

Alumni News | Introducing dr. ir. Sjoukje Heimovaara as the new president of WUR



Dear alumni,

39 years ago, I arrived in Wageningen, filled with anticipation: I was a student at long last! I had no clear idea of what I wanted to achieve, but I did have ideas about a greener world. Most of all, I had great expectations of student life.

Now, all these years later, I still see them on campus, those young people embarking on the same adventure as I did all those years ago. Filled with anticipation, some with well-defined ambitions, others with no clear sense of direction yet. And although much has changed in those years, with the University and research institutes merging into WUR, and our fantastic new campus with the new Aula (Omnia), much has also remained the same. Wageningen is still a world-class knowledge and education institute that explores how we can keep the world liveable and healthily feed humanity. Our students continue to live their student life with verve.

In all these years, and long before that, “Wageningen” has continued to train, and to a certain extent also form, young people like myself. Every year, a great number of alumni like yourselves go into the world equipped with the latest knowledge, ready to contribute to society in a multitude of fields.

In my case, the path led from the Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research (TNO) and Leiden University (where I defended my PhD thesis on the working of a hormone in barley), via the private sector (where I worked for years as Director of R&D, and later as CEO for an international breeding company), back to WUR. And everywhere I went, I met WUR alumni, all of them with a great affinity for their Alma Mater.

There are enough issues to be addressed in the world to which WUR's knowledge can make an important contribution, which is something we are proud of and like to communicate. In this context, I would love to invite you to join us at our annual “[Wageningen Experience Day](#)” on Saturday 8 October.

Kind regards,



Plastic in fox poo in Iceland

Man-made debris such as plastic is ubiquitous in the world and the Arctic is no exception. Researchers associated with Wageningen Marine Research published an article in the scientific journal *Polar Biology*, where they discuss anthropogenic debris in Arctic fox faeces from Iceland. The analysis of the samples was conducted at Wageningen and they indicated that plastic has been ingested since the 1990s but that frequencies of such uptake are low.

Difficult to calculate trends



Private wildlife economies in South Africa lead to 'green apartheid'

Wildlife economies based around tourism, real estate developments, game meat, and more, have been hailed as great catalysts for employment and sustainable growth. Based on a major Dutch Research Council-funded project, WUR researchers concluded that wildlife economies are not only environmentally unsustainable but maintain deep social inequalities. In fact, they often even exacerbate it.

Environmental impact





6th Mansholt lecture 2022: Nature Positive Futures

The Mansholt Lecture, organized by WUR on 28 September 2022, was about nature's positive future: food systems as a major catalyst for change. Topics of discussion were the transition of agricultural production and food system in a liveable planet, and how the transition will be sustainable and fair and just to everyone; including local and vulnerable communities. And why is climate change a critical driver of biodiversity loss?

Future for planet and people 



Wheat is not scarce but expensive

The loss of cheap Ukrainian wheat rocked the world market. African consumers were hit hard. And wheat will remain expensive for the time being, Wageningen economists fear. Not because of scarcity, but because of the sharply increased price of fertilizer. Read the article in Wageningen World, the magazine for alumni. Don't receive it yet? Sign up for a [free digital subscription](#) or change your subscription from a paper to a digital edition.

Food prices remain high 



Opening academic year addressed an urgent topic

WUR celebrated the Opening of the Academic year on 5 September. This year's theme was **Planetary Boundaries**. Global warming, biodiversity under pressure, and imbalance in our nitrogen cycle are just a few examples that show that the earth is cracking under the pressure we impose on it. We must intervene and balance the growing world population with the limits of our planet.

Watch the ceremony [▶](#)

The Wageningen University Fund helps students



The University fund helps students with their mission of detecting colon cancer earlier

A group of WUR students is currently developing a new diagnostic method to detect colorectal cancer at an early stage, and in an easier way. For this they use probiotic bacteria, which color the stool when colon cancer is present. With their project "Colourectal" they hope to win the international student competition IGEM. In order to finance this project and to participate in the final of IGEM in Paris, they have set up a crowdfunding campaign. [Will you support them too?](#)

Development is a continuous process that doesn't stop after graduation. Join a highly valued WUR course too.



Course Vertical Farming | 9 January - 3 February 2023

There is a shared enthusiasm that vertical farming can provide the world with safe, nutritious, and sustainable greens. But most claims lack robust scientific backing. In this mixed classroom course, Wageningen University & Research's world's leading academics in the field bring together business, academia, and students. [More info](#)

Winter School Greenhouse Horticulture | 23 January till 3 February 2023

This course gives you an in-depth view on the following topics: protected horticulture, passive greenhouse, potential crop yield, basic principles of crop physiology, water quality, growing systems and nutrient solutions, crop management, climate management, plant nutrition and its management, and crop protection and integrated pest management. [More info](#)

Micro-credentials for personalised professional development path

And did you know WUR offers courses with micro-credentials too - besides Bsc, Msc, and MBA? Micro-credentials certify the learning outcomes of short-term learning experiences, marking the quality of a course. The certificate guarantees the knowledge, skill set, and achieved learning outcomes. Find out which courses are eligible for micro-credentials. This amount will increase as WUR continues to develop its portfolio. Contact [Klaar Vernailen](#) or check the site for [more info](#)

Watch & enjoy 😊

Video | [Insects in Surinam](#), Book of Maria Sibylla Merian

Video | [Automated network visualisation tool](#), WUR fellowship programme

Video | [Dhaka's Food System in 2041](#)

Video | [Apomixis gene discovered](#)

Video | [From WUR to Work](#), a job after forest and nature conservation

Plans to move to Wageningen? | [Helpful information](#) for ex-pats & new international staff

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