

# 62 million for photosynthesis

Private donors and WUR are investing a total of 62 million euros in a new institute for photosynthesis, it was announced during the *Dies Natalis*. Fifty million euros will come from private donors.

The institute has been given the working name Institute for Advanced Studies for Photosynthetic Efficiency (IASPE). 'Brand

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**The aim is to double the yield of at least one crop in 10 years**

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research is now ongoing to choose a new, definitive name,' says Van den Ende, direc-

tor of the Animal Sciences Group and one of the instigators of the institute.

The institute will be independent, but relies heavily on the input of WUR for the time being. There will be a board of directors, which WUR will be on, alongside the other investors. With the exception of the PhD students, the scientists and administrative staff will be employed by the institute.

The admin staff and postdocs will be located together, somewhere in an existing building on the campus. The PhD students will be employed by the WUR chair groups, where they will work. The postdocs will also do some work for the research groups.

## **Double the yield**

The new institute's aim is to improve photosynthesis in agricultural crops. The specific target of the research is to double the yield per square metre of at least one crop in 10 years. How this is to be achieved and with which crop has not yet been decided conclusively. But various lines of research have already been worked out behind the scenes.

The sponsors are Menno Witteveen, Maarten Koopman and Egbert van der

Pol, who have all been affiliated with WUR as sponsors for a long time. Witteveen and Koopman are partners in the investment company DIF Capital Partners. Van der Pol is a retired philanthropist. Never before has WUR received so much money from private donations. **AK**



*See too the background story on the quest for the holy grail of photosynthesis (page 24).*