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Word from our Scientific Director: Another challenging year almost done, and new opportunities for 2022!

In the last FLASH of this year, I want to look back a bit, but mostly want to look ahead and talk to you about the new opportunities that we have in mind for the VLAG community.

At the end of my second year as VLAG scientific director, and that was again a year dominated by the external situation related to Covid, I am very grateful for all the things that we as VLAG community have managed to keep working and get to work. A huge effort was needed to keep teaching running, and that also included our courses that were mostly live, in some cases hybrid or even fully on-line. The fact that everyone is still trying to make most out of what we can do, and that we have very enthusiastic participants, makes me very proud of you all. With that kind of mindset we can get so much done! Compliments to you all.

Since this is also the festive season, we as VLAG office thought it is a good idea to come up with some new incentives for our community. You already know about our fellowship program that we revised last year, and that we now would like to extend with additional options. We then introduced traveling grants for PhDs and post-docs, and in the new year we will extend this to the VLAG assistant professors. We feel that they would greatly benefit from an opportunity to spend a short period of time in a high-level laboratory abroad. Of course we hope that Covid will be kind for us so many people can make use of this opportunity. All information will be sent to you by e-mail in due time.



What we have also added to the fellowships is a new opportunity that makes use of the fact that if you have scientists in PhD graduation

committees that are very interesting for the broader VLAG community, you could invite them to stay a bit longer, and e.g., organize a work shop or master class in which these scientists would participate. Only requirement is that these events are open for the VLAG community, and that people from more than one chair group participate in the event. We cover travel and residence costs of your special guest (to a certain maximum), and hope that this will entuse you to make a PhD graduation even more of a VLAG community event. We know that many groups cannot wait to do so!

We also had another look at the PhD trips, that traditionally would be directed abroad. We now have included that these trips can take place in the Netherlands; food chemistry has set a nice example for that. Of course, Covid is limiting many things, and at the same time we feel that in the Netherlands many things are happening that are extremely important for our (international) PhD candidates, post-docs, staff, basically all involved in VLAG, and that good learnings and networking opportunities would spring from this. The requirements are very much in line with what we had before, so organized by PhDs for PhDs, and for at least one week (so not just any excursion that you can do on any day of the week). So please also consider this option.

Last but certainly not least, the engineering doctorate (EngD) will start in 2022. I have talked about this before, but just as a short reminder, this is a two-year program for people interested in 'design' in the broadest sense. The candidates spend one year on courses, and one year on a design assignment supported by industry. These candidates will become part of VLAG, and I think it is a nice opportunity that diversifies the options that Wageningen University has on offer. Early 2022, the first candidates are expected to start within WUR, not yet within VLAG. Those interested can already let us know, so that we can make the step toward joining this initiative go smoothly.

That was all for now; have a wonderful festive season, and I look forward to seeing you all in 2022!

Kind regards, also on behalf of the entire VLAG team,
Prof Karin Schroën, Scientific Director VLAG

From the VLAG Office

2021 in VLAG numbers

In 2021 we saw 128 new PhD candidates enrol in VLAG and 79 VLAG PhD candidates defended their thesis. The total number of VLAG PhD candidates is now 546 originating from 54 countries!

We organised 9 scientific courses with more than 300 participants of which about a 57% were VLAG PhD candidates.

Looking forward to 2022 the VLAG Graduate School wishes you:



Happy holidays & a

happy, healthy and prosperous New Year!



Winter Break Programme

Many of you will spend the holidays at home, but unfortunately for some, it is still not possible to visit their relatives this year. Especially for these students AND PhD candidates, Student Service Centre & Student Training & Support organize a fun winter break activity programme. You will meet new people and engage in creative and sportive activities together

Goodbye to our colleague Eva Oudshoorn

After having worked at WUR for 20 years, Eva will leave VLAG to enjoy her free time.

Her first course as VLAG course coordinator was Diet and Cancer in November 2007 and her last course was Sensory Perception & Food Preference which took place last week.

We would like to thank Eva for her major contributions to VLAG courses and conferences and wish her all the best!



VLAG Peer Review 2015 -2022

VLAG Graduate School was subject to an international Peer Review which takes place every six years. During the site visit that took place from 11th through 13th October a group of international experts met the representatives of the four VLAG research themes, tenure track candidates, the VLAG PhD Council and VLAG management.

We are still awaiting the draft review report which is due this month.



VLAG Graduate Programme 2022

Applications are written by candidates who will obtain a Wageningen MSc degree between June 2021 and December 2022. If you know an excellent MSc student who e.g. is planning to do an MSc thesis with you, it might be interesting to discuss this opportunity to write a PhD proposal, and possibly get it granted. An early start of their thesis might be helpful in making it possible to fit the Research Master Cluster course in their study programme. The latter is mandatory to be able to take part in the [VLAG Graduate Programme](#).

WGS Postdoc Talent Programme 2022

The [Postdoc Talent Programme](#) offers talented researchers from abroad the opportunity to start a career at Wageningen University & Research. Applications should demonstrate the added value for the applicant's career and expertise for the hosting research group. Deadline for applications is **1 February 2022**. Grants will be awarded in March and projects should start in July 2022 at the latest.

From our PhD Advisor: Mind maintenance

When working in the lab, we're accustomed to calibrating the equipment we work with and providing regular maintenance. Similarly, we're used to switching our computers off and on regularly for software updates to take effect or to solve unexplained behaviour. But strangely enough, we can neglect upkeep and maintenance for the most important tool we use as scientists: our mind. For this specific tool and the system it runs on, sleep and relaxation are key necessities to keep everything

running smoothly. So next time you judge yourself for being lazy, just say that you're busy doing maintenance.

I hope that the end of December brings everyone some opportunity to calibrate their system and get a fresh start in January. Enjoy the Christmas holidays, best wishes for a blessed 2022.

Cheers, [Jochem Jonkman](#)

WGS Sandwich PhD Programme & Africa Talent Programme

These two calls from Wageningen University and Research are expected to open in February/March 2022 with a deadline in May 2022. As soon as the call texts are available, they will be spread among the VLAG supervisors.

WUR selection NWO Gravitation Programme

[The Gravitation programme](#) brings together top researchers and facilitates innovation, excellence and the international position of Dutch research.

Most likely the new call will be published in January 2022, deadline in September 2022.

To be considered, consortia are asked to send their ideas for a Gravitation proposal (max. 2 pages) to [Henriëke de Ruiter](#) before **25 January 2022**. Click [here](#) for more information.

(voice)phishing attempts

Recently several Guest/Sandwich PhDs have become victim of malicious (voice)phishing attempts. The callers pretended to be the 'National Police' and pressured the victim to provide personal details (like BSN, bank account, address) and to pay money. Voice phishing is when someone calls you and pretends to be an employee of WUR, Microsoft, the IND or your bank. They try to obtain money, your login details, codes or other personal information like your BSN. Please stay alert, and here's what you can do if they contact(ed)you:

- Are they asking for personal details or exerting pressure on you? Hang up and call the general (customer service) number of the organisation. They can help you check whether they really need your information.
- If you provided personal details, call the (emergency number of the) organisation immediately. Also always file a report at the Police. For WUR: call the Servicedesk IT (0317-488888).

From the VLAG PhD Council



VLAG PhD COUNCIL

A new edition of Dutch language courses will start early 2022 with a discount offered for the participants that sign up this year!

[Registration](#) is possible for all VLAG PhD candidates. For the time being, all courses are held online after office hours. You can get more information on the [website](#). If you are uncertain about the suitable course level or if you have questions about the course content you can contact the teacher directly. For

general questions you can contact the [VLAG PhD council](#).

VLAG courses

Highlighted events:

[VLAG Online Lecture Series](#)

The VLAG scientific community is buzzing with ground breaking ideas, knowledge and expertise. To introduce the numerous great topics that our researchers are working on, we are organising a **NEW** series of live online VLAG expert lectures. Starting **16 February** with Dr Daan Swarts' lecture '*Bacterial immune systems: how fundamental research uncovers a treasure trove of applications*'

[Bayesian Data Analysis: a new perspective in the VLAG domain](#) (31 January 2022)

A short introduction to the benefits of using Bayesian Data Analysis.

Examples from different fields within the VLAG domain will be used: biotechnology, microbiology, environmental sciences, food, and nutrition. Based on the interest during this introduction session, we will consider to organise a more elaborate workshop for you to get some hands-on experience with the use of Bayesian data analysis and to make a start on using it in your own research.

Other VLAG courses open for registration

[Advanced Organic Chemistry](#) (ongoing)

[Advanced Course Microscopy and Spectroscopy in Food and Plant Sciences](#) (18-20 January 2022)

[Advanced Food Analysis](#) (24-28 January 2022)

[Applied Enzymology](#) (21-25 February 2022)

[Exposure Assessment in Nutrition Research](#) (7-10 March 2022)

Planned courses

Healthy Food Design (6-10 June 2022)

Tip! For an overview of all courses regularly organised by VLAG take a look in [past courses](#) and contact the [VLAG office](#) for the new planning.

Wageningen Graduate Schools (WGS) courses

Highlighted course

[Making Impact: Increasing the relevance of research through science-society interaction \(in person\)](#)

Researchers experience a pressing demand from society to create solutions for a range of urgent problems. In the domain of life sciences such demands relate to climate change, food security, healthy diets, sustainable agriculture, ecological resilience and nature conservation.

[WASS course: Systematic approaches to reviewing literature](#)

In medicine, systematic reviews are the standard way to review evidence. This method is rapidly growing in importance in other disciplines. Systematic review is now used to describe theory, concepts, methods and evidence. The course offered at WU is interdisciplinary.

For a complete overview of all competence, skills and career development training activities by WGS, please click [here](#). Or click [here](#) for the direct links to the webpages of the other graduate schools.

Other courses and events

Visit Multiphysics Channel by [EMPA Multiphysics Hub](#)

This knowledge sharing platform includes [17 videos](#)

2nd webinar of the Gerrit Grijns Initiative (16 December from 12.00-13.00h)

Prof. Casper Schalkwijk (Professor of Experimental Internal Medicine at Maastricht University Medical Center+) will give a talk on dietary AGEs (Advanced Glycation End products), and whether they are a friend or foe for human health. If you would like to join, please inform [the organising committee](#).

NAV Hybrid Public Lecture Prof. Ingeborg Brouwer -VU Amsterdam (27 January 2022)

all PhD's, also non-members, are invited to join the [public lecture](#) of the Dutch Academy for nutritional sciences online for free. *The lecture is in Dutch.*

BioBusiness Winter School Online (9 - 11 February 2022)

[The programme](#) is a balance between theoretical sessions focusing on key knowledge of main business topics and interactive sessions with business leaders giving their insights in the world of European Life Sciences companies. A great way for MScs, PhDs and postdocs considering a career switch from academia to industry.

BFC career event 2022

[BCF Career Event](#) is the perfect meeting place for everyone who is or wants to be active in Bio/Life Sciences, Chemistry, Food or Pharma:

BCF Career Event Benelux - Online edition (17 February 2022)

BCF Career Event Netherlands - Jaarbeurs Utrecht (19 May 2022)

BCF Career Event Belgium - Ghent ICC (16 November 2022)

Biobased Coatings Europe 2022 (8 & 9 June 2022)

The 3rd [Annual Biobased Coatings Europe](#) will give you an insight to the industry's latest policy evaluations and, while focusing largely on developments within the coatings industry in Europe, will also concentrate on updates and future forecasts on supply and demand of the key world markets.

BioBusiness Summer School (27 June - 1 July 2022)

[The summer school](#) is an introductory course for academics who are contemplating a career switch to industry and young professionals in their first industry jobs. During the programme participants will learn the basics of the main business topics, gain insight into the world of Life Sciences companies, meet leading business people and expand their international network.

Grant Application Course Online (12 & 13 October 2022)

During this [intensive course](#) participants will be taught by seasoned scientists, grant application experts who have reviewed hundreds of grants, assessors from funding bodies and many more.

External calls & grants

For Women in Science Rising Talent Prizes 2022

The aim of [Women in Science Rising Talent Prizes](#) is to advance the academic careers of young women researchers in the Netherlands holding a position as PhD candidate or postdoctoral fellow in STEM or Life Sciences, with a maximum of three years post-PhD academic experience.

Closing date for applications is **20 January 2022**

Pieter Walstra Award 2022

This award will be given to an outstanding publication, or a PhD thesis, on a topic that is related to dairy science and technology. Nominations should be in English and submitted to the chairman of the jury, [Prof. Thom Huppertz](#). The closing date for submitting is **31 January 2022**. A person can only submit a specific publication once. There is no geographic limitation. Young scientists (<40 years per January 1, 2022) are especially encouraged to submit. Apart from the publication or thesis, a CV should be included with a list of publications.

The André Hoffmann Fellowship Programme

The [André Hoffmann Fellowship Programme](#) for the Fourth Industrial Revolution offers early career academics the opportunity to work at intersection of society, science and technology through joint appointment between the Forum and a leading academic institution. The programme develops a crucial link between primary research undertaken at the University and the Forum's public-private collaborations on emerging technologies. Hoffmann Fellows focus on two thematic areas: environment and human health.