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Study trip to South Africa

Last April 24 Ph.D. students of the section Food and Bioprocess Engineering went to South Africa for their biannual "Ph.D. study trip". The first week we visited universities, institutes and companies in Capetown and surroundings. The second week we visited several sites around Johannesburg. The following companies were visited: Servavac, a producer of bulk enzymes; Anchor yeast, a company producing several kinds of yeast for beer/wine production; and Parmalat, a dairy company. At the universities of Stellenbosch, Capetown and Pretoria and the Technikon Pretoria (bio)chemical

and food engineering faculties were visited. South Africa has two large research institutes, the ARC (Agricultural Research Council) and the CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research). We had a tour of several sites of both institutes where the research was focused on biotechnology and food sciences. In general the research in South Africa is more applied than in the Netherlands. Not only at the universities and research institutes, where research/production was focused on indigenous plants and typical South African problems, but also in the companies. The South

African government stimulates this research to eventually create equal chances for everybody. South Africa is a country of huge contrasts. During our study trip we mainly saw the rich part of South Africa. A large part of the population is still very poor, though. The bad exchange rate of the rand, the South African currency, only makes it worse. Currently, an effort is taking place to create equal chances for everybody. Unfortunately apartheid can still be seen everywhere. There are large differences in the kind of jobs performed by native or white people. A huge step forward is the compulsory education for all children. It will take a while, though, before the effects of apartheid have disappeared. After travelling for two weeks through South Africa we got many impressions of the country, the people and the research being carried out. We have learned a lot about how the economy and development of a country influences research and product development at universities, institutes and companies.

**Ciska Dalm, PhD student
Bioprocess Engineering**



EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

As another year comes to an end and the season craves floods our eyes, ears, noses and taste buds with Christmas paraphernalia, here at the Editorial Board we are pleased to present our 6th issue of the VLAG-FLASH.

In this number you will find, besides our regular columns (In & Out, New PhD projects, Dissertations, Overview of the Courses and News from the PhD Councils), a variety of interesting stories including NUTRIM's 10th anniversary celebration. As part of the program a symposium was organized on November 28th and 29th by Maastricht's Nutrition and Toxicology Research Institute with the title "Nutrition: the metabolic challenge". You can also read an account of the PhD study trips of this year and including some pictures.

Further more, we have some news from the secretariat: Current Research 2002/2003, a booklet containing a description of every VLAG PhD student's project, is almost ready and will be sent to every PhD-student of VLAG in January 2003. We would like to welcome a new member of the VLAG team, Trix Claassen who started working as a secretary on November 1st. We also want to congratulate Yvonne Smolders, who gave birth to a baby girl (Heleen) last September.

Finally, we would like to wish you a wonderful holiday season, independent of religious preference, and the very best for 2003. And for those who couldn't attend VLAG's PhD party on December 13th and missed Fré Pepping's impersonation of Sinterklaas, we will include some pictures on our next issue!

The Editorial Board

You can reach the editorial board of the VLAG-FLASH by e-mail at: ingeborg.vanleeuwen-bol@wur.nl

News from the secretariat of the Graduate School VLAG

10th year anniversary of Nutrim

On November 28 and 29 NUTRIM celebrated its 10-year anniversary with the symposium 'Nutrition: the metabolic challenge'. Some 20 speakers ranging from NUTRIM PhD-students, postdocs, senior-researchers to (inter) national speakers took part.



Photo 1, Prof. Wim Saris

Some 120 participants listened to the lectures which were divided into 4 sessions i.e. 'Lipids in physiology and disease', 'Chronic inflammation and metabolism', 'Gut dynamics', and 'Obesity and metabolism'. These themes were elucidated from various disciplines and approaches. Together the lectures offered a reflection of the research that is carried out within NUTRIM. The focus is on the fact that metabolism of man is strongly affected by nutrition which, most

importantly, varies inter-individually. By means of food intervention it is possible to influence specific metabolic processes resulting in a successful outcome for health and disease.

In his opening speech Prof. Wim Saris (photo 1), Scientific Director, spoke briefly about NUTRIM's history. He also looked forward into the (near) future, more specifically he mentioned NUTRIM's participation in the Wageningen Centre for Food Sciences (WCFS) as per 1 January 2003. Furthermore the audience came to know that NUTRIM together with Wageningen University, is among the top of the world with regard to the number of scientific publications on food matters, moreover the Netherlands



Photo 2, Prof. Bruce German

(NUTRIM & WU) is ranked second after the US. Prof. Saris' speech ended with the slogan 'Towards better nutrition in health and disease'.

During the symposium Prof. Bruce German (photo 2), Nestlé Research Centre / University of California, Dept. of Food Sciences, presented the WOCV NUTRIM-Lecture 'Lipid metabolism: from ice cream to hot genes' for which he received the bronze from Prof. Saris. The aim of the WOCV Foundation (Foundation for Research on Circulation and Nutrition Problems) is to help increase the quality of research in the fields of cardiovascular diseases and nutrition, as carried out within the institutes CARIM (Cardiovascular Research Institute Maastricht) and NUTRIM (Nutrition and Toxicology Research Institute Maastricht). To achieve this objective, the WOCV Foundation organises a series of lectures given by internationally renowned scientists in the aforementioned fields. In addition, the WOCV Foundation may award prizes to authors of theses in the above mentioned fields of research. On the second day of the symposium Marc Daemen (photo 3) received the WOCV thesis Award for his thesis 'Apoptosis



Photo 3, Marc Daemen

and inflammation in experimental ischemia reperfusion: Matters of life and cell death' from Prof. Wout Lamers, Chairman of the jury. Marc received the award for his innovative research of high scientific quality, its relevance to society, the number of publications at his (young) age and because of the excellent introductory chapter: comprehensive, concise and clear.

The symposium was organised by Prof. Wim Buurman, Prof. Robert-Jan Brummer, Noël Lebens and Yvonne Sondejker

New PhD Projects

- **Jolanda Lambert, 15-08-2002**
(AIO-project WU-Microbiology / NIZO. Supervisors: Prof. W.M. de Vos, Dr. M. Kleerebezem)
- **Sandra Beijer, 01-09-2002**
ATP infusion in palliative home care in cancer patients
(AIO-project UM-Epidemiology. Supervisor: Dr. P. Dagnelie)
- **Suzanne G. Bolder, 01-09-2002**
Innovative structures and textures on basis of acid-denatured whey proteins.
(AIO-project, WU-Food Physics. Supervisors: Prof. E. van der Linden, Dr. L. Sagis)
- **Renate Ganzevles, 01-09-2002**
Stability of emulsions and foams.
(AIO-project WU-PDQ & Physical and Colloid Sciences. Supervisors: Prof. M.A. Cohen Stuart, Prof. A.G.J. Voragen, Dr. T. van Vliet)
- **Jeannet Rens-Pols, 01-09-2002**
Meso-structural dynamics of carbohydrate systems under shear in conjoined geometries.
(AIO-project WU Food Physics. Supervisors: Prof. E. van der Linden, Dr. P. Venema)
- **Vincent van Beelen, 15-09-2002**
PUFA's: metabolic profiling in relation to human celluar responses.
AIO-project, PRI/ATO/WU-Toxicology (Within the Center for Human Nutrigenomics). Supervisors: Dr. R.J. Bino, Dr. H. Mooibroek, Prof. I.M.C.M. Rietjens)
- **Michiel Wels, 15-09-2002**
Bioinformatic and experimental analysis of regulatory pathways in *Lactobacillus plantarum*.
(AIO-project WU-Microbiology/ KUN-CMBI / NIZO / WCFS. Supervisors: Prof. R. Siezen, Prof. W.M. de Vos, Dr. M. Kleerebezem)
- **Vincent de Boer, 01-10-2002**
Risk Evaluation of Flavonoids in Foods.
(OIO-project RIKILT/WU-Toxicology. Supervisors: Prof. I.M.C.M. Rietjens, Dr. G. Alink, Dr. P.C.H. Hollman)

- **Gerd-Jan Coenen, 01-10-2002**
Interactions of pectin within the plant cell wall architecture.
(AIO-project WU-Food Chemistry. Supervisor: Dr. H.A. Schols)
- **David Cohen, 01-10-2002**
(AIO-project WU-Microbiology, within the Centre for Human Nutrigenomics. Supervisors: Prof. W.M. de Vos, Dr. Elaine Vaughan)
- **Tessa Kilkens, 01-10-2002**
Psychiatry & Neuropsychology, Serotonergic mechanisms in Irritable Bowel Syndrome.
(AIO-project, UM. Supervisors Dr. A. Honig, Dr. R.J. Brummer)
- **Manuela Lejeune, 01-10-2002**
Modelling weight maintenance in relation to the prevention and treatment of obesity.
(AIO-project, UM-Human Biology. Supervisor: Dr. M. Westerterp-Plantenga)
- **Jianfen Liang, 01-10-2002**
Improving the bioavailability of minerals in rice.
(AIO-project, WU-Food Microbiology and -Hygiene. Supervisors: Prof. R. Hamer, Dr. R. Nout)
- **John Penders, 01-10-2002**
Role of gut microflora in the development of atopic diseases.
(AIO-project, UM-Epidemiology. Supervisor: Dr. C. Thijs)
- **Marcel ter Veld, 01-10-2002**
Toxic effects in diffuse contaminants in the endocrine function of man and wildlife species.
(AIO-project, WU-Toxicology. Supervisors: Prof. I.M.C.M. Rietjens, Dr. A. Murk)
- **Jos van der Velden, 01-10-2002**
The role of Glycogen Synthase Kinase-3beta (GSK-3beta) in myogenic differentiation and IGF-I induced muscle hypertrophy
(AIO-project, UM-Pulmonology. Supervisor Dr. A. Schols)

- **Vincent Marion, 08-10-2002**
Anatomie & Embryologie, Role of endogenous arginine biosynthesis in gut development and function,
(AIO-project. UM Supervisor: Dr. E. Köhler)
- **Ping Wang, 14-10-2002**
Proteomics and transcriptomics analysis of the effect of selected nutrients on in vitro fat cell (de)differentiation and adipokine excretion.
(AIO-project, UM-Humane Biology. Supervisors: Prof. E. Mariman, Dr. J. Renes)
- **Pepijn Boeree, 15-10-2002**
AIO-project WU-Food microbiology. Supervisors: Dr. T. Abee
- **Elke Cocquet, 15-10-2002**
Human health and fatty acid dependent gene regulation – employing blood cell gene expression as a marker for whole body health status.
(AIO-project Human Nutrition & Epidemiology. Supervisors: Prof. M. Müller, Dr. E. Lichtenauer-Kaligis, Dr. S. Kersten, Dr. G. Hooiveld)
- **Gabrielle Pretzer, 15-10-2002**
Nutrigenomics and transcriptomics of interactions between host and probiotics during E.Coli diarrhea.
AIO-project, WUR-ID-Lelystad/NIZO. Supervisors: Dr. H. Snel, Dr. T. Niewold)
- **Els Swennen (successor to E. Gätje), 01-11-2002**
ATP infusion as a natural modality to prevent fatigue in non-small-cell lung cancer patients during and after high-dose radiotherapy: efficacy and underlying mechanisms
(AIO-project, UM-Epidemiology, supervisors: Prof. P. van den Brandt, Prof. A. Bast, Dr. P. Dagnelie)

- **Anne Kienhuis, 01-12-2002**
Functional genomics for mechanism-based toxicity assessment: in vivo-in vitro comparisons and interspecies extrapolation.
(AIO-project, UM-GRAT/TNO. Supervisor Dr. J. van Delft)
- **Karin Struijk, 01-12-2002**
Modulation of the bioactivity of phytoestrogens by enzymes of the human intestinal flora.
(AIO-project, WU-Food Chemistry. Supervisors: Dr. J.-P. Vincken, Dr. H. Gruppen, Prof. A.G.J. Voragen)
- **KA Baken, 01-01-2003**
Can immunotoxic agents be characterized on the basis of their differential gene expression profiles
(AIO-project, UM-GRAT. Supervisors Prof. J. Kleinjans, Prof. van Loveren)

- **Hauke Hiltz, 01-01-2003**
Novel extraction technologies in juice manufacture: characterisation of polysaccharides (AIO-project, WU-Food Chemistry. Supervisor: Dr. H.A. Schols).
- **Hans Ketelslegers, 01-01-2003**
Toxicogenomic applications in biomonitoring studies: Mutlplex genotyping as biomarker for genetic susceptibility.
(AIO-project UM-GRAT, Supervisor: Dr. J. van Delft)
- **Yvonne Staal, 01-01-2003**
Mechanism-based approaches to improved risk assessment of ambient air polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (part of AMBIPAH)
(AIO-project, UM-GRAT. Supervisors: Prof. F.J. van Schooten, Dr. J. van Delft)

New Postdoc Projects

- **Jan Benjamins, 01-09-2002**
Biopolymer Stability and Functionality.
Sub-project: Molecular properties determining protein adsorption at air/water and oil/water interfaces in relation to functional properties.
WU-Food Chemistry, supervisor: Dr.ir. H. de Jongh
VLAG Fellow
- **Perez Gutierrez, 01-09-2002**
Optimization enzyme stability by engineering cyclic polypeptides.
WU- Microbiology, supervisor: Dr. J. van der Oost.
VLAG Fellow
- **Andrey Martorin, 02-09-2002**
Real-time single enzyme dynamics
WU- Biochemistry, supervisors: Dr. W. van Berkel, Dr. T. Visser
VLAG Fellow
- **Mirjam Kabel, 01-10-2002**
Efficient bioconversion of agricultural by-product of ethanol.
WU-Food Chemistry, supervisor: Dr. H.A. Schols

- **Tai-Hua Mu, 01-10-2002**
Peptide-induced insulin response: use of leucine and phenylalanin rich peptides.
WU-Food Chemistry, supervisors: Dr. H. Gruppen, Dr. G.A. van Koningsveld
VLAG Fellow
- **Vassiliki Ecarchou, 15-10-2002**
Fast identification of antioxidants in herbs by on-line techniques
WU-Biochemistry/Organic Chemistry, supervisors: Dr. J. Vervoort, Dr. T. van Beek
VLAG Fellow
- **Aimee Paulussen, 01-11-2002**
The influence of candidate genes and perinatal environment on lipid and carbohydrate metabolism.
UM-Genetics & Celbiology,
- **Karel DeCroos, 01-12-2002**
Micellar Properties of Bile Salt/Saponin Mixtures.
WU-Food Chemistry/University of Ghent, supervisors: Dr. J.-P. Vincken, Prof. W. Verstraete
Fellow

Ph.D.-trip to the USA, October 25th –November 7th

We traveled in two groups to the USA. The first group spent the weekend in New York City. The second group arrived on Sunday. The first visit was Air Products. This company sells equipment to freeze food with liquid nitrogen. On our way to the motel, we had "dinner" in a fast food or for the luckiest at a Chinese restaurant. Chen did succeed to obtain beers from the restaurant for the thirstiest of us. At the motel Café 'Chez Armand' opened its doors. Tuesday, early in the morning we depart for Cornell University. Perfect sunny day, but ridiculously cold! Most of us were sleeping. Some also snoring! And Loudly! Sergio used the blanket and pillow that he "borrowed" from Singapore Airlines! He still borrows them!! Armand took a French shower (sprayed deodorant), but ended up waking the entire bus! Welcome by Cornell. We had a two-day symposium at Cornell University with very interesting talks,



especially the ones of our own students. The Ph.D. students of Cornell preferred to stay in the lab or go for classes rather than listening to our presentations. Again early in the morning we depart for Heinz on thursday. After a six hours drive we arrive in

Pittsburgh. After the lunch the program started with a short presentation about the history and a description of the Research and Development, and a tour through the building. The program was closed by different presentations by Ph.D. students from Wagenin-

gen. It was an interesting and well-organized day. It was good to see how product development is organized in a big company such as Heinz. We stayed in the Days Inn Downtown in Columbus, which was not at all in the downtown!! On Friday we left Columbus at a normal time in the morning and set out for Givaudan in Cincinnati. Here we had a tour of approximately 2 hours through the R&D department and the creation and application group, which was very interesting. We showed our poster in a poster session.

Even on Saturday we had a visit: Central Soya. (See photo). Also this time we left early, after a long night of pubbing. Not everybody was very happy with this, but a good sleep in the bus helped to recover!! After lunch and presentations of our Ph.D. students we got a tour around the laboratories and pilot plants

of Central Soya. The research focuses on the use and application of soy protein isolate and lecithin. When the tour finished we got on the bus again to reach Chicago. We finished the day with a few drinks, looking forward to our free day on sunday. Monday was the last day we had a program: Purdue University. We had a nice tour around the different labs and several presentations. Because there were so many people interested in our research, we had to split the group into a microbiology and chemistry group. This interesting visit was concluded with a tour around the campus. On Tuesday morning we visited the 'Science and Industry' museum. In the afternoon the first group depart to the airport and the other group had two days to visit Chicago.

Sandra Hinz

OVERVIEW OF THE 2002/2003 COURSES

VLAG/NUTRIM courses 2003

www.wau.nl/vlag/eduvlco.html

www.nutrium.unimaas.nl

2003

3-7 February	Winterschool Physical Chemistry, Han-Sur-Lesse, Belgium
20-21 February	VLAG/SZVG Masterclass "Calcium & Body Weight", Maastricht
24-28 February	Ecophysiology of the GI-tract
31 March-2 April	VLAG uitstroomcursus (also 14-15 April)
2-7 June:	Nutritional and lifestyle epidemiology
June or September	Masterclass Nutrigenomics
29 Sept -2 October	VLAG PhD week, Bilthoven
13-16 October:	Food perception and food preference
3-7 November	Industrial Proteins
23-29 November:	EU-course Chemistry and biochemistry of antioxidants

Other activities:

15-16 May:	4th International Symposium on Industrial Proteins "Industrial Proteins in Perspective", Ede. See: www.wau.nl/vlag/ip-4
8-9 November	2nd International Nutrigenomics Conference (TNO)

Thematic meetings:

23 April	4th CHN-thematic meeting
22 October	5th CHN-thematic meeting

Courses will be held in Wageningen unless indicated.

**Merry Christmas
and
a Happy and Brightful 2003**



The Graduate School



News from the PhD Councils

Wanted: PhD students



Are you currently writing your PhD and never heard of LAIOO? Then it's high time that you had an introductory lesson. Read the Five Ws of the Union on this internetpage : <http://pubwww.tudelft.nl/laioo/w5.htm>

Does this inspire you? Are you interested in a rewarding and eventful year? Would you like to become more active?

The positions of vice-president and treasurer will shortly become vacant on the Board of the National Dutch Union of PhD students. If you are interested in applying for one of these positions then please contact one of the present board members.

LAIOO is the coordinating association of the local AIO student unions (for example the Leiden Promovendi Organisation or LEO for short). Each local union has a representative in the National Association. These local unions play a crucial role in the functioning of LAIOO, by ensuring the maintenance of an important communication link between LAIOO and the members of the local associations. The members of the LAIOO Committee are elected by the local unions and this currently consists of:

President:	Ingrid Giebels (giebels@nat.vu.nl)
Vice President:	Mischa Peters (mischa.peters@let.uu.nl)
Secretary:	Sandra van der Graaf (sandra.vandergraaf@wur.nl)
Treasurer:	Felicite Adams (adams@fsw.eur.nl)
Webmaster:	Ian Sumner (I.Sumner@law.uu.nl)
International Contacts:	Annemarie Kerkhoff (Annemarie.Kerkhoff@let.uu.nl)

LAIOO is an independent organization deriving the money for its budget from the contributions of its members (i.e. the local student unions).

Fourth International
Symposium on

SENER

IOP

INDUSTRIAL *proteins*



Industrial proteins
in perspective



Second and final announcement
and call for abstracts

May 15 and 16, 2003

Hotel-, Cultural- and Conference Centre The Beehorst
Ede, The Netherlands



**Don't worry about it...
A lot of people don't like kids.**



Name Julian Ramakers
Place & date of birth Sittard (The Netherlands), 01/12/1978
Research title Nutritional modulation of inflammatory processes in the pathology of atherosclerosis and inflammatory bowel disease
Department/University Human Biology, Maastricht University
Promotors Prof. Dr. Ir. R.P. Mensink
Start of PhD project 01/01/2002

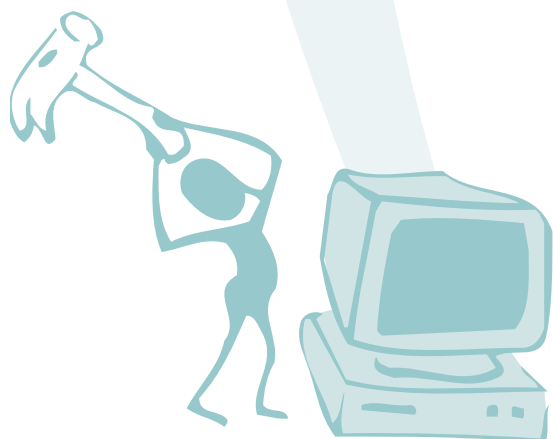


When I was a teenager I always said that I wanted to study something like biology but I don't wanted to be a physician. So in 1997 I decided to study Health Sciences in Maastricht. The "problem based learning"-system they use(d) was also a reason to choose Maastricht. During my MSc fieldwork I was working at the Department of General Surgery to unravel the pathogenesis of inflammatory

bowel disease (IBD). In November 2001 I graduated and in January I could start my PhD project at the department of Human Biology. The project deals also with IBD but now the aim is to modulate the inflammation processes with nutrition. I never had expected that I ever should do a project with nutrition but when I read this project I was directly interested. I like(d) the project because it is very broad,

many techniques should be used and the underlying mechanism responsible for the effects will be studied. First I will test different fatty acids, antioxidants and micronutrients in their capacity to inhibit inflammation in an in vitro cell culture system. The next step will be to set up mouse models for IBD (and atherosclerosis) and give them different diets based on the in vitro results. I see this project as a big challenge; it will

have ups and downs, but I will learn to live from the positive results.



Name Wilbert H.M. Heijne
Place & date of birth Geneva (Switzerland), 21/05/1976
Research title Toxicogenomics of hepatotoxicity
Department/University TNO Nutrition and Food Research Institute
Promotors Prof. P.van Bladeren, Dr.B. van Ommen
Start of PhD-project January 2000 – 2004/2005

Functional genomics is a new name for an old discipline: biology!

Like in the past, the organism is studied in a holistic approach rather than by zooming in on one tiny molecule or reaction in the cell. Novel technologies exploit the complete genome sequences and powerful (bio)informatics. We now measure (nearly) all the gene transcripts, proteins or metabolites in a cell at once, like taking a snapshot of the cell in action. This reveals which state a cell is in, eg. damaged, diseased, recovering, or even: healthy! We apply gene and protein expression measurements in order to explain mechanisms of toxicity. Extrapolation of *in vitro*

toxicity testing is facilitated and toxicity of unknown compounds may be predicted based on similarities in gene expression profiles to known toxicants. We chose a model toxic compound, bromobenzene, that induces liver damage, to determine the hepatotoxic response at the gene expression level. Alterations were observed in correlation with *ao.* liver necrosis, and effects were obvious before "classical" toxicity indicated damage. Cellular pathways involved in bromobenzene-induced hepatotoxicity were identified, including yet unknown processes. We are trying now to relate the changed gene activities to protein levels and enzyme activities. Effects of various liver toxic

compounds will be measured both after *in vivo* and *in vitro* exposures to compare mechanisms. The setting up of the technologies was a large task, but the real challenge in functional genomics research is to get (bio)logical insights from a mass of data, inevitably requiring bioinformatics tools, and a lot of patience. It is however very satisfying to gather this wealth of data from a single *in vivo* experiment and to explain toxicity through integration of the findings. Working as a PhD-fellow at TNO offers a great opportunity to fully explore sophisticated functional genomics technologies, but also to spend effort on in-depth research on the biological relevance of the findings.



Name Mariska Klerk
Place & date of birth Vlaardingen (The Netherlands), 12/05/1972
Title thesis Homocysteine and coronary heart disease: the role of polymorphic genes and hemostasis
Promotors Prof. Frans Kok, Prof. Evert Schouten, Dr. Petra Verhoef
Date of defense 20/12/2002, Wageningen University



Epidemiological studies have shown a positive association between elevated homocysteine levels and cardiovascular disease risk. However, the causality of the association is still under debate. In addition, the potential pathogenic mechanism is still unclear, but it has been proposed that homocysteine would affect hemostasis. The studies described in my thesis explored the evidence for causality of homocysteine in the occurrence and pathogenesis of coronary heart disease (CHD) by investigating the role of polymorphic genes. In addition, we investigated the role of hemostasis as potential mechanism. The work was performed at the division of Human Nutrition & Epidemiology of the Wageningen University, in collaboration with

the Wageningen Centre for Food Sciences. In a meta-analysis we have shown that homozygosity for the 677C>T mutation in the gene encoding methylenetetrahydrofolate reductase, an enzyme involved in homocysteine remethylation, was associated with a higher risk of coronary heart disease (CHD). This finding provide support for the hypothesis that an impaired homocysteine metabolism is causally related to CHD risk. Homocysteine-lowering through B-vitamin supplementation did not clearly affect hemostasis in healthy volunteers. When I started the project in 1998, it was not because of getting a PhD degree. I just wanted to work on a interesting research project for several year. What especially appealed to me in a PhD project was the variety of tasks you are

faced with. You are involved in all phases of research; from protocol writing to reporting of results. You have the opportunity to broaden your knowledge. I also learned a lot from educational task, among which supervising MSc-students. Of course you also learn a lot from your own mistakes, and if you would do it again you would handle things differently. Looking back, I think all these things together make the PhD degree very valuable for me. At the moment, I am working as a stand-in for my co-promotor who is on maternity leave. In February, I will go on maternity leave myself. After that, I would like to do a post-doc project abroad for several years, preferably in France. The first contacts are made, and I hope this will work out.



What PhD's always wanted to know ...

Dear PhD student,

Have you ever had a question that you did not dare to ask? Do you think that you know something deep inside that everybody should know?

This is your opportunity!

Send us your questions, remarks and opinions (VLAGEFLASH@list.nutepi.wau.nl), and we will get back to you on that.

The following VLAG PhD-fellows successfully defended their thesis

– 30 September 2002 at Wageningen University
Mirjam Kabel: 'Characterisation of complex xylo-oligosaccharides from xylan rich by-products.'
Supervisors: Prof. A.G.J. Voragen, Dr. H.A. Schols

– 2 Oktober 2002 at Wageningen University
Isabel M. Aidos: 'Production of high-quality fish oil from herring byproducts.'
Supervisors: Prof. R.M. Boom, Dr. A. van der Padt, Dr. J.B. Luten

– 2 Oktober 2002 at Wageningen University
Esther den Aantrekker: 'Recontamination in food precessing – quantitative modelling for risk assessment.'
Supervisors: Prof. M. van Schothorst, Prof. R.M.Boom, Dr. M.H. Zwietering

– 4 October 2002 at Maastricht University
Eva M.R. Kovacs: 'Satiety and body weight regulation.'
Supervisors: Prof. W. Saris, Dr. M.Westerterp-Plantenga

– 11 Oktober 2002 at Wageningen University
Ingeborg C. Boels: 'Metabolic engineering of exopolysaccharide Production in Lactococcus Lactis.'
Supervisors: Prof. W.M. de Vos, Dr. M. Kleerebezem

– 25 Oktober 2002 at Wageningen University
Peter van den Bogaard: 'Catabolite control of sugar metabolism in Streptococcus thermophilus.'
Supervisors: Prof. W.M. de Vos, Prof. O.P. Kuipers, Dr. M. Kleerebezem

– 30 October 2002 at Maastricht University
C.J.A.W. van Gool: 'Perinatal essential fatty acids and atopy.'
Supervisors: Prof. P. van den Brandt, Dr. Thijs

– 1 November 2002 at Wageningen University
Wendeline Wouters-Wesseling: 'Impact of nutritional supplements on health indices in elderly people.'
Supervisors: Prof. W.A. van Staveren, Prof. J.G. Bindels, Dr. C.P.G.M. de Groot

– 7 November 2002 at Maastricht University
A. Knaapen: 'The role of neutrophils in particle-induced DNA damage in the lung.'
Supervisors: Prof. A. Bast, Dr. P. Borm

– 14 November 2002 at Maastricht University
P.L.M. Cox-Reijnen: 'The validation of bio-electrical impedance spectroscopy (BIS) for measuring body composition in patients.'
Supervisors: Prof. P. Soeters, Dr. van Kreel

– 12 November 2002 at Wageningen University
Erica J. Helmroth: 'Release of additives form packaging plastics.'
Supervisors: Prof. W.M.F. Jongen, Prof. J.A. Wesselingh, Dr. M. Dekker

– 25 November 2002 at Wageningen University
Ronald Neeleman: ' Biomass performance: monitoring and control in bio-pharmaceutical production.'
Supervisors: Prof. G. van Straten, Dr. A.J.B. van Boxtel, Dr. E.C. Beuvery

– 27 November 2002 at Wageningen University
Mazen Khaled El Tamer: 'Molecular regulation of plant monoterpene biosynthesis in relation to fragrance.'
Supervisors: Prof. A.G.J. Voragen, Dr. H.J. Bouwmeester, Dr. J.P. Roozen.

– 4 December 2002 at Wageningen University
N. Slimani: '24-hours dietary recalls as reference calibration measurements in EPIC: from a statistical theory to an epidemiological application.'
Supervisors: Prof. W.A. van Staveren, Dr. E. Riboli

– 6 December 2002 at Maastricht University
P. Rump: 'Effect of essential and trans fatty acid status in fetal life and early childhood on cardiovascular risk levels: possible interaction with selected gene polymorphisms'
Supervisors: Prof. G. Hornstra, Prof. R. Mensink

– 20 December 2002 at Wageningen University
Mariska Klerk: 'Homocysteine and coronary heart disease: the role of polymorphic genes and hemostasis'
Supervisors: Prof. F.J. Kok, Prof. E.G. Schouten, Dr. P. Verhoef

Colophon

VLAG-FLASH is the newsletter of the PhD-students of the Graduate School Vlag (Advanced Studies in Food Technology, Agrobiotechnology, Nutrition and Health Sciences). VLAG-FLASH is published three times a year. In every newsletter attention will be paid to ongoing research, general information concerning training- and research activities of Vlag, the agenda of relevant courses, congresses etc.

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VLAG Ph.D. excursion to England, 27th October – 1st of November 2002

In the period of 27th of October to 1st of November, we have made an excursion to England with 14 Ph.D.'s and 2 senior scientists. The Ph.D.'s and senior scientist come from the Wageningen Centre for Food Sciences, NIZO food research or Wageningen University. We are all working on subjects related to food biopolymers and structure formation. The goal of this excursion was to meet people from University's and Institutes who are working on similar subject and to discuss and learn from each other.



Our trip should have been started on Sunday the 27th, if there was not such an incredible storm that day. Therefore, we left in the middle of the night from Wageningen to the Hoek van Holland and a few hours later we arrived (in great shape) in the

harbour of Harwich. We first visited the Institute of food Research in Norwich (IFR). During the day, several people from IFR and several people from our group gave interesting talks. We had already met several people from the Food Colloid 2002 and it became a real sociable evening. We went to the famous beer festival, where they pour out about 200 different beers and ciders. So the first day became a success.

The second day, we drove to Leeds. Leeds University is situated in middle of town. The people from Leeds and our Ph.D.'s as well again gave high quality talks, which resulted in good discussions. After the poster session, we went together with the Leeds people to an Asian restaurant, where we had a delicious dinner.

The day after, we went to the University of Nottingham where we went through the same program. However we did not go to the pub to practised some serious sports: Skittles!! (and we ate some English specialities). This is not skittles as we do in the Netherlands. In England it's a medieval kind of skittles, really amusing.

On the fourth day we visited to the University of Cambridge. This

was really special because only very few groups are allowed to visit the University. After the presentations we had a few hours spare time to walk around in the city. Cambridge is an impressive city with lots of culture. The last day we visited Unilever Colworth House, which is very special because several Ph.D.'s have been there for a traineeship. For the people who have never been there, it's located in the middle of nowhere on a huge estate, but worthwhile to see and to speak with the people there. They seemed to be very interested in the people from Wageningen to do a post-doc at Unilever.

To conclude, this week was very intensive, instructive and pleasant. We have shown our qualities and learned about many interesting research topics. Just as important as the things I mentioned before are the contacts we have made, because we can use them in our career. This great trip was not possible without help of VLAG and the effort of Theo, Elke and Anneke. On behalf of the Ph.D.'s thanks for this marvellous organised trip.

Mireille Weijers

Awarded



On October 15th, 2002, **Ana Costa** was awarded the Storm-van der Chijs Fund Stipendium for female scientists. Ana is a PhD student in the group Product Design and Quality Management. In her project she has shown to possess excellent qualities as a scientist. Due to her enthusiasm, persuasiveness and creativity she has succeeded to collect a lot of interesting information on consumer wishes for food products and to develop ways to convert this into valuable knowledge for the design process for new food products. She has been invited several times to give presentations of her research at congresses and for companies.



Mingwei Wang received the Walter Bushuk Best Student Paper Award for her paper entitled "Gluten properties: The result of an interaction between water unextractable pentosans with gluten protein", which was presented at the 2002 American Association of Cereal Chemists Annual Meeting in Montreal, Canada