



# Onion DNA unravelled at last

**WUR researchers have managed to map the DNA sequence of the onion genome.**

Sequencing the onion genome was far from easy, as it is very large: five times the size of the human genome. So the researchers had to place 100,000 fragments of DNA in the correct order, says plant-breeding researcher Richard Finkers. 'Of these 100,000 pieces of the jigsaw puzzle, 95,000 were blue sky, and only 5000 were different.'

Now that the sequence has been determined, breeders can develop new varieties faster, such as onions with increased resistance to drought

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and mould.

The onion is one of the world's most widely cultivated vegetables.

The Dutch eat an average

of about seven kilos of onions a year.

To keep pace with the increase in the global population, the production of onions must increase by 800,000 tonnes per year. *AS*

