

CORONAVIRUS

WUR sets up platform aimed at preventing pandemics

WUR has set up the research and investment platform ERRAZE@WUR with the aim of learning from the coronavirus crisis and stopping new pandemics in time. The programme combines relevant knowledge from various disciplines.

ERRAZE — Early Recognition and Rapid Action in Zoonotic Emergencies — is a Wageningen platform bringing together virologists, ecologists, economists, animal scientists and communication scientists, among others, says programme coordinator Joukje Siebenga. ‘We want to be better prepared for the next outbreak of a dangerous, contagious virus and reduce the chance of such an outbreak where possible.’ WUR wants to prevent future pandemics from having the same devastating effects as Covid-19 and in particular to better understand zoonoses — pathogens

that can be transmitted from animals to humans. ‘Wageningen Bioveterinary Research already does a lot of research on zoonoses — how they infect the host and how they spread,’ says Siebenga. ‘We also know a lot in Wageningen about the ecology of wild and domestic animals, about the agrifood system, the economic impact of an outbreak and risk communication. We are now combining all that knowledge.’

For example, WUR wants to get a better picture of places where wild animals come into contact with farm animals, pets and people.

This includes not just wet markets where live wild animals are sold but also areas in tropical rainforests where livestock farming is on the rise, and intensive livestock farming in the Netherlands. Using knowledge about climate change and changes in land use, the scientists will be able to keep track of shifts in these hot spots.

The WUR knowledge obtained through ERRAZE@WUR can also help detect unknown viruses faster by focusing surveillance on the hot spots, for example targeting virus families with a zoonotic risk. That requires more collaboration between virologists and epidemiologists on the one hand and behavioural scientists and economists on the other. Info: ludo.hellebrekers@wur.nl



PHOTO ILIRI / CHRIS JOST



PHOTO PTI

WAGENINGEN ACADEMY

Summer school on Dutch greenhouse horticulture

Wageningen University & Research is the ‘knowledge heart’ of Dutch greenhouse horticulture, which is the most advanced and productive in the world. This summer, scientists of Wageningen will share their unique knowledge with international students and researchers during the Online Summer School Greenhouse Horticulture. This is the first time that the summer school will

be given in a virtual format. Particular attention has been paid to developing a programme that relates to and is interesting for protected cultivation with less technology than is usual in the Netherlands, so it can be applied directly in the participants’ own countries and situations.

www.wur.eu/summer-school-greenhouse-horticulture