

Alumni News | April 2023



Dear alumna, alumnus,

Wageningen University & Research (WUR) is celebrating its 105th anniversary this year. With the theme Shaping Sustainable Futures, we are closely aligned with our mission. The kick-off of this lustrum year at the Dies Natalis was dedicated to 'Shaping Sustainable Marine Futures', or in other words shaping sustainable seas and oceans.

The sea always seemed infinite and an abundant source of food. But with global terrestrial (eco)systems under increasing pressure, attention and activities are rapidly shifting to the sea to meet global needs for food, (wind) energy, minerals, tourism, shipping, military training grounds, cables and pipelines, and carbon storage. All these claims to the sea do not go together easily. There is stiff (including spatial) competition at sea so multiple (space) use is required. The more intensive use of marine systems and the emissions of nutrients, chemicals and plastics also affect the quality of the coast, sea, ocean, marine nature and biodiversity, marine food production and communities and societies that depend on the sea.

How can we design, use and preserve these global seas sustainably, also for future generations? A challenge that WUR fits like a glove. That is why a new BSc programme in Marine Sciences will start at WUR this year, and a new Delta Climate Centre will be established, based in Zeeland, in the south of the Netherlands. [Read more.](#)

I have been walking around at our university for several years now and it is wonderful to see how WUR keeps renewing itself and therefore stays relevant. And not only for our students, but equally for the professionals who took a course through Wageningen Academy and our alumni worldwide. We need everyone to realise our ambitions and shape the necessary transitions to sustainability. We therefore look forward to seeing you again at the annual '[Wageningen Experience Day](#)' on Saturday 7 October.

Kind regards,

Prof. dr. Arthur P.J. Mol,
Rector Magnificus and Vice President Executive Board of WUR

Furthermore, in this newsletter you will read about:

- 🌱 Promoting consumption vegetables West Africa
- 🌱 WUR signs agreements with French knowledge institutes
- 🌱 Wageningen connects people and cultures
- 🌱 New Postmaster Engineering Doctorate
- 🌱 Successful UN Water Conference
- 🌱 The story of Niranjana from South India
- 🌱 University Fund Wageningen's passion for good causes
- 🌱 Spring season tips



Promoting consumption vegetables West Africa

WUR and its national research partners are in charge of the work package that is connected with promoting the consumption of safe vegetables in West Africa's Benin, Mali and Burkina Faso. They want to achieve this by making vegetables affordable, available and acceptable. Answers are sought to the questions: what is the problem with vegetable consumption and why do people not eat enough of this nutritious food.

[More green leafy vegetables](#)





WUR signs agreements with French knowledge institutes

WUR is entering into a new collaboration with Ifremer and INRAE. This Innovation Pact aims to intensify the collaboration to innovate in the 'Securing Food Transition' domain. Through the collaboration agreement they join forces in the fields of protein transition, robotics, digitalisation, biotechnology, sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for the food systems transition and the innovative power of the agritech and food tech sectors.

[More about the Innovation Pact](#) >



Wageningen connects people and cultures

Did you know WUR organises One World Week every year? This week consists of activities that are in line with the philosophy of promoting diversity and inclusion at WUR and in the city of Wageningen. WUR feels responsible for creating a work and learning environment where citizens, students and employees from all over the world feel welcome. Get an impression of the colourful and positive 12th edition.

[One World Week 2023](#) >



New | Postmaster Engineering Doctorate

The postmaster designer programme 'Design for AgriFood and Ecological Systems' started at WUR. With this two-year programme you will become an Engineering Doctorate. The programme focuses on (technological) design both in industry and in society. Have you been working for quite a few years? Or have you just completed your MSc? See what the EngD programme can offer you or your company!

[Admission and application](#) >



Recap Water Conference

More than 700 commitments and \$300 billion to tackle water problems. That is the outcome of the UN Water Conference held in New York. WUR was closely involved in the conference and organised, among other things, a session on water and food. Board chair Sjoukje Heimovaara announced that WUR will invest 7.7 million euros in research on food systems and water. All in all, Wageningen scientists look back on a successful water summit.

[About the Water Action Agenda](#) >

The story of alumna Niranjana Balram Menon



Niranjana grew up in Chennai in South India. She decided to move to the Netherlands in her gap year. She had always been passionate about the environment, and WUR motivated her decision to move to the Netherlands! She graduated in 2021 with her Bachelor's Environmental Sciences and now works full-time in Rotterdam.

"I think the most important way I have brought aspects of my culture to the Netherlands is through food. Over the years I have lived in the Netherlands I have grown to love cooking and making curries and other Indian dishes. Secondly, through movies; I love showing my friends Bollywood movies.

It is funny, but in the first few years, I tried to hide my Indian-ness as much as I could in order to fit in but now I wear it with pride! I wear more Indian patterns in my clothing to fuse the fashion of my two homes. Furthermore, I sometimes celebrate Indian festivals with my friends by playing music and sharing traditional sweets with them and the stories behind the festival. I have been lucky enough to have a friend group that welcomes my culture with curiosity with warmth!"

Niranjana jokes about becoming more and more Dutch every day. "I love the punctuality and efficiency here and it suits my personality perfectly. I think the biggest similarity is the ability for both Dutch and Indian people to complain or discuss the weather at any chance they get! India has a rich history and heritage. Moving to the Netherlands has been an ironic journey for me in that it feels like a 'homecoming'. But it is, the further I am from home, the more I tend to learn and appreciate my own Indian culture!"

Thank you for sharing your journey in a nutshell, Niranjana. Are you non-Dutch and want to share your story too in this newsletter? Mail to alumni@wur.nl

University Fund Wageningen news



Student challenge thanks to philanthropic donation

WUR and University Fund Wageningen are partnering with the Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research (FFAR) to launch a series of Nature-Based Future Challenges. These challenges stimulate student teams to find solutions that mitigate climate change effects and contribute to a biodiversity positive future. The FFAR is donating over \$250,000 to make this challenge a reality. Contribute to talent and research at WUR and become a [Friend of University Fund Wageningen!](#)

Next generation of leaders [➤](#)



Financial support for female WUR alumni

Are you or do you know an alumna who could use some extra support in taking the next step or turn in her career? Great timing, as applications for the Marina van Damme Fund have opened again. The grant consists of an amount of €9,000 and is intended for expanding their knowledge or for an international study or internship. Be sure to share it with an alumna for whom you think this could be interesting.

Apply before 30 June [➤](#)

Keep on learning, join a highly valued WUR course!

New | [WUR issues microcredentials for continuing education courses](#)

A microcredential is not just a certificate but highly qualified proof that you have successfully completed the course. It is valuable for your career and very suitable to put on your CV and LinkedIn profile. Watch the [video](#) in which the rector explains the added value.

Course | [The Proteins of the Future](#)

Proteins form an important part of diets for humans and animals. However, the proteins we currently consume can contribute to environmental degradation. Alternative proteins, like algae and insects, are needed. This course is designed for professionals who want to know more about alternative protein sources and their role in future diets of humans and animals.

Summer Schools | [Get inspired and learn from academics! Check our offer here](#)

Do you spend your summer on our campus? Then we hope to see you at one of our Wageningen Summer Schools! Through these academic programmes and courses you will be introduced to the latest insights in your field while you attend lectures and do group work with other professionals.

Honors & awards 🌟

- NWO Rubicon Grant | [Iris van 't Erve](#)
- Honorary doctorates | [Dennis Baldocchi](#), [Valerie Trouet](#) and [Willy Verstraete](#)
- WUR Research Award 2023 | [Balwina Koopal](#)
- Fund Niels Smiths Sport Grant | [Boris van Hennik](#) and [Lauren Heijnsdijk](#)
- QS World Univ. Rankings by Subject | [WUR Environmental Sciences rises to spot 2](#)
- AtlasInvest Entrepreneurship Grant 2023 | [MoVax](#) en [BrewRight](#)

Spring season tips



Love solving puzzles? 🧩

Online puzzle | [Mouse and red tulip](#) consisting of 126 pieces

Online puzzle | [Field bindweed](#) consisting of 130 pieces

Online puzzle | [Bird wren](#) consisting of 255 pieces

Books written by alumni 📖

Book | [Buying Time for Climate Action](#), Gert van Santen co-author

Book | [Our Future Proteins, a diversity of perspectives](#), Hannah van Zanten co-author

Book | [Tourism is dead, long live the traveller](#), Jelleke de Nooy co-author

Report | [Future Water Challenges, bending the trend](#), PBL

Written literature yourself? Submit it to this section via alumni@wur.nl

Continue learning 🎓

Course | [WUR MOOC, Transformative Citizen Science for Sustainability](#), study wherever you are

Keep up to date 💡

Wageningen World | [Magazine for alumni](#) (digital)

Knowledge Base Magazine | [Culmination highly succesful WUR research programmes](#) (digital)

Upcoming alumni activities

Save the date | Wageningen Experience Day on 7 October

Published by the WUR Alumni Office

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