

## MORE WORK FOR WAGENINGEN GRADUATES

- **MSc graduates finding jobs faster.**
- **Average salaries staying the same.**

**The job prospects for Wageningen graduates are improving.** At least, it seems we may draw this conclusion from the latest survey by the Wageningen Alumni

Network KLV. Of the Master's students who graduated in 2013, 45 percent had a job in the bag when they graduated. In the same period of the previous year, that figure was 40 percent.

Silvia Blok of KLV acknowledges that the rise of 5 percent gives a positive signal, but thinks it would be premature to conclude that for Wageningers the crisis is over. 'It is impossible to infer the precise

reason for the rise from the figures.'

The increase applies strikingly to one specific group of graduates, namely those aiming at a PhD position. Of that group, 58 percent already had a job when they graduated: 37 percent had a PhD position and 21 percent had another job. The success rate has risen particularly fast in the latter category. A good sign, thinks Blok,

since it suggests that the job market is recovering not at the lower end but at the top end, for high-level jobs for which ambitious academics are sought. This is not reflected in the average salary, however. At 2078 euros gross per month, that is only 5 euros higher than one year earlier. **RG**

### in brief

#### >>ART

##### Listening to woods

What does a wood sound like? Artists and Wageningen scientists will try to transmit that sound during the Oeral festival in June. 'Speaking Plants' is a project by the artists Alexandra Duvekotte and Jillis Kruk. The artists want to make a wood's heartbeat audible. Bart Kruijt (Alterra) is one of the researchers involved. 'A tree doesn't actually have a heartbeat, of course. But we measure sap flows, carbon uptake and so on. You can translate that data into sound using technical means.' Kruijt finds it exciting to be working with the artists. 'It also means you can show something of yourself and your work at Oeral.' **RK**

#### >> STUDENT

##### Happietaria

Students are getting another chance to eat for charity. Happietaria will be opening its doors in Wageningen for the fifth time from Friday 28 March to Thursday 17 April. Like last time, the university will be providing one of its buildings free of charge: the maths building at the Dreijen. A Happietaria is

a temporary restaurant set up by the Christian student societies and run entirely by volunteers. The proceeds from this venture go to charity. This year, that is an education project for Burmese refugees in Thai camps. See also [www.happietariawageningen.nl](http://www.happietariawageningen.nl).

**LvdN**

#### >>TIMES

##### Reputation

Wageningen UR's global reputation fell slightly last year, it appears from the *World Reputation Rankings* published by the Times Higher Education (THE). Wageningen is no longer among the top 100 in this list, in which academics say which institutions they consider to be the best. Last year, Wageningen was ranked 91-100, but now it is in the 100 plus category where the score is unclear. The reputation scores are incorporated in the overall THE ranking, which also includes measurements of publications and citations. That ranking will be published in the autumn. **AS**



## KEESVANVELUW <<

### Three branches

Suddenly I see trees everywhere I look. In groups, in rows, alone. There is one at the entrance to the Forum, too – a dead one. I also notice how people bark up the wrong tree, some get to the top of the tree, and a few are simply out of their tree. Nowadays I observe extremely selectively, and trees jump out at me all over the place.

At a lecture about learning from nature, someone explained that young trees only start growing when the old ones in the climax vegetation have died. Then it is the turn of the next generation: the young trees compete for light, space, water, and they all want to fill the gap left behind by 'mother'. That idea hit home. My mother died a year ago. She was the last old tree. So it is only natural that I compete with my brothers and sisters for light and space. Fortunately we have reached a new balance, formed a new climax community.

I am not about to embrace nature as a new religion, but I was impressed. I am not so very different to trees. A banana tree and a cabbage have 50 percent of the same DNA as me. I share 60 percent with goldfish and 97 percent with apes. Not such a crazy idea to learn from nature.

But what about that tree in front of the Forum. It was sawn through but then grew three new branches. Do they symbolize something? The Trias Politica or the Golden Triangle? Or the triumvirate Thijs, Martin and Louise? It reminds me of the story of the three farmers in a field. A field with a tree. The conventional farmer says: 'It's in the way when I am ploughing!' The organic farmer says: 'I'll leave it because it has an ecological function.' The organic-dynamic farmer says: 'For me a tree is a beautiful gesture to heaven, especially in winter.' **Kees van Veluw**

