



A flourishing
career?

Check the careers of
Plant Sciences alumni
in this booklet and see
in which directions
you can go!

Plant Sciences

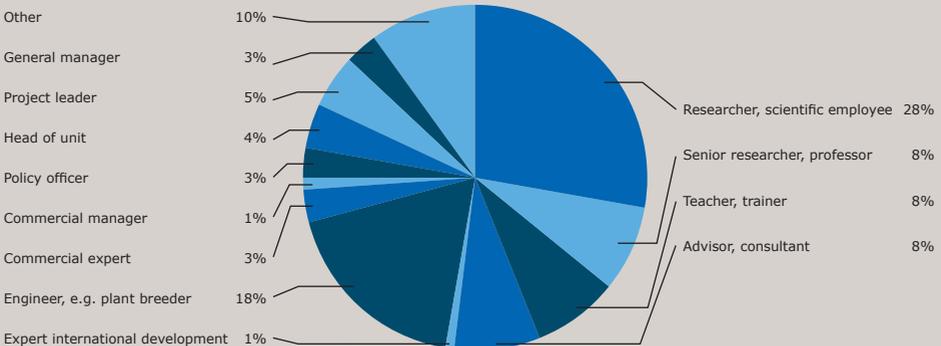
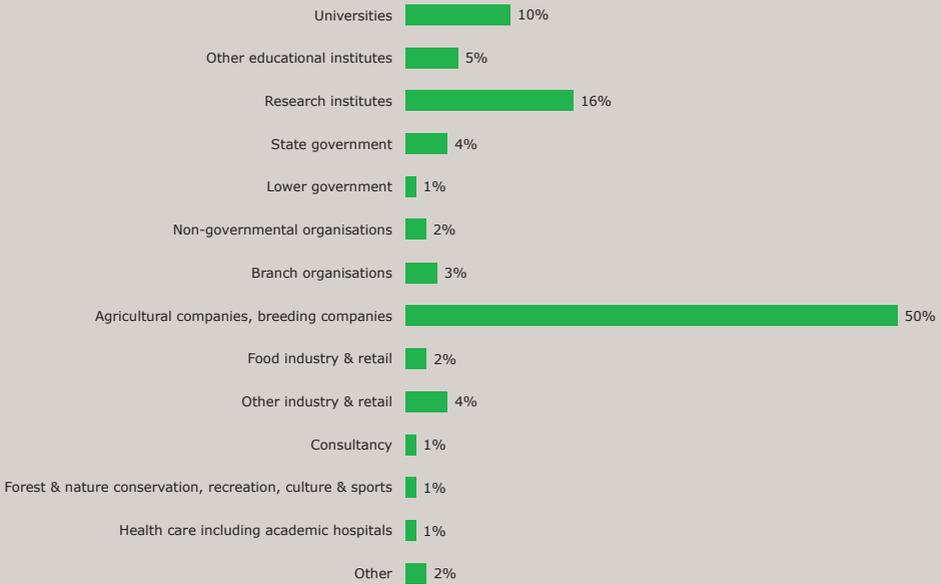


WAGENINGEN
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH

Graduates & Labour Market

Master Plant Sciences, 2021

36%	has a job after graduation	64%	starts at academic level
50%	finds job within 1-6 months after graduation	72%	starts in own (or related) field
14%	needs more than 6 months to find job		



Plant your future!

This booklet contains brief descriptions of the employment that Wageningen University alumni have found since graduating in Plant Sciences. Their experience shows that a Wageningen degree in Plant Sciences is an excellent foundation for a career with impact on the big global challenges that we face today.

A master's diploma in Plant Sciences, Plant Biotechnology or Organic Agriculture is highly sought after in the world. And with good reason: we pride ourselves on the high-quality courses we offer. Our programmes have scored high in the rankings for many years. Another key to our success is that we work with many partners (e.g. governments, knowledge institutes, NGOs and companies) in trying to find answers together.

As a plant scientist you'll not only work in a flourishing sector; you'll also be tackling issues that are of crucial importance for our future. We believe that in the coming decades the world's population will need twice as much food as we currently produce on the planet. In this same period, we also need to greatly reduce the impact that food production has on the earth. We need to find solutions in relations to climate change and the loss of biodiversity. The numbers of people in the world suffering from malnutrition or obesity are rising and the need for healthy foods is getting more important.

All this will not be possible without new crops and smart cultivation methods. It is therefore that we need plant scientists who have the ambition to work on healthy diets for a healthy planet. Plant your future!

Ernst van den Ende,
Director Plant Sciences Group,
Wageningen University & Research





*'Obtaining the master's degree
at WUR was the best investment
in my career for me.'*

Yvette Bakker

Anne Waverijn



2020



Researcher Glass and Open Field cultivation,
Provinciaal Proefcentrum voor de Groenteteelt

During my studies I chose the specialization Crop Science, because I like to be in the field. My job as a researcher at Provinciaal Proefcentrum voor de Groenteteelt gives me the opportunity to work closely to the daily practice of agriculture. As a researcher it is my goal to gather knowledge of innovative cultivation techniques and transfer this knowledge to the farmers. I really enjoy the variation in my daily work. I conduct experiments in greenhouses and fields and perform data analysis. I work on different projects concerning irrigation and increasing the resilience of the soil against drought or disease. This job matches perfectly with the knowledge I gained in both my bachelor and master programme.

Ava Verhoeven



2015



Post-doc at the Plant Ecophysiology Group,
Utrecht University

After a BSc, MSc and PhD at Wageningen University, I now work as a postdoc at the Plant Ecophysiology group of Utrecht University. During my study, I specialized in the interactions between plants and attackers, such as insects or diseases. My PhD project at the department of Nematology allowed me to dig deeper into the specific relationship of root-knot nematodes and their plant hosts on a molecular level. At the moment, my postdoc project takes me to stressed plants again, but this time mainly abiotic stress (flooding, heat, drought). Over the years I have supervised several MSc and BSc students, helped with a variety of courses, and learned all kinds of new lab techniques, analysis methods, and how to handle big piles of data.

Carlo Castro Gamiz



2017



Crop Researcher, Rijk Zwaan

Working as a Crop Researcher within Rijk Zwaan enables me to work together with many (international) experts from all kinds of scientific fields. As a project leader it is my goal to combine the knowledge of this team to discover (new) plant traits and unravel their genetics. I really enjoy the variation in my daily work and the ability to work on different projects like disease resistances, abiotic stresses and quality aspects. The job overlaps perfectly with both my HBO bachelor study of Biology & Medical Laboratory Research and my master study of Plant Sciences.

Cesar Naranjo Diaz



2014



Entrepreneur, Ideas Verdes

After my graduation, a colleague and I started our own company that produces hydroponic leaves and herbs, such as lettuce, spinach, basil, rucola and kale. We are located in Costa Rica and our products are mainly sold in supermarkets in San José. I'm in charge of checking correct growth of the leaves and herbs in order to achieve the amounts of kilos ordered by our clients, in other words: to harvest the lettuce needed in the time and quantity wanted. During my work I apply a lot of knowledge that I obtained in the plant physiology, greenhouse technology and post-harvest courses from my master programme.

Gé Bentvelsen



1982



Director - Main Shareholder, ABZ Seeds

As son of a Westland greenhouse grower of vegetables, I was raised in an agricultural and entrepreneurial environment. I always have been fascinated by the impact of great inventions developed by innovative entrepreneurs. After finishing Gymnasium B it was a logical step to choose for Plant Breeding at Wageningen University. Even before my graduation in Plant Breeding and Business Administration in 1982, I was invited for a position in Wageningen as junior station manager for an international vegetable seed company. Two years later I continued my career at Zaadunie in Enkhuizen, nowadays known as Syngenta Seeds. I became responsible for a dozen of innovative breeding project in pot and bedding plants. One year later I was invited to execute a feasibility study for a very special project: strawberry F1 hybrids, propagated by seed. The project became an international breeding program and after eight years I had the opportunity to take over the program and to start my own seed business in strawberry F1 hybrids. With my breeding work I won several innovation awards, in 2020 I was included in the top 20 of most innovative plant breeders of the European seed sector. Nowadays ABZ Seeds is market leader on its own and ships strawberry F1 seed to more than thirty countries all over the world.

Kai Moisan



2015



PhD Student at the Entomology Group,
Wageningen University & Research

I graduated from the master Plant Sciences at Wageningen University in 2015. Before coming to Wageningen, I studied agronomy in France and I had totally different plans for my career. Studying at Wageningen was a great opportunity for me to work in an international place and to be in touch with experts in my field. I was actually so passionate about my thesis topic that I expanded this line of research into a PhD project at the Laboratory of Entomology. Looking back, this was the best decision I have ever made in my life. Doing my MSc at Wageningen University provided me with the methods and knowledge I needed to start my PhD project, and I am still learning a lot today.

Lysette Lacambra



2016



Technical Specialist, East-West Seed Knowledge Transfer

In my daily job I try to strengthen the capacity of East-West Seed Knowledge Transfer teams in Asia and Africa by developing, sharing and consolidating technical knowledge. I enjoy working in the field and dealing closely with field staff and farmers. Even though I do not directly apply a lot of knowledge from my Pathology and Entomology specialization, my master Plant Sciences gave me additional knowledge, especially on crop production and protection, to support me with my current responsibilities. I am still in touch with Wageningen as my group collaborates closely with the WUR Applied Plant Research team for collaborative projects in Indonesia, Myanmar and several countries in Africa. I'm happy to be still connected with WUR with a common vision of helping smallholder farmers in tropical countries.

Reinout Pennings



2012



Supply Chain Manager, Solynta

Solynta is a hybrid potato breeding company that unlocks the true potential of potatoes. Our breeding platform is a game changer and will completely change the way potatoes are grown and distributed around the world. My main job is to make sure we produce sufficient high quality, hybrid true potato seeds. This is done year-round on several international locations, which requires frequent travelling. Sharing knowledge and experiences with growers around the world fascinates me. Together we maximize yield and quality of the hybrid seeds. However, we are only satisfied once these seeds reach their final goal; produce potatoes to feed the world! Even though my job concerns plant breeding and genetics: my background is in plant physiology and greenhouse horticulture. Yet I can definitely put my passion into practice in this sector of plant breeding, which is full of continuous innovation. Will you come and help us?

Terry van Loon



1997



Account Manager, Triferto

After my graduation I had several different jobs, varying from agricultural journalist at a farmers' weekly to crop manager at a crop protection company. Since early 2020 I work again at fertilizer wholesaler Triferto, where I worked before and currently have the position of account manager. This means that I'm in daily contact with retailers/distributors who buy their fertilizers from us. Next to sales I also give agronomic advice and try to develop concepts together with customers so they can distinguish themselves in the market. Those concepts can be completely new products, but also unique blends from different fertilizers to, for example, better fit the crop's needs. These contacts and the 'rumour' in the market, combined with technical affairs and contact with agronomists makes the work very diverse and I really like this. Use of fertilizers has drastically changed over the years. Legal limits have become more tight which makes an optimal use of nutrients more and more important and requires a broader view than 'just' N, P and K. In the future this will probably further change to more circular fertilizers and (even) more attention for soil improvers. A balanced fertilization is one of the conditions for a healthy crop. A challenging future lies ahead and I'm looking forward to it.

Yvette Bakker



2002



Seed Pathology Researcher, Bejo Seeds B.V.

During my study Plant Breeding and Crop Protection at Wageningen University, I became fascinated by the world of fungal and bacterial pathogens and their hosts as well as the interaction between these pathogens and biocontrol agents. After finishing my master, I studied soil suppressiveness against a fungal pathogen in sugar beets at IRS. In 2006, I started a job at Bejo Seeds, a multinational vegetable seed company, based in The Netherlands. I enjoy working on research projects with applied value for the company. Obtaining the master's degree at WUR was the best investment in my career for me.

Hilde Coolman



2020



Researcher and Advisor, HLB B.V.

The last part of my study Plant Sciences, with the specialization Phytopathology and Entomology, was an internship at the company HLB B.V. After my internship I was able to stay at this company as researcher and advisor. In my work as researcher I am involved in several projects involving soil resilience and soil quality at agricultural farms. As an advisor I help farmers to keep and/or get their crops and soils healthy. Next to my work at HLB, you can find me on our arable family farm one day per week. Here, I help with all the daily work. Besides a really diverse work week, the combination of these activities, research, advising and practical work, enables me to combine research with the practical side of agriculture.

Jan Willem van Roessel



1985



Director, IRS

Before my official graduation I already started a job as agronomist at the agricultural service of Cosun (which was then called Suiker Unie). I was mainly concerned with assisting sugar beets farmers with cultivation. Afterwards I still remained "in the sugar business" as head of quality assurance, manager of the agricultural service (organizing the transport of beets during the campaign was a big part of this) and secretary of the Cosun Board of directors. Building on the general knowledge and experience I gained in Wageningen, I did many different jobs over the years. Since two years I am the director of IRS, an institute that conducts cultivation research on sugar beets and chicory, so I returned to the field I once started in.

Niek Botden



2001



Owner, HortiSolutions Holding BV;
Founder and Member, HollandDoor Cooperative U.A.

As son of a flower and vegetable greenhouse grower, I grew up in a horticultural environment and got "infected with the horti disease". I started my professional career by working for 2 years at the Horticultural Production Chains group of Wageningen University. My multidisciplinary and entrepreneurial attitude, combined with my academic specializations in both plant physiology as well as farm management, resulted in the start of my company HortiSolutions in 2003. Since my graduation I got increasingly involved in bridging global scientific and applied knowledge demand with implementable practical solutions which still triggers and keeps me busy today. With this knowledge and network brokering I facilitate, often by working together in various teams, for projects and business development concepts with HortiSolutions. When the demand of the client is for a study tour (mostly incoming in the Netherlands) or tailor-made training (mostly onsite globally) we offer this via HollandDoor.

Juultje van der Loo

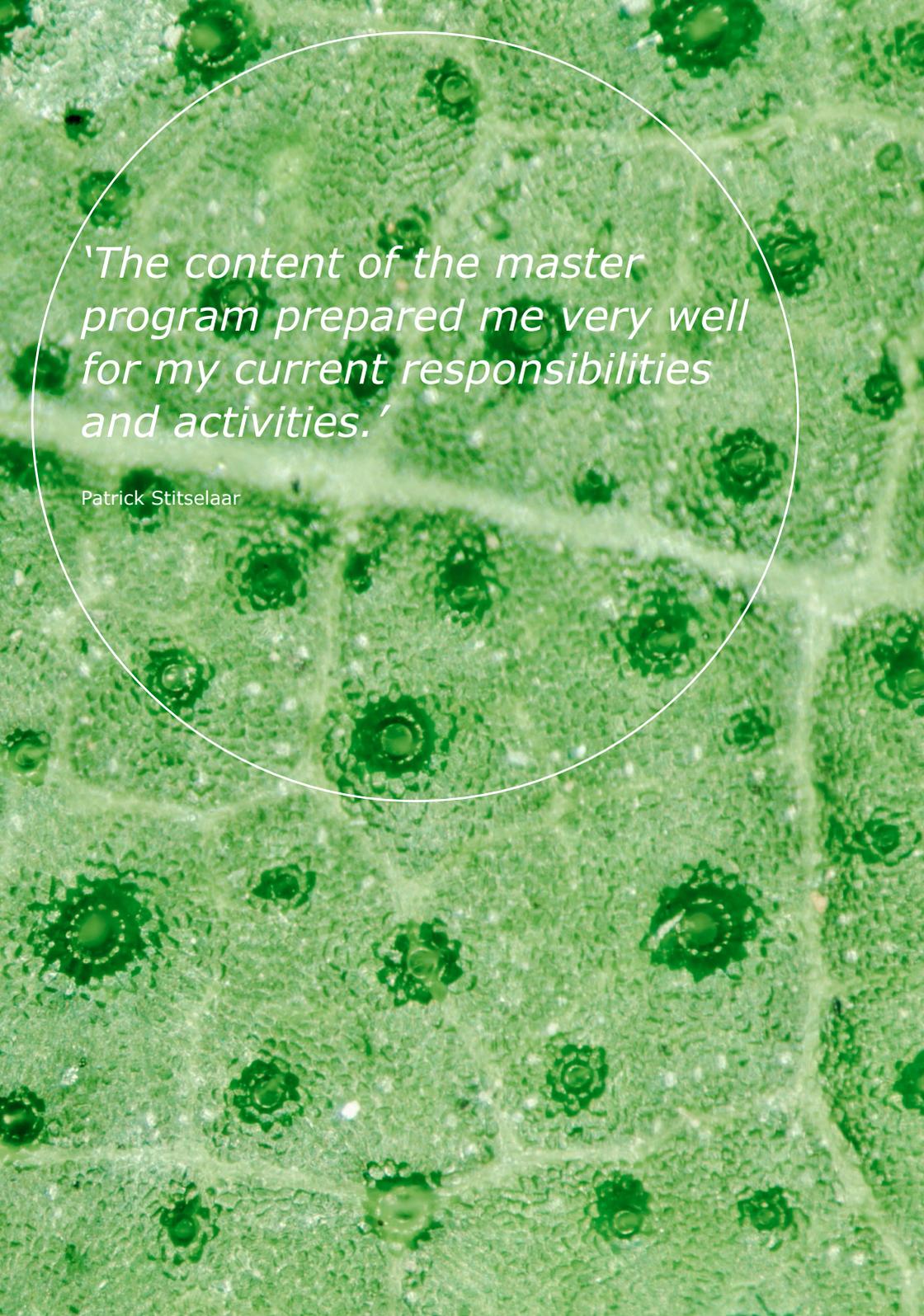


2015



Insectary Manager, Bugs for Bugs Australia

Before moving to Australia to work for Bugs for Bugs I worked in The Netherlands as a Quality Controller of beneficial insects and mites for a horticultural wholesale company. For both my previous and my current job, a specialization in Entomology at Wageningen University was highly regarded. My day-to-day work is very diverse and ranges from caring for various insect colonies to designing and implementing experiments for improving production systems and training of new staff members. My job is very much linked to my studies: insects, insects, insects! The courses at WUR help me to obtain a good background in entomology that I can now apply in my job.

A detailed microscopic image of plant tissue, showing various cellular structures and green pigments. A large white circle is superimposed on the image, framing a quote.

'The content of the master program prepared me very well for my current responsibilities and activities.'

Patrick Stitselaar

Ahmed Abd-El-Haliem



2006



Senior Researcher Phytopathology, Rijk Zwaan

In 2006 I obtained my MSc in Plant Biotechnology, during which I specialized in Molecular Phytopathology. Before my current job I spent two years as a postdoctoral researcher at the Laboratory of Plant Breeding in Wageningen and then four years as a postdoc at the Laboratory of Plant Physiology at the university of Amsterdam. Currently I am a Senior Researcher Phytopathology at Rijk Zwaan, here in the Netherlands.

Annemarieke Borst



2016



Researcher at the Cell Biology and Tissue Culture Group, Bejo zaden B.V.

After graduating from the MSc Plant biotechnology in 2016 I first started as a guest researcher at the WUR to finish some unrevealed parts of my master thesis. Thereafter, I worked for a while at a coffee, tea and cooking shop in Wageningen until I found a job as a teacher biotechnology at Aeres University of Applied Sciences in Almere from January 2018. Although I really liked the teaching, I missed doing research. In January 2019 I started with my current job at Bejo zaden as a researcher cell biology and tissue culture, where I can perfectly combine my knowledge with the desire to do research, and even do some teaching every now and then. At Bejo I am responsible for providing breeders with pepper material for selection using cell biology and tissue culture techniques.

Aranka van der Burgh



2013



Molecular Researcher, ClearDetections B.V.

In December 2013 I finished the MSc Plant Biotechnology, with the specialization Molecular Plant Breeding and Pathology. Prior, I did the technical bachelor ("HBO") Plant Biotechnology at Larenstein in Velp, after which I worked 3 years as a technician at the department of Plant Breeding at the WUR.

After my MSc, I started my PhD project at the Laboratory of Phytopathology at the WUR, in which I studied receptor proteins at the plasma membrane of plant cells and their role in defense at a molecular level. I unraveled key steps in the cascade starting with recognition and leading to resistance.

During my career so far, I gained ample experience in setting up and running experiments, organizing, writing, guiding students, and managing projects.

Soon I will start a new chapter in my career, as molecular researcher at ClearDetections B.V. where I will develop kits to detect plant pathogens in the soil.

Aurelie Huser



2005



Business Development Manager, VIB

After my master in Plant Biotechnology I went on to do a PhD at the Max Planck Institute for Plant Breeding in Germany. I wanted to continue to be involved with research but be closer to its applications. I have been working at the interface between academia and industry ever since. It allows me to combine my knowledge and passion for biology and gives me the opportunity to enable the development and commercialization of solutions which ultimately contribute to the enhancement of human conditions or to a more sustainable economy. I joined the technology transfer team at VIB as licensing manager. After a few years I joined the company BASF as technology acquisition and innovation manager and after a few years there I went back to VIB as a business development manager. In my current job I look for opportunities to transform research into innovation and moving it from the lab to the marketplace. My master really helped me to be able to quickly grasp the research and its potential, look at it critically and to discuss eye-to-eye with researchers and my counterparts in other companies.

Bullo Mamo



2007



Project Scientist, the University of California Davis

The required internship during my MSc Plant Biotechnology encouraged me to go to the United States, working at the University of California Davis as a research scholar. Afterwards I remained in the US to do my PhD at the University of Minnesota and then back to California to do postdoctoral research. I am currently working on determining the genetic basis of resistance to lettuce drop, a pathogen of lettuce crops. I am using a systems approach that combines genetic, molecular and biochemical techniques. I am part of a collaborative research project between the Department of Plant Pathology and Crop Improvement and Protection research of the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture).

Yonina Hendrikse



2016



Junior Plant Breeder Lettuce, Bejo Zaden

After studying the two master programs Plant Sciences and Plant Biotechnology, I graduated in 2016. From the start I was interested to become a breeder, as this would be a versatile job. I chose to work for Bejo Zaden as a Junior Plant Breeder in Lettuce. Here I can use the knowledge and experiences from my masters and develop them further. This job is great, one moment I could be going through my material in the greenhouse, another time work at my computer and figure out what to do based on the marker results, or meet with colleagues on how to improve our breeding program with the use of new technologies or I could be selecting in the field, which can be in the Netherlands or somewhere abroad. Really, try it.

Max van der Heide

 2019  PhD Student Marie Curie ESR, University of Hamburg

After finishing my master in Plant Biotechnology, I started working as a PhD student at the University of Hamburg. Here I am working on meiotic recombination in maize. In this project I am working a lot with microscopy to study the regulation of meiosis in maize. One of the goals of my project is developing a live imaging system to visualize maize meiosis in real time. My PhD project is part of a European Marie Curie network that includes multiple PhD students from all over Europe, who are working on related subjects. This means that we often have meetings somewhere in Europe to take part in outreach events or to discuss our progress.

Patrick Stitselaar

 2017  Crop Researcher Brassica, Rijk Zwaan

After obtaining my bachelor degree in Biology at VU University, I moved to Wageningen for the master Plant Biotechnology. I learned how small molecular changes in DNA can have enormous effects on the characteristics of plants. To see how this fundamental knowledge is used in practice I did an internship at the Aubrika Breeding department of Rijk Zwaan. During my internship I applied for the position of Crop Researcher Brassica. As a Crop Researcher my aim is to develop molecular markers for the cauliflower, cabbage, kohlrabi and broccoli breeders to improve their crops. To develop these markers I work together in multidisciplinary teams on several QTL mapping projects. The content of the master program prepared me very well for my current responsibilities and activities.

Roos Goessen



2018



PhD Student at the Department of Forestry,
Laval University

I graduated my master Plant Biotechnology in January 2018. I did my MSc internship at the University of Guelph (Canada), and kept on working there as a research assistant right after graduating. In September 2018, I started as a PhD student at Laval University (Canada) in the forestry department. My PhD project focusses on elucidating the adaptive potential of quaking aspen, the most widespread forest tree species in North America, under projected climate change. My current position combines lab work, phenotyping and bioinformatics (genomics), three aspects that I obtained a lot of experience with during my master, through courses, my thesis and internship. My master was thus definitely a great preparation for my current position.

Susan Moenga



2014



PhD Student, the University of California Davis

I was able to come to Wageningen for my Master Biotechnology because I obtained the Paul Speijer and Anne van den Ban grant, for which I am very grateful. My master prepared me well for my current job as a PhD student at the University of California Davis. Here I study drought tolerance in wild chickpea relatives by looking at the molecular physiology of the plants' drought responses.



'My work is closely linked to my study, as I work and communicate daily with different stakeholders in the field of organic farming, such as farmers and companies.'

Marten Nijhuis

Fogelina Cuperus



2016



Junior Agroecologist, WUR Institute for Applied Research in Field Crops; PhD student at the Farming Systems Ecology Group, Wageningen University & Research

I am combining my job as an applied researcher in agroecology with a PhD in strip cropping and biodiversity. In my job as applied researcher at WUR Field Crops I am a generalist, combining many tasks like supervising BSc and MSc students, designing and coordinating field experiments and its data-sets on crop diversity, visiting farmers, project acquisition and coordinating several regional projects on nature inclusive agriculture. Besides, I recently started a PhD at the Farming Systems Ecology group, highlighting one of the aspects I also work on during my job as applied researcher: crop diversity and its effects on above ground biodiversity. The combination of a fundamental approach and working in applied research, with and for farmers is my dream job. I hope many more ambitious young researches will follow the example, becoming a vital key in bridging the gap between science and practice. The current day agricultural challenges and transitions don't (only) need impact factors, they need impact on the ground!

Hongkun Oh



2016



Entrepreneur, Agriconsulting GROW

After I graduated from my master Organic Agriculture I first worked as a humanitarian worker for INGO World Vision. In 2018 I started my own company in agricultural consultancy "Agriconsulting GROW", in the Netherlands. As an agricultural development consultant, I assist people interested in doing agricultural business in the Netherlands (training, excursion, business matchmaking, market survey, etc) and provide project consulting services to the agricultural organizations working in developing countries.

Ken van Driesten



2018



Forage Specialist, More Than Just Feed Inc.

I grew up on a farm in Alberta, Canada, and obtained my bachelor in Agricultural Geography from the local University of Lethbridge. After seeing the excellent programmes and global reputation of WUR, I travelled to the Netherlands in 2016 to begin my studies. I graduated with a master in Organic Agriculture (Agroecology) in May of 2018 and returned to Alberta. I soon found a position at More Than Just Feed Inc., as forage specialist. I work with a team of dairy nutritionists and consultants under the motto of “helping farmers feed people”. The knowledge I gained at WUR helps me daily, as I connect livestock nutrition with crop production and soil health, improving nutrient cycles and agricultural sustainability in my favorite place in the world.

Maren Peters



2016



Sourcing Development Coordinator, Tradin

I currently work as Sourcing Development coordinator at the organic trade and sourcing company Tradin Organic Agriculture. I am responsible for setting up integrated supply chains for tropical products, mainly from West Africa, and support our partners in implementing organic systems and other prerequisites for market access to the EU and USA. Next to that, I am working on collaborations with international organizations and associations active in the products’ countries of origin. I started my career at Tradin with an internship in the last year of my master programme. After my internship, I was offered the position of sourcing development coordinator. Since then, I have gained more and more expertise, network and responsibilities, and it is great to see projects and partners grow as well!

Marten Nijhuis



2018



Specialist Supervision on Organic Farming,
Skal Bioncontrole

During my master's I did my internship at Skal and afterwards they offered me a full-time contract. My main work consists of interpretation of the European legislation for organic products, handling cases when an illegal substance is found in organic products and handling critical deviations from the organic regulation. My work is closely linked to my study, as I work and communicate daily with different stakeholders in the field of organic farming, such as farmers and companies.

Pragya Shrestha



2018



Agriculture Extension Officer,
Department of Agriculture Hariharbhawan Lalitpur

In my job I try to bridge the gap that exists between agriculture research, extension and education through policy intervention and implementation in Hariharbhawan, Nepal. I also coordinate among government, cooperatives and private sectors for disseminating different agricultural technologies including organic farming and accumulate the information on traditional and modern agricultural technologies prevalent in Nepal for further studies. Even though the organic sector in Nepal is still in its rudimentary stage, the knowledge I gained in my master programme helps me to disseminate and promote organic farming practices. I also have a keen interest in rooftop farming, so I hope to promote that in the future.

Seth de Vlieger



2017



Residential Staff, Brockwood Park School

After my bachelor of International Project and Change Management, I came to Wageningen for my master Organic Agriculture. When I graduated I immediately started working at Brockwood Park School, an international boarding school. There I am a tutor, social media manager and also a kitchen chef. Even though it seems like it is not linked to my master's, the school places key importance on ecology and nature education. So I can still use the knowledge I gained in my master programme.





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know more?

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