of the Social Sciences examining board and professor of Education and Competence Studies, has his doubts. 'A five is a fail.'

'We have a five ruling in Wageningen too; we've had it about ten years. It is intended as an incentive. If students manage to pass all their courses in the first year, we let them off one five. That motivates students to finish everything on time. Fine.

'On the other hand, imagine if we introduced this in Medicine. You don't want to be treated by a doctor who hasn't got his basic facts straight. And that goes for all arts and science graduates of course. In that sense, just one five in the first year is acceptable, but we should not make a general rule of the compensation principle. If someone gets one five, he stands a big chance of failing subsequent courses in that field as well. That five could end up costing the institution more teaching and supervision time, and therefore more money.

'There is also a danger that the quality of education and the value of the degree could suffer. That is why student organizations object to the five regulation – they are afraid of the InHolland syndrome. I understand their suspicions, because this rule is being introduced in several universities now to raise the pass rate and with it the institution's income. It is a strategic move, and it should be opposed.

Educational quality should come first. You can safeguard that quality with good teaching, good exams, good exam regulations and good quality control on the exams. The examining boards in Wageningen are now working hard on quality control of the exams. We must not let standards slip and start passing students out of pity. This is only in our own interests, since dubious quality would dent the programme's reputation and affect student recruitment.' **Ⓜ AS**

PROPOSITION

The scientific community in The Netherlands is too small for objective peer-review

Patrick Kabouw, 1 February.

BUILDING WITH PROTEIN BLOCKS

- **Microcapsules with protein base enable better control.**
- **Possible use in medicines.**

Microscopic capsules made from tiny rods of protein are very promising. They can help to keep food fresh longer, release a medicine at the right time and place, and get substances into the body undamaged.

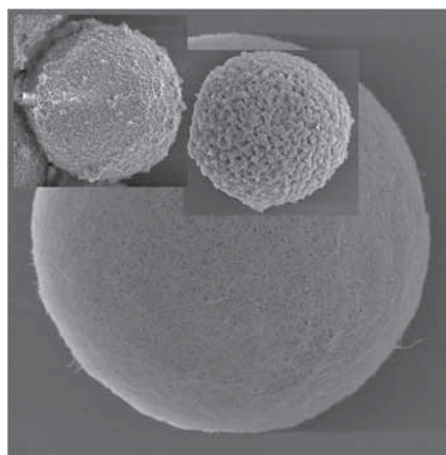
Leonard Sagis, associate professor of Food Physics, struck on this idea after observing artificial protein fibrils. These are stiff little protein rods which in turn comprise protein fragments stuck together side-by-side.

Structures like these are present in the brains of Alzheimer's patients. It seems that they can also be manufactured in the laboratory by heating a protein for ten hours in an acidic environment. Of note is that digestive enzymes can break them down safely.

A BALL OF WOOL

The fibrils can be used as building material for capsules. Sagis uses a drop of oil coated with charged protein fragments as 'scaffolding'. This is coated with alternate layers of positively charged and negatively charged fibrils. The end result seen under the microscope strongly resembles a ball of wool.

This technique is very much



Microscopic capsules made from tiny rods of protein.

basic proteins or by adding on more layers of fibrils. The consistent final product contrasts sharply with the 'thick layers of amorphous material' sometimes seen when old techniques of producing microcapsules are used.

In the meantime, the influential *Reviews of Modern Physics* has recently published an overview written by Sagis of the theory behind complicated border surfaces, such as those of 'his' microcapsules. **RR**

better than current methods of producing capsules. 'You can control the mechanical and release properties much better,' says Sagis. This is done by using different

SCIENCE CAFÉ: MEASUREMENT ERROR OR REVOLUTION?

- **CERN researcher gives his views on neutrinos that 'travel faster than light'.**

Sixty nanoseconds. That is the reason for the talk particle physicist Prof. Frank Linde will be giving in the next Wageningen Science Café. That tiny difference in time made physics into front page news last year. Researchers at CERN shot neutrinos from Switzerland to Italy and these subatomic particles appeared to have travelled faster than the speed of light. If that result can be replicated, we can dump our physics theories in the wastepaper bin. In principle it would even make time travel possible.

Linde is the director of the National Institute for Subatomic Physics (Nikhef). He was involved for



some time in the experiment that resulted in the neutrinos that travel faster than light. He is currently

one of the people working on the search for the Higgs particle with CERN's ATLAS detector. Linde will be talking about the research into superfast neutrinos and particle physics, and he will discuss the results and their implications with the audience.

99.9 PERCENT SCEPTICAL

The researcher gives dozens of talks for the general public every year,

providing an insight into an invisible world in a light-hearted, accessible manner. 'I will explain in particular what my colleagues and I need to see before we really accept the need for a complete overhaul of particle physics,' Linde says a lot more evidence is required. '99.9 percent of elementary particle physicists are and remain incredibly sceptical about this measurement.'

Linde says it is more likely to be a measurement of something else than an as yet unknown physical phenomenon. 'I am putting my money on a measurement error. But in my discipline we say 'measurement is knowledge' until we can disprove it. If neutrinos really do travel faster than light then we're back to square one. In fact, it means we no longer have a valid theory to explain many great, accurate experiments in the past. So that would be a revolution. In a word: fantastic.' **AvTH**

23 February, 8 p.m., Café Loburg. With live music by Anne and Aljosha. Wageningen Science Café is an initiative of Resource and others.

Science Cafe Wageningen

>> RESOURCE.WUR.NL

The past two weeks saw some bitterness on the website. A discussion about giving foreign students priority for student accommodation stirred up strong emotions. Luckily, everyone kept their cool concerning the ins and outs of student questionnaires.

Comments

@ Tammy, Anukram, I think the article of living conditions should be seen separated from the discussion you're referring to, whether international... if you can you should organize hunting days or regulation we are three goose hunter with decoys. I'm also looking young geese... I'd like to go n have a look when it's moved to I love this cover picture very much,

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

OUR STUDENTS FIRST?

We should stop giving priority to foreign students when allocating student rooms, declared Jillis in the previous issue of Resource. It so happened that the preceding page featured photographs from a photo exhibition on student rooms – rich and poor – around the world. That turned out to be an explosive mix.

While a thoughtful discussion grew up around Jillis' opinion, all hell broke loose because of the photos. A misunderstanding led several readers to regard them as part of a politically incorrect piece of scientific research. As this storm subsided, it left some people in its aftermath who wanted to air their grievances: 'The Netherlands is in a rotten state of anti-international everything,' says **Tammy**. In short, the trolls could have a ball. Luckily, some, such as **Klusser**, also saw the beauty of the photos: 'Fantastic, I will certainly take a look when the exhibition moves to Utrecht.'



ILLUSTRATION: ESTHER BROUWER

LETTER RECEIVED: COURSE EVALUATIONS

Student questionnaires on courses are necessary for improving and assessing teaching standards. So problems arise if students don't fill them up anymore, declares Professor Marcel Zwietering. See the letter at the bottom of this page.

Via the internet, students indicated practical problems which reduce the level of response. 'I would like to include the exams in the evaluation,' says **NP**, 'but because we are given the evaluation way before the exams, I forget about it afterwards.' Others point to the exasperatingly long online questionnaires with a tendency to crash. **Marlies** feels the questions are not good enough: 'I notice that I'm okay with everything asked, and yet I do have a lot of criticisms of the courses.' **JH** gives the discussion a nostalgic tint: 'What is wrong with the former system? Why not just let us fill out the evaluation on the spot after the examinations?'

programme committees review all course evaluations and when needed, urge course coordinators to take action.

Feedback is crucial to achieve quality. This feedback is taken seriously. The response from students in some courses is sometimes so miserably low that these results are taken less seriously.

Education in Wageningen is considered to be of a high standard, and both lecturers and students want to keep it this way. I therefore appeal to all of you to give more thought to filling out the questionnaires. We really will listen to you. We might not be able to make changes to everything and sometimes we have to look around for a good way of addressing a problem, but we are working in earnest and we need your feedback to do so.

Marcel Zwietering
Professor of Food Microbiology

post

WANT TO VOICE AN OPINION? Email to resource@wur.nl.

DEAR STUDENTS,

I would like to appeal to all of you to fill out the EVASYS questionnaires.

I am a professor, lecturer and member of a programme committee. In these capacities, I often use the results of course evaluations.

As a professor, I am responsible for the teaching quality of the chair group. I discuss every evaluation with the course coordinator. I discuss the results of the course evaluations during the annual job performance appraisal of each lecturer. The course coordinators in my chair group also view the evaluations seriously and use them to make improvements. The results of these questionnaires are important in promoting lecturers (tenure track system). As a lecturer, I look at the results of lecturers and the comments. My boss in his turn discusses with me the results of my own courses and the courses in my chair group. Finally,

colophon

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

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What do ambitious researchers need in order to thrive?

No Harvard on the Rhine

Wageningen needs to create a more invigorating climate for top research. Four seasoned experts scrutinise the academic culture at the Born. 'We mustn't be fixated on Harvard.'

text: Gaby van Caulil / **photos:** Manon Bruininga

Joris Sprakel is the first to answer. 'Money!' he shouts in response to the question what it takes to produce outstanding research. 'No, we talk too much about money, actually', responds Erwin Bulte. And the ball is rolling.

At the invitation of Resource, four researchers with experience at top institutes are pondering the academic climate at Wageningen. They have met on the second floor of Hotel De Wereld.

Among the scientists is Dolf Weijers, one of the initiators of the Young Academy launched two weeks ago. The academy is made up of talented researchers who want to stimulate the right sort of climate for top research. They

aim to attract distinguished speakers to Wageningen and promote interaction between Wageningen highfliers in different fields.

This raises questions about the academic culture at the Born. Is it stimulating enough? How is this university doing compared with the top universities? After one and a half hours of discussion in De Wereld, one thing is clear: Harvard is not the be-all and end-all. Although we could use a bit more scientific 'drive'.

TOO MUCH MONEY TALK

So Joris Sprakel feels the need for more funding. 'My own research is highly dependent on equipment. I notice that

From left: Erwin Bulte, Dolf Weijers, Joris Sprakel and Vera Ros. 'When it comes to the culture, it's up to us.'



it is very hard to secure major investments and in my subject area this means quite simply that we lag behind places that don't have this problem.'

But funnily enough, it is the economist in the group, Erwin Bulte, who thinks there is too much talk of money in Wageningen. 'That is not always the issue. The IPOP theme for research on complex systems has now got to be linked with top sectors. What you will see now is that very interesting subjects, which you would love to work on, will disappear over the horizon. Another sticking point is tenure track, with acquisition requirements being set which are not realistic, I think. This is to the detriment of the academic work. I want people from my group to be able to dedicate themselves heart and soul to their research. They should be publishing as well as possible, get every opportunity to do their work and not have to worry too much about acquisition.'

Dolf Weijers nods in agreement. 'I am not sure money makes such a difference either. I really like being spurred on by contact with someone who has been very successful, someone who can inspire you to keep on going all out. What I'm talking about here is also one of the reasons for setting up the young academy. The aim is to have real contact with people who are ambitious. To create a platform where you can share your ambitions and find support and reinforcement for them.'

Sprakel: 'And yet there are surely some very successful scientists at Wageningen.'

Weijers: 'That's true. But I also have in mind people

who are doing very well internationally. There simply isn't a tradition of bringing those sorts of people to Wageningen. My point is: the people who are in the Veni, Vidi, Vici system are probably going to make it. What I want is to provide inspiration for people who haven't got that far yet – a PhD student who ends up getting frustrated because things don't work out, or a postdoc who is wondering whether he'd better get out of academia. We have to show them that there really are possibilities, based not just on

'We have the Science Café too now. That is going well; it's packed out every time. That is motivating'

their own research group but also on a supportive wider community.'

Vera Ros: 'But that is already happening of course. We've got WEES, the Wageningen Ecology Evolution Series. These are monthly lectures for which we invite world-class speakers. I don't think it is well enough publicized, though.'

Bulte: 'When it comes to the culture, it's up to us. Regularly inviting inspiring people to speak is a practical point, and something we have to do ourselves.'

Ros: 'And we have the Science Café too now. That is going well; it's packed out every time. That is motivating.'

Weijers: 'It is part of a culture in which you realise that science is enjoyable.'



Erwin Bulte, Development Economics.
Also research fellow at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, and professor at Tilburg.
Received a Vici grant in 2010.

Bulte: 'Yes, I think that's really good, too. But besides that, there are some factors in the Wageningen UR system that work against a strong academic climate. There is an emphasis on quantity at the expense of quality. More students, more PhDs. My goodness, in our Development Economics group we have more PhD students than the whole economics department at Tilburg – which is five times the size. At Tilburg I worked with my fellow professors, here I mainly work with students. That leads to different sorts of projects, of course.'

COLLABORATION, NOT COMPETITION

All four of the scientists at the table have spent some time at universities abroad. What are the differences between those top institutes and Wageningen?

Ros: 'At Pennsylvania it struck me how strong the collaboration was between different groups. People really look beyond the borders of their disciplines.'

Sprakel: 'In the Netherlands we are full of talk about interdisciplinary research, especially in the natural sciences. But as soon as you really try to go for it, you find it difficult to get funding for it. Sorry, there I go, talking about money again.'

Bulte: 'That may be true, but I do think Wageningen is a positive exception in that respect. That is why I came here, too. Look at the IPOP or the INREF programmes, for example: they are attempts to establish interaction



between groups.'

Weijers points out another cultural difference. 'At the Max Planck Institute in Tübingen, fantastic people come and speak on a regular basis. That kind of seminar took place on a Monday evening at a quarter past eight. You went along and soaked up the science. That is unimaginable here.'

Sprakel: 'That is something that has completely astonished me. At five o'clock the chemistry building is almost empty. At Harvard, the place is busy around the clock. People are recording and working even at night. Here people see science as a job; in America they see it as a mission. There people aim to do one thing, and to be the best at it. That attitude is totally ingrained. There is a lot of competition.'

Weijers: 'How did you like that?'

Sprakel: 'I saw a case where two people were taken on when there was one job going. The first one to come up with results got the job. Appalling.'

Bulte: 'You want to publish at a high level, no question about that, but in the end I don't think science can flourish in a competitive atmosphere. In Tilburg I saw how the economics faculty kept a beady eye on their competitors-cum-colleagues at the University of Amsterdam. It was so bad that if Amsterdam got an article in a top journal, people in Tilburg were down in the mouth. Now, that is too crazy for words, if you can't be pleased for your colleague.'

Ros: 'You want people to share things. You get more out of cooperation.'

Bulte: 'Yes, our group thrives better on cooperation than on competition. Within our niche, by collaborating on big projects we can achieve unique results. That makes us of value to others as well. If I were to try and create a mi-

'Here people see science as a job; in America they see it as a mission'



Joris Sprakel, Physical Chemistry and Colloid Science.
Did post-doc research at Harvard University.
Received a Veni grant in 2011.

Dolf Weijers, Biochemistry.
Did post-doc research at
the University of Tübingen.
Received an ERC grant in 2011.

ni-Harvard in our group, based on internal competition, I would take away the one weapon we have.'

Sprakel: 'Nevertheless, I think that top-class scientists are competitive. And they are the ones who get your institution high on the Times Higher Education list.'

Weijers: 'Yes, that is an interesting point. Precisely because the wish has been expressed here to get ourselves higher up those lists. Perhaps these two things do not go together: a high ranking and a caring attitude towards each other.'

Sprakel: 'The governing body at Groningen wants to turn it into the Harvard of the Netherlands. A misguided ambition. People put themselves first and don't care about their staff. Compared to Harvard, precisely what I value in the Dutch model is that people who are struggling a bit can be carried along in the wake of others, because they are given some attention and coaching. I think it's nice to give someone a chance when they are going through a difficult period in their life.'

Bulte: 'I don't see us as competition for Harvard...'

Sprakel (laughing): 'Nor does Harvard, I should think!'

Bulte: 'We are too small for everything. We should stay in our niche, and do as well as we can there. Go beyond that, and we're overestimating ourselves.'

FLAT ORGANIZATION

Weijers: 'Something else: what I often wonder is whether




the very hierarchical system in the Netherlands affects the academic climate. You have mentioned American universities that have a very flat culture. Here the individual researcher has a very limited role to play in strategic decisions.'

Sprakel: 'As it happens we raised this issue just a month ago. Our chair holder is leaving. We have made a cautious proposal for a flat organization, to see how that would work in our lab. So instead of having one big kingpin, with everyone else standing somewhat in his or her shadow, everyone is equal and has a share of the financial responsibilities. But people are not open to this at present.'

Weijers: 'That is understandable from the organization's point of view. But if you are looking to create a stimulating climate, I think every ambitious researcher wants to take on some responsibility and get recognition for his successes.'

Bulte: 'If you ask me, it depends on the make-up of the group. If it gets some enlightened leadership from someone who can get 'a thousand flowers blooming', and who can sometimes persuade people to tackle things together, then things go very well. But if the group is led by a top dog who cannot or doesn't want to do this, it is deadly for everyone else.'

Sprakel: 'Exactly. That way, you stifle ambition. You really want everyone to progress as fast as possible on the strength of their own motivation.'

Weijers: 'I think that is a strong factor. Spreading responsibilities creates a stimulating academic climate. If people share the full range of responsibilities, including attracting funding, allocating budgets, appointing staff and running doctoral research, this provides a tremendous stimulus to do their best and to stay ambitious.' 


'We should stay in our niche, and do as well as we can there'

Vera Ros, Virology.
Did post-doc research at the University of Pennsylvania.
Received a Veni grant in 2011.





GET YOUR SKATES ON

Neck and neck. Exactly 160 metres in a straight line. And may the best man win. You can't say fairer than that. That's how it went last Sunday down by the Rhine at the Wageningen students' short track championships. And then to take a tumble just before the finishing line! Face to face with the ice. An end to a dream. But a stunning scene.  RK / photo Guy Ackermans

The ideal system

With the student population growing too fast for the housing provider to keep up with, Idealis has been an easy target over recent years. Which is not always justified, says Idealis director Hans van Medenbach. 'You can't just say, OK, we'll put up a student residence costing ten million.'

text: Linda van der Nat and Rob Goossens / **photo:** Guy Ackermans

An explosive rise in student numbers has put a lot of pressure on the room rental market in Wageningen in recent years. But the end is in sight, if Idealis gets its way. In its new business plan, the student housing provider outlines plans to build a thousand new rooms. It is also going to introduce a new, flexible rental system. Meanwhile, it seems as though the university and Idealis are drifting further apart: the university is planning to stop renting Idealis accommodation for foreign students and is looking for another partner for its building plans for the campus.

One thousand new rooms when only a few years ago the Rijnsteeg residence with 625 rooms was demolished... Is it hard to plan student accommodation?

'It is not as simple as you make it sound. Let me take you back in time for a moment. From 1990 to 2005, student numbers in Wageningen fell dramatically, against the general trend. At one point there was even talk of possibly closing the university. In 2005, we had 700 empty rooms, and the university itself predicted that numbers would not grow in the years following that. It was precisely at that moment that we had to decide whether to spend 7 to 8 million euros renovating the Rijnsteeg. In that context, it was a sensible decision to demolish the complex. But then suddenly, student numbers began to shoot up, by more than 10 percent per year. Then you soon see the pressure on accommodation going up. It is very difficult for us to keep adjusting in such a situation. Investments in real estate take place on a different time scale from the fluctuations in student numbers. After two years of growth you can't just say, OK, we'll just put up a student residence for the next 40 years, to the tune of 10 million. You have to weigh up the demand against the risks.'

You don't always seem to see eye to eye with the university on this issue. The university has even started to buy and rent out property as temporary accommodation for foreign students. And for the new student residence on campus they are looking for another partner – not Idealis. Are you still on speaking terms actually?

'Yes we are. Relations are better than they were a year ago. Then there was tension about the sale of land. We were keen to build for the growing student population, but as a social housing corporation we could not afford the astronomical prices that were being asked for land at the time. The university had a lot of land for sale itself, because of the move to campus. We said, if we could buy a small percentage of that for a reasonable price, we could get going. But we drew a blank. Go and talk to a developer, was the reply. With good reason, perhaps – like the university needing money for its new building plans. I can't see into the university's purse. But whatever the case, our hands were still tied. And meanwhile, they were still recruiting foreign students, which put pressure on the accommodation market. The university responded to that by buying up and renting out properties for temporary housing. Strikes me as an extremely pricy solution to a problem we could have prevented by doing a bit of extra building, but that was their choice.'

From Idealis's plans, it seems as though there are big projects in the offing again.

'Yes, that is thanks to the economic crisis. Land prices have plummeted because commercial projects are pretty much at a standstill. Student housing was always last in the line for the real estate sector, but now we are really the only party that is still investing in it at all. And so we can suddenly buy up first-class sites in the city which were always out of our reach before. And they do indeed take

'Investments in real estate take place on a different time scale from the fluctuations in student numbers'



priority for us over building on campus. Why? Firstly, in order to spread the risks. If student numbers fall again, small-scale complexes in the centre could be used for other target groups such as older people or singles. That way you can avoid a repeat of the Rijnsteeg demolition. Secondly, this is what our target group wants. Many of the older students and PhD students prefer to live in the town centre and at the moment only about 5 percent of our rooms are there. Whereas we actually already have quite a lot of rooms around the edge of the campus: Bornsesteeg, Dijkgraaf, Hoevestein. Even Droevendaal is practically on the campus.

It's fine by me that the university is considering going into business with another partner there. There is no need for us to be the only party on the housing market. As long as we keep each other informed in good time, and dovetail our building plans. Because then maybe we can scrap some of the projects on our list.'


The university is still renting 1,200 rooms from Idealis for foreign students. What is going to happen to them?

'Wageningen UR has indicated that it wants to stop doing that at the end of this contract period, on 1 January 2016. The argument is that having empty rooms on its hands is too expensive and that the university wants to abandon the room guarantee on such a large scale. I don't entirely understand that, given that Idealis covers most of the costs. From a business point of view, at least, I find it incomprehensible that the university wants to get rid of a rent agreement with what I can safely describe as the most favourable conditions in the Netherlands. But here again, no doubt Wageningen UR has reasons of its own, of which I am not always aware. The advantage of this for Idealis is that it gives us the chance to introduce a new rental system.'

And what is the new rental system precisely?

'In practice we often run into the problem of matching demand with supply. We have put all our target groups in neat boxes, à la the 1970s. There are rooms for first-years, for foreign students, and for PhD students, all with their own characteristics: simple for one group, more luxurious for the other, furnished for a third. We get a lot of criticism for this, so we are going to change it over the next five years. Soon everyone will be able to choose a complex, a room, and possibly furniture, on our website. It will be first come, first served. So a first-year from Uganda also has the option of going for a luxury apartment, if he can pay the rent. While a Dutch PhD student on a limited budget can opt for a smaller room on a corridor. There will be no distinction between courses of studies or nationalities. We are going to introduce this step by step in the coming years, with 2016 as the final changeover date.'

Will this mean the end of the 'campsite student' who has become a feature of the start of the academic year?

'I am not promising that. We will never have the capacity to completely absorb demand at that peak arrival time. The problem is that the arrivals are all within one month, whereas departures are spread over the whole year. If you build so many rooms that you can even absorb the peak demand, it means empty rooms over the rest of the year, with higher rents to make up for that. No one wants that. But more than a thousand new rooms over the next five years does constitute a considerable expansion. Our capacity will be fairly well adjusted to the real demand. I think we will be able to offer both students and the university an excellent starting point this way.' 

Hans van Medenbach: 'You have to weigh up the demand against the risks'



Whiff of death

Help, the frankincense tree is dying out! This, basically, was the message sent out just before Christmas by Professor Frans Bongers (Forest Ecology and Forest Management). And his SOS signal was no exaggeration, as his research shows.

text: Roelof Kleis / photos: Linear and Frans Bongers

The media responded en masse. 'I was on the phone almost continuously for a week.' The BBC alone reported the alarming threat to the Frankincense tree in six different programmes (including the World News). So the strategy worked. As expected, actually, Bongers recalls with satisfaction. Exactly the same thing happened a few years ago with a press release on the frankincense tree. It seems the combination of Christmas and frankincense is one journalists find irresistible. 'All because it's about frankincense', says Bongers. 'Frankincense is a fantastic product that gives everyone a good feeling. Frankincense is something that matters to hundreds of millions of people. One of the reasons is its symbolic function in religion. And not just in Christian circles, mind you. Muslims and Buddhists burn incense as well.'

SCAB TISSUE

Frankincense is resin from trees of the *Boswellia* family. The species in Ethiopia for which Bongers has sounded the alarm, is the *Boswellia papyrifera*. This tree accounts for more than 80 percent of the country's export of gum and resin. Resin is really a sort of scab tissue, Bongers explains. 'Harvesting is done by making little cuts in the tree's bark. The white fluid that is then emitted dries in the air; more or less the way a scab forms on a wound on your skin.' The comparison holds water: the resin has the same protective function as a scab does on a wound. Two weeks later, the resin is scraped off the tree and the process can begin all over again. The harvesting takes place in the dry season that lasts nine months. The heat makes it hard work, says Bongers.

Incense is a product of tropical dry forests. According to Bongers, they come in for much less attention than tropical wet forests. 'And yet they cover a gigantic area. Northern Ethiopian forests largely consist of frankincense trees. In other dry forests, Acacia gum is harvested, and

IN MONEY TERMS

Ethiopia is the world's leading exporter of frankincense. Both production and export have expanded massively in recent decades. At the end of the 20th century, about 1,700 tons of frankincense were being exported annually. Ten years later, this amount has almost quadrupled to

4,700 tons. About 80 percent of the frankincense currently gets shipped abroad, the bulk of it to China, where it is used in medicines. The price of frankincense depends on the quality. Top quality frankincense fetches 5,000 dollars per ton, while the poorest quality

goes for 2,000 dollars or even less. So the kilo price is anywhere between 2 and 5 dollars, giving it only marginal economic value. Bongers estimates the value of Ethiopia's total exports of frankincense at less than 12 million dollars.

elsewhere there is myrrh.' The *Boswellia* family includes 19 species. The best quality incense traditionally came from the Arabian peninsula, from Oman and Yemen, or from a country known in the old sources as Puntland. 'This is probably what is now northern Somalia, but no one knows for sure. We are talking here about Biblical frankincense or *Boswellia sacra*. But production in Oman and Yemen is on its last legs. The trees have been felled and there is no regeneration going on. At the moment, Ethiopia is the biggest producer in this region. Production is spread over the entire northern region of the country. That is where we find the populations of *Boswellia papyrifera* which we are studying.'

SACRED SMOKE

The word frankincense is derived from words for 'sacred smoke'. Frans Bongers divulges that he served as an acolyte in church himself in his younger days. But that is not the reason for his interest in the *Boswellia* family. This dates back to the mid-nineteen nineties when an Eritrean

'Frankincense is a fantastic product that gives everyone a good feeling'



In 50 years only 10 percent of the current population of frankincense trees will be left.

Saplings no longer get the chance to grow up into adult trees


student knocked on his door, asking him to supervise a PhD research on frankincense trees in Eritrea. A visit to Ethiopia in 2003 led two years later to a long-term research programme on the fortunes of the frankincense tree in Ethiopia. The ensuing studies have produced four whole PhD theses on frankincense in the last six months. Hence the SOS sent out in December. The frankincense tree is under threat. The trees are dying out at a rate of seven percent per year in the populations studied. The question is why. Bongers suspects that the long-horn beetle (*Idactus spinipennis*) plays a role. 'This insect has become more and more common in recent years, according to the locals. But of course, the question is: are there more insects because more trees are dying or are more trees dying because there are more insects? Which is the cause and which is the effect? We don't know.'

HALVED OVER 17 YEARS

Tree deaths are not such a problem if regeneration goes on. But this is not happening. Bongers: 'There are no saplings left. In the whole of northern Ethiopia I could only find one place where regeneration was going on. Saplings no longer get the chance to grow up into adult trees.' The reasons for this are known: overgrazing, deforestation for agriculture, and burning. Then there is the fact that the frankincense trees are tapped more and more intensively to boost production. All that tapping weakens the trees, as PhD researcher Tefera Mengistu Woldie demonstrated. He researched the influence of tapping on the frankincense tree's carbon balance. After all, tapping means a loss for the tree. Carbon that is tapped is no longer available for growth, for reserve formation in leaves

and roots, or for flowering and seed production. His conclusion is clear: Intensive harvesting leads to fewer vital trees and hence to more deaths.

The decline of the frankincense tree is reflected in hard figures. Bongers: 'From our model studies you can see that only 10 percent of the current population will be left in 50 years' time. Frankincense production in those forests has been halved in 17 years. So something must be done to save the frankincense tree.' Bongers has already put forward several proposals. In the first instance, the way the harvesting is organized needs to be changed. It is currently too focused on the short term. 'So concessions should no longer be granted for one of two years of harvesting, but for much longer periods. Then farmers and cooperatives will be forced to think more long-term.'

Secondly, frankincense trees should be better protected against felling and fires. 'That demands rigorous control, and I can't see that happening for the time being, although it is badly needed', says Bongers, thinking aloud. One alternative is to establish plantations, but that would require some major investments. And frankincense trees grow slowly. Woldie argues for strict guidelines for both the number of taps per tree and the harvesting rate. Sustainable production, says Woldie, needs to be based on the tree's carbon balance. 'And of course we must also analyse the role played by the long-horn beetle in the deaths and see what we can do about that', adds Bongers. He does not see the *Boswellia* research as finished, by a long way. But he is not short of willing helpers. His alarm has had an impact. 'This month I received several applications from Ethiopians wanting to come and do a PhD on it here.' 

'I WANTED TO GIVE WAGENINGEN A HIPPER IMAGE'

From an association with agriculture to the life sciences. From paper pamphlets to instant tweets. From docile citizens to outspoken critics. As head of Communications, Viola Peulen led Wageningen UR into the brave new world of modern communications. Now she's moving on.

'If it suits people, they'll listen to their auntie rather than to a professor'

'Am I no longer happy here? Because I'm moving on? This isn't a research job; I've been working here for over six years and there comes a day when you suddenly realize you've got into a cycle: here we go again with this or that... Then it's time for a change. Good for me and refreshing for the organization.' So Viola Peulen, director of Corporate Communications and Marketing, is moving on 1 March to Nijmegen, to put the St Radboud University Medical Centre on the map. 'Yes, another institute that combines education with research', she says. 'And there is a lot going on in the health care sector: working with market forces, developing centres of expertise – these are the challenges. I am not interested in developing further in a management position; I would rather do content-related work within my subject area.'

Peulen currently leads about 80 people from the head office, but even in Wageningen she has found time to engage with the core work too. She looks back with pride on

such achievements as the development of the intranet, Wageningen World, and the Food for Thought fundraising campaign. But most of all, on her first main task: getting rid of the last traces of an association with old-style agriculture that still stuck to Wageningen UR. 'The 'You'll wake up in Wageningen' recruitment campaign that was running then made you hear cockerels crowing in the farmyard. I wanted to give Wageningen a hipper image.'

It worked out well: student numbers soared to 80 per cent more than when Peulen arrived. 'I am quite proud of that, but you must keep it in proportion. We had a lot of things going for us: the beautiful new Forum building, the fact that our themes were marketable, and don't forget that although we at Communications make sure Wageningen stays in the picture, it's the people who run the programmes who convince the high school students at the open days.'

STOMACH ACHE

But it hasn't been all sweetness and light over the past six years. 'The call for tenders for *Resource* in 2008 gave me sleepless nights and stomach ache', she recalls. 'Particularly the inaccurate reports that we were aiming at a commercial magazine. As if that was something the organization would want. I was able to postpone the Europe-wide tender for a couple of years, but then it had to happen. It was not planned in advance that the tender submitted by Cereales, the publisher of *Resource* at the time, did not come out top.'


The way the organization came under fire last year, in Zembla over the bee research for instance, is all in the game, says Peulen. 'The social context has changed. Increasingly, people with different stances on an issue try to use research results for their own ends. If it suits them, they give more credence to their auntie than to an eminent professor. And everything spreads around the world at lightning speed on the internet or through Twitter. What we've got in Wageningen is invaluable, but we need to give more thought to what we present to the public, and how, who will react to it and what the consequences could be.' She is not in favour of making a distinction between communication about the university and about the more commercially oriented institutions. 'That unity is our strength, but we must make clear to the public every time again what sort of research is in question, who did it and who commissioned it', says Peulen. 'When I first came here we still worked with collections of newspaper cuttings', she says. 'Now we have a webcare system that automatically tracks any tweets about us and detects whether the tone is positive or negative. We then get going on a webcare, responding or inviting someone in for a cup of coffee. Gone are the days when communications personnel could take a day to mull over a press release.'  Rik Nijland



PHOTO: GUY ACKERMANS

SURVIVING EDE'S BLEAK MIDWINTER

Since last August, a number of international students have been housed in the Prince Maurits barracks in Ede. They feared the bleak Dutch winters. So how are they faring now that the frost has kicked in?

Soldiers out, students in. A nice solution to the shortage of rooms. Or is it? In November, the students made in known, including in Resource, that although they were satisfied with the accommodation, they were less happy with the distance between their barracks and the university.

A delegation from the university paid a visit, as promised. Emma from England, who was a spokesperson at the time, was quite impressed. Not that the shuttle bus service the students wanted has materialized. 'That didn't surprise us. But it was disappointing that there was no follow-up at all after the visit.' For this reason, three quarters of the students have left, according to Emma. She can un-



PHOTOS: GUY ACKERMANS

derstand it. 'It is a pity to live so far from Wageningen. We miss a lot.'

PARTIES

But apart from the distance, the students are having a good time in Ede. Emma: 'The facilities are fantastic.' For 333 euros a month, the tenants get 13 m2, furniture,

brand-new showers and kitchen utensils. The units are even cleaned for them. Each unit has 17 rooms, but on most corridors only 10 of them are occupied. The doors to all the units are left open and everyone joins in the parties. Juen from China says: 'In comparison with Wageningen student houses, it is obvious that social life there revolves very much around your own unit. We also have a bigger kitchen, which is important for having a lot of contact with each other.' Dmitri from Bulgaria agrees. 'We eat together with other units too, and there are parties every week.' Is this enough reason to stay? 'In the end', says Gerard from Benin, 'you have to weigh up the advantages against the disadvantages. In Benin we also formed a community made up of many students who lived far from the university, just like here. If you build up a strong relationship with your housemates, you don't want to leave any more.'

DANCING IN THE SNOW

Things haven't got that far yet in the unit where Paula from Colombia lives. Most of the students here have just arrived in the Netherlands and are still getting over the culture shock at the quiet, wooded barracks compound. They have co-

me to do a two-year Master's degree, and are just getting to know each other around the kitchen table.

But Emma's unit is full of exchange students who go home again after six months. Over a period of five months the unit has been home to 35 students of 23 nationalities. Now there are eight nationalities, including Canadians, a Dane, an Ethiopian and a Bengali. With so many cultures together, don't you get friction? Emma: 'No, actually, we get on well together.' Take the Brazilians. 'They are great', says Emma. 'They always switch to English if you are in the room, even if you are not in conversation with each other. I have a lot of respect for that.'

The Brazilians themselves are finding the cold a bit hard to cope with. Natalia: 'Yesterday I cycled as far as the barracks gate, but I turned around. I felt that I wouldn't make it to Wageningen.' They were just about getting used to 7 degrees (above zero). 'That was cold enough for us.' Then it started to snow and they forgot the cold for a while. 'The first snow we had ever seen', says Natalia, still savouring the memory. 'At midnight we were out there dancing and shouting with excitement, in our pyjamas.' **Irene Boers**



International students in the Prince Maurits barracks in Ede.

How big will Dutch students' debts get?

From next academic year, a lot is going to change for Dutch students, and Master's students are going to be especially hard hit. A fine on slow students is being introduced and the basic grant is being replaced with a student loan system. The right to a free public transport card will be held for a shorter time too. Students can expect to run up higher debts.

What is the scrapping of the basic grant going to cost a typical Dutch student?

A Master's student who applies for a basic grant after 1 August 2012 will be offered a loan. This will apply even to those who have already started on a Master's programme. For students living away from home, this adds about 3,200 euros to the costs of studying; for those living at home it adds about 1,200 euros. Wageningen is particularly hard hit by these measures, as all the Master's degrees here are

two year programmes.

What about the means-related supplementary grant?

The supplementary grant will continue for the duration of the Master's, but then it stops. So those getting a supplementary grant during their Bachelor's will go on getting it during their Master's.

Until when will students have free public transport cards?

Cuts are being made here too. Up to now, students got a public transport pass for the duration of their studies (Bachelor's and Master's) plus three more years. From September 2012, that will be cut down to their student years plus one year.

When does someone incur a slow student fine?

This is perhaps the government's most notorious new measure. Students will incur a fine if they are more than one year late in

finishing their Bachelor's or Master's degrees. The fine is a little over 3,000 euros per year and has to be paid by all slow students from September 2012.

Will those doing a Master's in the Social Sciences incur extra hefty debts?

These Masters' are seen by the government as one-year programmes, not as two-year programmes. Luckily, the university is going to compensate students for the first fine of 3,000 euros, partly thanks to the campaigning of the student council. One small disappointment: the university will not be compensating students for the loss of the free public transport pass.

So how big a debt are Dutch students likely to run up?

It depends of course how long they take over their degrees, and where they live. In the best case scenario, you graduate on schedu-

le and you live at home. Then you only need to borrow for two years, and your total debt will be about 2,400 euros. In the worst case scenario, you live out, you are doing social sciences and you take two years extra over both your Bachelor's and your Master's. Then you'll pay the fine twice and you have to borrow even more during the extension period on your Bachelor's and for the whole of your Master's. That means six years. Your debt will be roughly 25,200 euros. Add to that the fact that you have to pay for public transport during the last four years, and that you'll have to pay interest (albeit low) on the whole loan. If your name is Maxime Verhagen [Dutch minister of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation, ed.] and you spend ten years studying history, you'll just have to hope you'll earn enough to pay off your debt of 43,600 euros within the maximum term of 20 years. **KvdA**

Dijkgraaf students fear intruders

Students living on the ground floor of the Dijkgraaf residence in Wageningen no longer feel safe in their rooms. They want Idealis to take steps against potential housebreakers.

This came out at the beginning of February during a meeting organized by the student housing provider after a recent wave of break-ins at the student residence. In recent weeks, six rooms on the ground floor have been broken into, or an attempt has been made to break in. There have also been break-ins at the Bornsesteeg and at Droevendaal. The ten residents who came to the meeting at the building's bar, the Bunker, no longer feel safe in their rooms. 'It has happened twice now that I was lying in bed in

the evening and saw people trying to force open my window. It's got beyond a joke', says one of the students. One of the residents came home from a night away to find a brick on her pillow. The students want Idealis to address the security problem by installing lighting, metal blinds and CCTV cameras.

The neighbourhood police officer who attended the meeting emphasized the students' own responsibilities. 'Keep your valuables out of sight and close windows and doors when you are out of the room. Call the police, certainly in the coming weeks, if you see or hear anything suspicious. All information is welcome.'

Jan Harkema, head of Accommodation at Idealis, promised the students to send round a letter



PHOTO: EMMA TEULING

Emergency repairs to a broken window at the Dijkgraaf.

soon, with tips and important telephone numbers. The student housing provider has also agreed with the police that they will patrol the area more frequently. 'In the

long term will be look into the possibilities for extra lighting or blinds. We want to show that we are taking it seriously.' **LvdN**

ICE THIEF

The polar ice and glaciers are melting due to climate change. At least, that is what scientists have thought up to now. But maybe something else is going on. A man in Chile was arrested with a 5,200 kilo block of ice in his freezer truck. He is thought to have hacked it out of a glacier in Patagonia. He wanted to make designer ice cubes and sell them to local restaurants. Make mine a Melting Iceberg. Shaken, not stirred.



CHILL

It is cold out. Sweet 16 and just had a few beers. The pub closes and there you are on the street with your friends. 'Dare you to French-kiss that lamppost.' 'Course!' This bright spark had to be prized off the lamppost by the police, with the help of warm water. Talk about frozen stiff.

WSO and PSF are launching a new student union: Pulse

It had been a Facebook rumour for some time but the official launch is next week. The Wageningen Student Union (WSO) and the Progressive Student Party (PSF) will be merging to form Pulse.

In the launch week, Pulse will be organizing an evening of debate on student accommodation on Monday 13 February and a big party in 't Gat a day later. On Thursday evening there will be drinks in Arion, with someone from the National Students' Union (LSVb) explaining

the new government measures.


The merger between the student union and the Student Council party has been quite a challenge for the interim chairperson Romy Appelmann over the past few months. 'It is very confusing because we share the same name but are actually two different organizations. Pulse aims to improve conditions for students. One way of doing that is by influencing university policy through the Student Council. We prefer to have a separate board for that task so that the Student Council members are free

to operate independently from the student union.'

THINK TANK

Pulse will be in a transitional phase until the summer. Appelmann wants to concentrate on getting the union functioning properly over the coming period. Former WSO services such as the second-hand bookshop, the delivery bikes and the working groups will get a new lease of life. Appelmann says the working groups will be at the heart of Pulse. 'They will be actively tackling specific student is-

suues such as accommodation, internationalization and education. These working groups are our think tanks, as it were, since they are closely involved in student life.'

It is not yet clear where the new union will have its headquarters. 'WSO was supposed to move from Arion to the Building with the Clock but it would be better for the Student Council party to be in Forum because of the meetings. A solution might be difficult to find because there is not much room in Forum. We are still in discussions about this with the university.'  LvdN

FOR AND AGAINST

Proposition: Student residences on campus. Surely no one wants that?




MARLIES: It is common knowledge that new student accommodation is urgently needed. Where it comes makes very little difference to me. If for whatever reason the campus is the most attractive location, perhaps because land is too expensive in the town centre, that's fine by me. It seems to me unlikely that the students who live there will never show their faces in town. All the main student societies and pubs are still in town. And already, three of the four main student residences are very close to the campus. So I don't really understand what is against housing students there. I certainly think it is much more important that new accommodation is built than exactly where it is built.

JILLIS RESPONDS: I agree with you that the main thing is for more student accommodation to be built, but I do think it's OK to look a bit critically at the choice of location. Of course there are big blocks of flats on the edge of town already, but if you build even more, you create a sort of surrogate centre. Now there is to be a shop on campus, later there'll be catering outlets, and then the businesses in the town centre will be in trouble. It's only logical to first fill in the ugly derelict sites in town!



JILLIS: As I recall, a year or two ago the Wageningen town council decided not to allow the building of any student housing on campus. And now the discussion has blown up again. The best argument against is that the centre of Wageningen will become quieter and emptier, which will deprive food outlets and many other businesses of custom. What is more, there are several disused sites around the town, which are an eyesore (Kirpestein, the fire station, the Shell site). If someone built student housing there, the centre would stay lively, these ugly scars on the landscape would be removed and Wageningen would still have the atmosphere of a student town. Having hundreds of students whose knowledge of Wageningen doesn't go beyond the campus, the Forum and the bus stop won't do anything for the town's atmosphere.

MARLIES RESPONDS: There are still loads of students living in town anyway. And I have yet to meet a student who never goes beyond a radius of 1 km from their own house. And I am a bit surprised to find a conservative like you suddenly in favour of government intervention in this case.  LvdN

ICE FORMULA

How fast does ice grow? Google *ijsgroei formule* (ice growth formula) and you'll find a 2001 publication by the Meteorology and Air Quality chair group. These scientists developed a formula for ice growth. It boils down to: the growth rate of the ice is equal to the square root of the time. Got it? In other words: for ice to double in thickness you need four times the time. And the right kind of weather.

DAUGHTERS

It's not going to happen. But it's still best to be prepared. Hence this tip: Frisian for *Elfstedentocht* skaters. (If you don't know what we are talking about, where have you been?) A must-have, if only for the legendary sentence: *Hawwe jo noch mear dochters?* (Do you have any more daughters?) Out of print, sadly. Try the second-hand bookshops.



PHOTO: GUY ACKERMANS

WANT TO BUY A BIKE? More than 110 new students, most of them international, descended on Wageningen in Monday to get a taster of student life and the town. The second semester starts on 13 February. To give them an optimal start to Dutch student life, IxESN was offering second-hand bicycles for 80 euros apiece. Twenty of the students took the plunge straightaway but others needed a special (i.e. smaller) model. They will have to wait another couple of days. **Ⓡ NM**



'THEY WERE EXTREMELY AGGRESSIVE'

Reports in the news suggested it was a mugging. What really happened?

'My boyfriend Andrea came to visit me that weekend. We drank some beers in the city centre. On our way back home we were attacked by four guys of about seventeen years old. They also stole my bag, but that was not their intention at first. They were really aggressive and beat and kicked us.'

How did they know you were gay?

'We don't really look straight. You know, well dressed. And we were pushing each other and playing around.'

Walking with our arms around each other's shoulders. When they insulted us for being gay I turned around and said: I'm gay, what's your problem?'

How are you now?

'Physically we are fine. We both had bruises and a sore back. Andrea had to get stitches above his eye. I still live in Dijkgraaf where my corridor mates have been really nice. I have no intention of moving away from here. In Italy we are used to this kind of incident, unfortunately.' **Ⓡ NM**

Who? Lorenzo Locci, studies Plant biotechnology

What? Got beaten up by a group of guys near his student flat in Wageningen

Why? Because he's gay

When? Saturday 21 January

>> CULT

What? Fundraising auction to keep Movie W going
Where? LA13
When? Friday 10, Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 February
Tip from Roelof Kleis, Resource editor

Shimra Golan with one of her own works up for auction.



Artistic fundraiser

Everyone wants Movie W to stay, but who is doing anything to make it happen? Shimra Golan is. This Israeli artist is organizing an art auction to raise funds for the film house. At her request, a number of artists from the Wageningen area have offered some of their own works for nothing. All the proceeds will go to Movie W. The art works have been trickling in to the gallery at Heerenstraat 11 over the past few weeks. Shimra Golan started her one-room gallery – The True Limpet – six months ago. The first of its kind in Wageningen city centre, and a praiseworthy initiative in itself. The auction is her way of trying to keep Movie W running. ‘It would be a disaster for the town if the film house closed down’, she feels. The works to be auctioned are a ragbag of different genres. From paintings of all kinds to a 3D object that could be described as a piece of jewellery made of maize flour. There is a minimum price on each piece, but what they will really fetch will be revealed this weekend when they are moved to LA13. Bidding will go on throughout the weekend of the Movie W festival. Shimra does not expect to raise millions, but every little helps. **R**

>> THE WORKS

KARAOKE ON THE PHILIPPINES

Who? Jasper van der Pijl, MSc Plant Sciences

What? A fertilizer study on different doses of phosphor for tomatoes

Where? East West Seed, Lipa City, the Philippines

Why? My trip to Thailand last year made me enthusiastic about South-East Asia.

‘Here in the Philippines I feel completely at home, although a curly-haired bloke two metres tall is not something you see every day. The first two questions I was asked when I arrived were: how tall are you? And: so do you play basketball?’

I arrived just before Christmas. They celebrate it very differently here. No Christmas drinks parties, but a whole evening of watching singing and dancing. And needless to say, the karaoke equipment gets wheeled out! I joined in a few performances myself, including a traditional folk dance. Even my rendering of the Dutch song ‘Shalalie, shalala’ was appreciated, and is still sung in the office every now and then.

I am staying just outside Lipa City, about one and a half hours’ drive from the capital, Manila. My trial is in full swing at the research station. The tomato varieties have been given different doses of phosphor and now we are waiting to see how this affects the final yields. Because the planting didn’t go entirely according to plan, I discovered that the peo-

ple here are not as direct as Dutch people. A ‘yes’ doesn’t necessarily mean that something will be done, and no one ever really says ‘no’. And yet the business culture suits me very well, and relations with colleagues are very cordial. Several times a week we go out for a meal or a night out, or we go for a hike or to do some sightseeing. You get to places which you would never normally see as a tourist.

It is a great experience to have this sort of contact with the Philippines. For instance, I was allowed to stay in the house of my colleague’s parents-in-law, where he lives in with them, along with his wife, children, brothers-in-law, sisters and their children. It is hectic, but also incredibly convivial and it’s lovely to see such close family ties. **R 50**





PAN <<

The legend of 63

Elfstedentocht, the 11-city ice skating tour, has recently dominated the headlines of all the Dutch newspapers. Inevitably it's associated with a movie, *De hel van 63*. I'd like to give just one word of advice on it: must-see.

The film is based on the Elfstedentocht of 1963: four heroes, joining the 200km marathon with different backgrounds and goals, meet in the howling snowstorm. With strong resolution, love and friendship, they trudge through blood, tears and all hardships, finally to cross the finishing line in Leeuwarden.

Even though the plot is a bit Hollywoodish, that little flaw will not outweigh the merits of the film. It's an encyclopedic epic containing many typical Dutch emblems: pannenkoeken, the UNOX snert or erwtensoep (pea soup), the Verkade snack, the Friese doorloper (Frisian skates). All of these, I guess, could easily strike a chord in Dutch hearts. In brief, Dutch genes can be seen everywhere in the film.

I especially appreciate that in the movie they speak Fries, the dialect in the north province Friesland, which ironically makes subtitles necessary for some Dutch people. This provides a stark contrast to Mr. Spielberg's Oscar favourite 'War Horse', in which the German and French always speak English. Now I understand why not everyone buys what Hollywood sells; sometimes it's true that small is better.

Previously I'd watched 'Zwartboek' (Black Book), a more famous made-in-Holland film, but with Chinese dubbing. This time, although it was my first time to see a Dutch movie without dubbing or subtitles, I managed to get goose bumps from the straightforward dialogues and emotional music. And for the first time the Dutch showed me they can also do something serious: to chase a small badge for the spiritual glory.

For the sake of the economic crisis, please dear 22 rayonhoofden (regional heads in Friesland), could you play some magic and make the legend revive in the coming days? **Pan Deli**

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 2012/2013 election will be held from Monday 21 May 2012, 00:00 hrs to Tuesday 29 May 2012, 23:59 hrs inclusive. The complete time 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 16 February 2012 inclusive, with the Secretary of the Student Council, Hermijn Speelman, Droevendaalsesteeg 4 (Room D 109), P.O. Box 9101, 6700 HB Wageningen.

INFO: SSC ONLINE AND EDUWEB

OFFERS AND REQUESTS

Offers and requests for goods, voluntary work and paid work for students and staff. Send no more than 75 words to resource@wur.nl, with 'Wanted/On Offer' as subject, on the Thursday before publication.

Organizer for Science Cafe

Science Cafe Wageningen is looking for an enthusiastic student to join its team! Someone who would like to help with promotion activities such as distributing invites, keeping the website up to date and taking photos. The team of organizers consists of seven students and members of staff.

We meet once a month.

SCIENCECAFEWAGENINGEN@GMAIL.COM

agenda

Thursday 9 February, 20.45h TINEKE POSTMA CONCERT

The Tineke Postma Quartet will be playing on the Jazz In Wageningen Foundation stage in the Rotonde Room in Hotel De Wageningsche Berg. Tineke Postma won the pres-

tigious Edison Jazz National Award for her album Dawn of Light.

WWW.JAZZINWAGENINGEN.NL

Weekend of 10, 11 and 12 February MOVIEWEEKEND FILM FESTIVAL

The one and only Movie Weekend Wageningen Film Festival is here again! The arthouse cinema Movie W, at Lawickse Allee 13, is organizing a film festival with 19 films and documentaries, tasty nibbles, drinks and lots more. The films include the children's film Fantastic Mr Fox in English and Dutch (free admission for kids aged up to 8), the dance documentary Pina (2D), Ouwehoeren [old tarts], 900 Dagen [900 days], Black Swan and a special German silent classic with live musical accompaniment by Kevin Toma (admission €10).

VOOR MEER INFO: WWW.MOVIE-W.NL
RESERVEREN: 0317-484809 INFO@MOVIE-W.NL

Saturday 11 February, 15.00h PIANORECITAL

The Amsterdam pianist, composer and author Frederic Voorn will be playing a number of 'hidden masterpieces' in the Old Church in Bennekom. The programme includes music by Carl Philip Emanuel Bach (the most famous son of the Bach), Beethoven and others.

WWW.FREDERICVOORN.NL

Tuesday 14 February, 20.00h THE CITIES ARE HUNGRY, THE COUNTRYSIDE IS EMPTYING

Prof Eric Smaling, an expert on Africa, and Madelon Meijer from Oxfam-Novib will be among the speakers discussing 'Food in Africa: dramas and opportunities' in the series of debates on the topic of global food in the Rode Hoed. Discussion leader: Felix Rottenberg. With free nibbles by top chef Eric van Veluwen.

WWW.RODEHOED.NL - WWW.CLM.NL

Tuesday 14 February, 21.00h 'SILENT SNOW' WITH INTRODUCTION

Heerenstraat Theatre will be showing the powerful documentary Silent Snow by director and Golden Calf winner Jan van den Berg. The director will introduce the documentary and answer questions afterwards. Silent Snow deals with

the serious consequences of the use of pesticides for people's health around the world.

WWW.HEERENSTRAATTHEATER.NL

Wednesday 15 February, 20.15h CONCERT BY DUTCH STUDENT ORCHESTRA

The 106 students in the 2012 Dutch Student Orchestra will be in De Harmonie in Leeuwarden, performing Le Sacre du Printemps by Stravinsky and Tzigane by Ravel (with Emmy Storms on violin). They will also be in De Vereeniging, Nijmegen on 16 February and Vredenburg, Utrecht on 18 February.

WWW.NSO.NL

Thursday 1, Friday 17 February DE ONTZETTING CONCERT

Student orchestra De Ontzetting from Wageningen will be staging its six-monthly concerts for donors; this time this will be in preparation for its tour of China at the end of 2012. The orchestra primarily consists of enthusiastic stu-

dents from Wageningen University and is still growing, with currently more than 60 members. The programme includes El Camino Real by Alfred Reed, Cuban Overture by George Gershwin, the Candide Suite by Leonard Bernstein and more. Several pieces will be performed with vocalist Kyra van Camerijk, including I've Got You Under My Skin and Fly Me To The Moon. The concerts, presented by Jean-Pierre Gabriël, will take place in the Aula of Wageningen University (on Thursday) and in Junushoff Theatre in Wageningen (on Friday), and both begin at 8.15pm.

WWW.ONTZETTING.WUR.NL

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(Junior) Onderzoeker Agrobiodiversiteit (80%)

U werkt aan projecten op het gebied van akkerbouw (natuurlijke plaagbeheersing) en melkveehouderij (teelt van grasland en voedergewassen, en mineralenkringlopen).

Heeft u een universitaire opleiding op de gebieden melkveehouderij, akkerbouw, agro-ecologie (of aanverwant) afgerond en enige jaren ervaring met projectmatig werken, ziet u het als een uitdaging bijeenkomsten te houden met mensen uit de praktijk, dan nodigen wij u van harte uit te solliciteren.

De uitgebreide vacaturetekst is te vinden op onze website www.louisbolk.nl. Voor inhoudelijke informatie kunt u contact opnemen met Jan Paul Wagenaar, afdelingshoofd Dier & Omgeving j.wagenaar@louisbolk.nl of tel. 0343-523860. U kunt uw sollicitatie tot 20 februari 2012 (bij voorkeur per e-mail) sturen aan Claudia van den Tweel, c.vandentweel@louisbolk.nl of per post aan het Louis Bolk Instituut, afdeling HRM, Hoofdstraat 24, 3972 LA Driebergen.

de natuurlijke kennisbron

EEN (LICHT) VERHOOGDE BLOEDDRUK?

Onderzoekers van de afdeling Humane Voeding zijn op zoek naar personen met een (licht) verhoogde bloeddruk die mee willen doen aan de KaNa-trial.

In de KaNa-trial worden de effecten van de mineralen natrium (keukenzout) en kalium op de bloeddruk, bloedvaten en nierfunctie onderzocht.

U KUNT DEELNEMEN ALS U:

- 40 jaar of ouder bent
- een (licht) verhoogde bloeddruk heeft
- niet rookt
- geen medicijnen/bloeddrukverlagers gebruikt die van invloed zijn op het onderzoek
- geen chronische ziekte heeft, zoals diabetes

WAT HOUDT HET ONDERZOEK IN?

- 3 maanden een volledig verstrekte voeding nuttigen
- in deze periode op werkdagen tussen de middag op de universiteit eten
- dagelijks 8 capsules met mineralen of placebo innemen
- 4 testochtenden (duur: 2 uur) ondergaan
- 5 hele dagen urine verzamelen
- 4 hele dagen een bloeddrukmeter dragen

WAT STAAT ER TEGENOVER?

- een financiële vergoeding van € 500,-
- 3 maanden gratis voeding
- u levert een belangrijke bijdrage aan wetenschappelijk onderzoek

WANNEER?

Het onderzoek duurt 3 maanden en vindt plaats tussen maart en juli 2012.

INTERESSE?

Kijk dan op: <http://voedingsonderzoek.wur.nl/kana> of neem contact op met ons.

Ir. Lieke Gijsbers of Ir. James Dower. email: KaNa@wur.nl, telefoon: 0317-485989



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Working on the quality of life

Wageningen UR zoekt:

Analist Fysica en fysische chemie van levensmiddelen

AFSG Fysica en Fysische chemie levensmiddelen ATV, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: AFSG-FPH-0002

PhD Haloperoxidases

AFSG Valorisatie plantaard.produktieketens ATV, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: AFSG-VPP-0006

Postdoc Soft Matter Science

AFSG Fysische Chemie en Kolloïdkunde ATV, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: AFSG-PCC-0015

Medewerker International Student Support

BC Corporate Education & Research, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: BC-0010

Medewerker studenten administratie

BC Corporate Education & Research, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: BC-0011

Functioneel IT applicatie manager SIS

FB IT Information Systems, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: FB-0019

Regioteamleider Wageningen

FB IT Services, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: FB-0002-12

Bioinformatics Research Assistant

PSG business unit Bioscience, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: PSG-BIOS-0009

Research Technician in Plant Metabolomics

PSG business unit Bioscience, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: PSG-BIOS-0010

PhD position 'Understanding the mechanisms of drought tolerance in rice' (2 PhDs)

PSG Laboratorium voor Plantenfysiologie, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: PSG-PPH-0008

PhD position 'The role of strigolactones in the adaptation of rice to phosphate shortage'

PSG Laboratorium voor Plantenfysiologie, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: PSG-PPH-0009

Senior Adviseur Subsidies & Contracten

SSG afdeling Liaison Office, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: SSG-LO-0005

Assistant professor Environmental Sociology / Political Sciences (Tenure Track)

SSG Environmental Policy, Wageningen
Vacaturenummer: SSG-ENP-0006

Secretaresse

SSG LEI Secretariaat Onderzoeksvelden, Den Haag
Vacaturenummer: SSG-LEI-SECR-0003

Administratief Medewerker Agrarisch

SSG LEI BIN, Oisterwijk
Vacaturenummer: SSG-LEI-BIN-0005

Persvoorlichter/Adviseur Externe Communicatie

SSG LEI Afdeling Communicatie, Den Haag
Vacaturenummer: SSG-LEI-COM-0000



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>>TYPICAL DUTCH



ILLUSTRATIE: HENK VAN RUITENBEEK


Facing the frost Dutch fashion

Don't be astonished – not at all – if you see some Dutch women not covering their heads in winter. Not even when it's snowy, rainy and windy.

During my one year stay in Wageningen, I have never yet seen a Dutch woman covering her head. Interestingly though, they do love to wrap their necks in big, warm shawls and mufflers.

Since coming to Wageningen, I have now and then recalled my mom's words in winter times: 'Don't forget to cover your head. Protect it from the cold. You will soon catch a cold if you don't.' I wished I could pass on my mom's suggestion to my Dutch female friends. But, despite being so curious, I could never dare to ask them the hidden reason behind not covering their heads.

I could not be so timid for long, though. Once, on an excursion to Biofach in Germany, I was having coffee with a Dutch woman teacher. The weather was extremely cold. Wrapping her neck in a nice big brown muffler, she said, 'It's too cold today, isn't it?' I nodded, 'Yes, too cold'. Immediately I thought: now is the right time to satisfy my curiosity. After hearing me, she smiled and responded, 'In fact, we also feel the cold on our heads. But it doesn't look nice if we cover our heads. And wrapping something around the neck is in fashion.' I wondered and I still wonder: Can fashion beat the cold?

I am embracing Dutch fashion this winter too. Hope it works.  **Menila Kharel, MSc student of Organic Agriculture, from Nepal**

You have to suffer to be beautiful, says a Dutch proverb. Or shiver.

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.