

PhD theses **in a nutshell**

Dangerously sweet

Sugary soft drinks are often linked to the development of diabetes. But research by María Gorety Jacobo Cejudo, from Mexico, did not confirm this. She found no link with diabetes in a study of over 6,000 healthy Dutch adults. On the other hand, people who have had a heart attack do need to be careful what they eat. Sweet yoghurt products form a risk, whereas consumption of unsweetened yoghurt reduces the risk of death from a heart attack by 14 per cent. The overall drink consumption pattern was assessed using the newly developed Beverage Quality Index. The result was clear: a healthier drink consumption pattern reduces the risk of death from heart failure by 11 per cent.

Beverages Matter **María Gorety Jacobo Cejudo** ◀ **Supervisor Marianne Geleijnse Hohlbein**

Illegal wood

Detecting illegally felled wood is not easy. Laura Boeschoten investigated whether the chemical composition of the wood can be used to make a kind of fingerprint. Using mass spectrometry, she determined the amounts of 60 elements from the periodic table. Could this help trace the origins of tropical wood species such as Azobé, Tali and Red Meranti? The results are variable and the accuracy is not great. The same applies to detection using isotopes or based on genetic analysis. However, in combination the three methods offer some hope of useful applications in the future. *Chemical methods for Timber*

Trading **Laura Boeschoten** ◀ **Supervisor Pieter Zuidema**

Godwit

The black-tailed godwit does well when agriculture is extensive rather than intensive. Not because there is more food for the bird but because the nests are less likely to be disturbed or robbed by predators. That is the conclusion reached by Miguel Silva-Monteiro from Portugal. He investigated the state of the godwit in the Netherlands, France, Poland, Estonia and Finland. The more secluded spots in the landscape, the better. One striking finding: the more frequent and longer the breaks taken by the birds during brooding, the less likely the nest is to be robbed. The break as survival strategy.

A cross-continental analysis of the habitat requirements for stable Black-tailed Godwit populations in Europe **Miguel Silva-Monteiro** ◀ **Supervisor David Kleijn**