

Mansholt Business Award for Sustainable Entrepreneurship 2018

Judicium

Based on the advice of the jury, the board of the University Fund Wageningen is honoured to hand out the award to two prize winners, to encourage them and facilitate future growth of their promising young companies: Ms Chantal Engelen, co-founder of Kromkommer, and Mr Ruud Zanders, owner of Kipster. Both award winners bring new approaches to sustainable food production and clearly voice their view on social responsible entrepreneurship.

Ruud Zanders, director and co-owner of Kipster

Ruud Zanders' career shows his resilience and his ability to adapt – including adapting to the trend towards sustainability in Dutch animal food production. Trained at Wageningen University and tried and tested in the family poultry business, he faced his family business' bankruptcy after the devastating bird flu. He rose like a phoenix from the ashes to start a new, more animal-friendly way of producing eggs, trading his so-called 'Rondeeleieren'. In a next step towards sustainable food production he started to work in close cooperation with researchers Imke de Boer and Hanna van Zanten of Wageningen University & Research. Together with partners Styn Claessens, Maurits Groen and Olivier Wegloop he developed the revolutionary chicken farm 'Kipster'.

The company is keenly aware that too much good food and arable land are used to produce animal feed, and therefore works on realising circular food production methods. The chicken feed used originates from residual flows and replaces foodstuffs which would also be suitable for human consumption. Kipster also took major other steps towards sustainable production methods: it introduced significant enhancements in animal welfare, the use of solar energy, recyclable packaging and reductions in the emissions of fine particular matter – a major source of pollution from intensive poultry farms. The male chicks are not simply destroyed as is common practice in the industry, but raised for meat production.

Ruud Zanders built a consumer brand by signing a large contract with supermarket chain Lidl, thus creating a solid demand and an easy and affordable access for large consumer groups to his eggs. Kipster started only in 2017, however, and is a young and therefore financially still vulnerable enterprise. To create a sustainable business model, Kipster will need to step up its production. The jury sees the company as an exemplary enterprise when it comes to introducing revolutionary ways of approaching sustainable food production. Kipster's major challenge today is to assure long-term commercial success, which will require scaling up production levels.