



no. 1

# PIONEER

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Your inside guide to sustainable  
student food culture in Wageningen



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# DEAR EATER,

Since arriving in Wageningen I have been itching to put the jar-hoarding, scoby-swapping, dough-kneading habits of WUR students on paper.

*PIONEER* presents a small overview of the way students in Wageningen are engaging sustainably and creatively with food in their daily lives. The stories of eight students are displayed, each with their own musings and explorations in the world of food.



The future of resilient food systems is in the hands of eaters like you and me.

Several students also share their hopes for the future of eating, varying in scope and ideology.

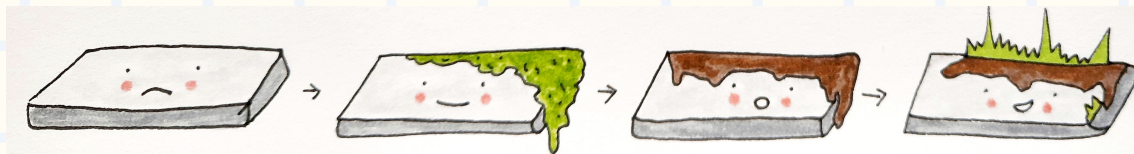
Whether you are new to Wageningen, or a long-time resident, I hope these practices and desires will resonate with you.

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# PIONEER SPECIES: STUDENTS



bare rock

arrival of  
pioneer species  
(e.g. moss)

decomposition  
creates a  
layer of  
topsoil

grass  
grows and  
displaces  
the  
pioneers



more  
nutrients  
and soil  
depth allow  
for shrub  
and tree  
growth

Nestled in the Wageningen 'Silicon Valley of food' lives an unusual community of students whose habits merit closer inspection. These individuals spend their weekends growing oyster mushrooms in dark alleyways and looking at pictures of chickens online. "Do you want to see my SCOBY?" is considered a common pick-up line, and the exchange of sourdough starters marks the beginning of friendships.

The words that have been used to describe these students range from '70s re-enactors' to 'Albert Heijn's worst enemy'. For the sake of this project, I choose to describe them as a pioneer species.

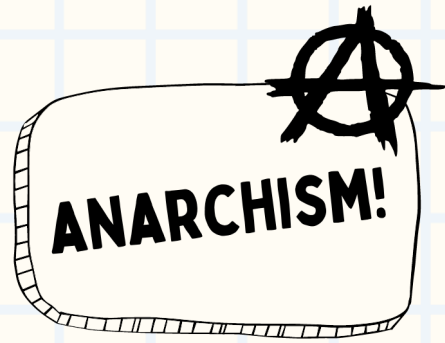
A pioneer species establishes itself in a disrupted ecosystem, triggering the process of ecological succession. It has become increasingly clear that our global food system symbolizes a collapsing ecosystem in need of succession. Solutions to the current food crisis radiate from custodians of traditional ecological knowledge, forming the epicenter of food pioneering worldwide.

The following students represent a sliver of the pioneers in food thought and practice within Wageningen; their ideas are fresh in the context of the tech-based food valley where they are cultivated. Whether it is on a small farm or in a student kitchen, these individuals foster an intimate connection to food from seed to bittersweet decomposition.

Pioneering is a communal effort whose success depends upon the empowerment of the few who feed the many. Let's start with anarchism.

# YANNIK

## MSC URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT



### How do anarchist values shape your relationship with food?

Y: Many people believe that being an anarchist implies being in favor of violence and chaos. This couldn't be further from the truth! In the most basic sense of the word, anarchism means rejecting all forms of involuntary hierarchies, which we believe to be inherently unjust and unnecessary for a functioning society. It's all about kindness and equality, helping others in need, respecting life, and creating a world in which all beings can live freely without being exploited by others in unfair power relations.

As an anarchist, I try to incorporate these values into my everyday life, which makes me aware of all kinds of "normal" everyday practices that are based on unjust power dynamics. This also affects my food choices, since I cannot accept food produced under unfair labor conditions or taken away from animals against their will.

The meat industry is especially tainted by the exploitation of animals - from an anarchist perspective, it is entirely illegitimate because animals cannot give consent. They are separated from their mothers, have to live in undignified conditions, and are brutally slaughtered, all for us to enjoy a steak at an affordable cost. As much as I can, I therefore choose to eat local, plant-based food, which is usually more sustainable and also more delicious than you would think!

**"IT'S ALL ABOUT  
KINDNESS AND  
EQUALITY."**

**By questioning authority and abolishing unfair power relations, veganism can trigger many debates and emotions - what does the movement mean to you?**

Y: If you consider all of the different leftist movements, such as Black Lives Matter, LGBT rights, environmentalism, veganism, etc., you will see that they are based on anarchist values and they all want the same thing: to end the oppression of minority groups.



In my opinion, all leftist movements are too heavily focused on solving individual problems instead of joining forces to jointly address the system allowing these issues to arise in the first place.

Nevertheless, it means a lot to me that there are so many people out there who support the vegan movement and defend other species from discrimination to give them the dignity they deserve.

There is a deeply-rooted connection between veganism and anarchism: On the one hand, veganism is based on anarchist values and all vegans are anarchists to some extent, as they reject the illegitimate hierarchies between humans and other species. On the other hand, I believe that any anarchist who really thinks about the issue will come to the conclusion that a plant-based lifestyle is necessary for a life without unjust hierarchies.



# GUUSJE

## MSC ORGANIC AGRICULTURE



Surrounded by 5 liters of homemade cola syrup, Guusje describes the process of brewing beer from the moment of harvest to the first satisfying sip. As a student of organic agriculture and member of the 'Brewthers & Sisters' committee at the Wageningen Student Farm (WSF), Guusje quickly found her niche within the world of food pioneers. Having grown up with a passion for cooking and innovation in the kitchen, it was only a matter of time before she found WSF and joined their crew. Alongside brewing, she also helps in the Picking Garden committee to bring food and drink to life with herbs like cola.

Members of the Brewthers & Sisters Committee grow hops and wheat for beer right next to campus and set some of the wheat aside to make sourdough starters for the members of WSF. Brewing takes place twice a year, and last fall two kinds of beer were brewed: a stout and an autumn blond with cinnamon, cloves, and cardamom (imagine the flavors of gluhwein, but make it beer).



*"A chill session develops around brewing the beer, people take turns boiling the hops or wheat and stirring for hours. We bring games and music to entertain ourselves. It's also important to manage the temperature so it doesn't overheat. I'm still learning about how to manage the process of brewing to keep it steady."*

Around 7 crates of beer are made and distributed amongst the 100 members of WSF, with everyone chipping in a little bit to cover the cost of ingredients grown off site. Except for growing the cloves, Guusje shares the joy of coming close to circularity in the beer brewing process within the committee. While typically brewed behind the Droevendaal Experimental Food Forest amongst large vats of cider, the beer-making process has been adapted during the pandemic and moved into student kitchens. Guusje reveals that members of her committee store the beer in their rooms, finding space where they can for the group's experiments. Taking risks in the process is part of what draws people to the Brewtherhood.

*"Last year I was involved in brewing 4 crates of spicy triple with chili (which in the end was not spicy at all, so we all had a laugh about that). The hard thing is that you can't taste it beforehand; the flavor changes a lot when the alcohol and carbonation kicks in, so it's a surprise in the end to see what's been created."*

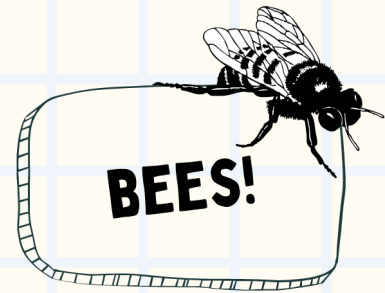


The laid back atmosphere of the Wageningen Student Farm extends to all committees, whether it's brewing, herb picking, beekeeping, composting or making merchandise. Guusje admits that even as a Dutch native, it was not easy arriving in Wageningen as a new student. During the past year it has become even harder to form connections, but whenever possible Guusje advises students to attend info markets and events such as Green Office's 'Seriously Sustainable Week' to learn about community initiatives around the university. Without any hint of bias, she also recommends joining WSF - after all, you can share a homemade beer at least twice a year.

To read another account from the Brewthers & Sisters check out:  
[Beer brewing for dummies](#)

# SMARA

## BSC INTERNATIONAL LAND & WATER MANAGEMENT



**How does being a beekeeper shape your relationship with food?**

S: I am not really a beekeeper just yet, I am rather a beelover with some experience in beekeeping. Before I started beekeeping, I had already been vegan for a while and of course there is a lot of discussion about whether or not vegans should consume honey. However, being on a very strict vegan diet doesn't really work for me. That is why I like to think more of myself as having a plant-based diet instead. Why am I telling you all this background information? Well, because I think it is relevant for my relationship with food and bees.



I think working with bees is a great example of how we should treat and think about our food system. It is about working together with nature, helping each other and benefiting from the help. As in the case of the bees, beekeepers take care of them, try to prevent diseases and provide the right environment, whereas the bees give honey, which is harvested to a certain extent. This extent is exactly

what I mean when I think of a partnership, you don't take everything, you take a bit, while you also give a bit back.

**What is something you wish every person knew about bees?**

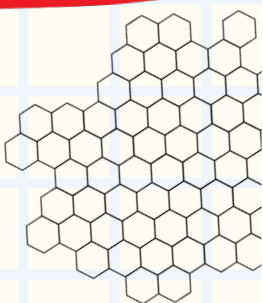
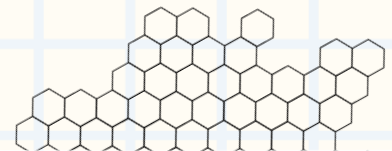
**S:** It is not really about bees, but rather about beekeeping.

A lot of people are hesitating to start beekeeping and I was one of those people. The reasons are multiple and understandable: lack of time, being afraid of getting stung or of having too much responsibility and a lack of knowledge. Personally, I was always afraid not to harm them. However, there is one thing I learned, which was very important for my thinking as a beelover and as a becoming beekeeper.

Bees are wild. They can take care of themselves. If they don't like something they just go. You are there to help and not to control. So don't think too much if you have the chance to learn beekeeping, just go for it! It is definitely worth it.

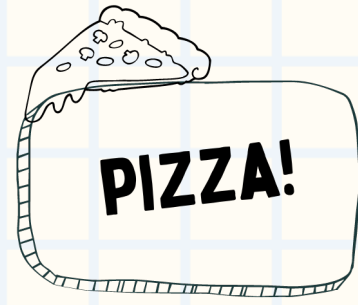
When you open the hives and you see your bees looking back at you, it's just amazing. Words can't describe it!

**"BEES ARE WILD.  
THEY CAN TAKE CARE OF  
THEMSELVES."**



# GIACOMO

## MSC URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT



As the previous pioneers have made clear through their views and practices, food is more than the substances we chew and swallow for fuel. Food is sense of self, social connection, and a political act all wrapped up into one. Giacomo, student of environmental policy, is here to break down these large concepts into bite size pieces using pizza philosophy. But first, a transatlantic voyage to the notorious North American foodscape.

Giacomo grew up in the United States, exposed to the convenient reality of fast food in what is termed the 'food desert:' a place where fresh produce makes a scarce appearance during the winter. Infused with the seasoning of an Italian heritage, he grappled with the disparity between good food (dalla nonna) and bad food (dal Ronald McDonald). The internet, a dark hole for trolls with nary a beacon of light, proved a daunting place to discover what constitutes 'good' food, both in terms of health and equity. That is where constant introspection and exposure to multiple sources of information became vital to debunking the myths surrounding nutrition.

*"I was always an advocate for good food, and against fast food. I took a lot of time to inform myself through primarily the internet and scientific research. I wanted to understand how the body works. I realized nutrition is quite a personalized thing, there are so many ways to go about eating. My approach was never to impose a certain way to eat upon people, just to remind people to be critical of what they were eating and why."*

Diets are saturated with cultural norms and class divisions, including unhealthy beauty standards. What seems normal to one person may not appear realistic to another. To democratize the process, Giacomo has found that researching and trying out a range of mini-challenges, like going gluten-free for two weeks and monitoring the outcome, is a good way to experiment without falling into the extremes of restriction or over-indulgence.



In a place where ‘bad’ food runs the show, fighting for fresh and healthy meals is an uphill battle. Food can and must be more than a means to an end. It was in this quest for food’s true value that Giacomo took a second look at pizza. The staple that had been there since his childhood, rooted in Detroit’s history and in his nonna’s kitchen, could provide the grounds for deep personal development and mark the occasion to throw a great party.

It was upon arriving in Chicago that Giacomo coined the pizza diet. To quote him directly *“for 11 months I ate a pizza every single day.”* Clearly carbohydrates were no match for the gluten-free mini-challenge. Giacomo, with his 100 kilo bag of flour secured from a local Italian restaurant, set about making as many different kinds of pizzas as he could imagine. No combination escaped his mind, including (at this point Italians and Cubans are encouraged to look away) black beans with fried bananas.

*“No one really liked it [the beanana pizza], and I never made it again. However, I enjoyed it because I thought the flavors were very complex and unique.”*

While the beanana marked a grim day in history for some, he was able to prove that when combined creatively, there is no ingredient that does not belong on pizza. All of this brings us to pizza philosophy.

## **PIZZA PHILOSOPHY:**

**1) INCLUSIVITY**

**2) ACCESSIBILITY**

**3) FINITO!**

Years of experimentation with pizza led Giacomo to the conclusion that the keys to pizza philosophy are inclusivity and accessibility. Pizza, in its fluid state of being, represents food for anyone.

It is difficult to argue against pizza being delicious, as well as customizable and relatively inexpensive. This philosophy originated in his Chicago apartment, where Giacomo and his brother delivered experimental pizzas to people they would encounter, including the large homeless population in Chicago. The sentiment was then carried across the ocean to the small student kitchens of Wageningen, translated into a WhatsApp group called “Pizza Madness,” and further elevated through the use of seasonal and homegrown pizza toppings.

Giacomo drips nostalgia as he depicts the scene of classmates coming together in the spring to make pizza outdoors with sweet backyard tomatoes and purple basil. Strangers became friends as they shared high-level vegan cookery and innovative dips and sauces - all through the magnetic power of food. Since pizza can take so many directions and shapes, there is no doubt that it holds a place in the movement toward a more conscious and circular society.



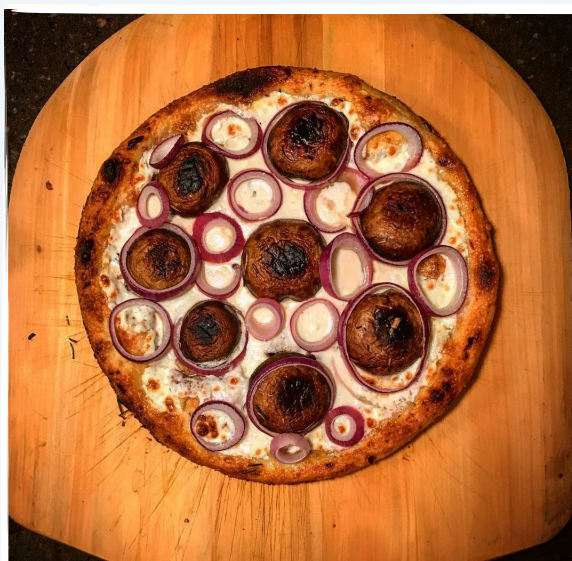
We have seen food as a vehicle for self-discovery and social connection, and it can also be used to make a powerful statement about the future. As a proponent of circular economy, Giacomo argues that consumption is a promising starting point for challenging the “straight to the dumpster” model prevalent in society today.

Care + curiosity is the magic equation to initiate change on a societal level. Although purchasing organic or locally grown food is typically considered a privilege, it may also be a matter of creativity and preference. Giacomo elaborates:

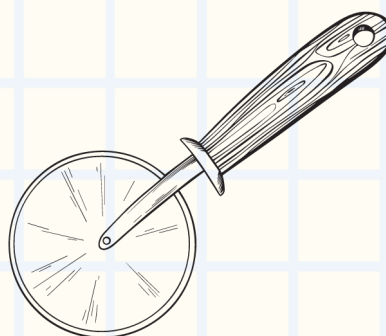
*“Budgeting and weighing your preferences can make room for more expensive and sustainable products. Understand seasonality and who is working in your locale. Avoid waste through creativity and consciousness. Challenge your habits, create a new normal.”*

When unsure where to start, you can challenge your waste as the most readily visible and tangible part of a motion toward circularity. The act of throwing something into the trash is already an indication of linearity. Unwanted ingredients and high value food scraps that would normally go to the bin might even make the perfect pizza topping.

*“Equality is key and delicious food needs to be available for the people who want it. Things should be rooted in the preferences of any given group, with regard to culture, tradition, and dignity. There need to be free enterprises that support this transition. As the only species who cooks, we must be willing to make sacrifices to make this change possible. I remain optimistic that change is possible.”*

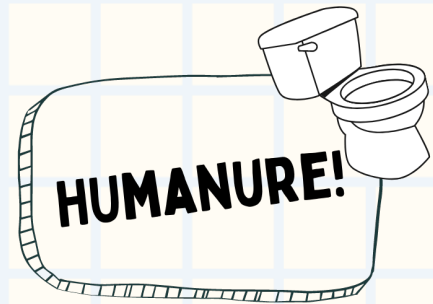


To follow Giacomo's pizza journey check out @apartmentpizza on Instagram.

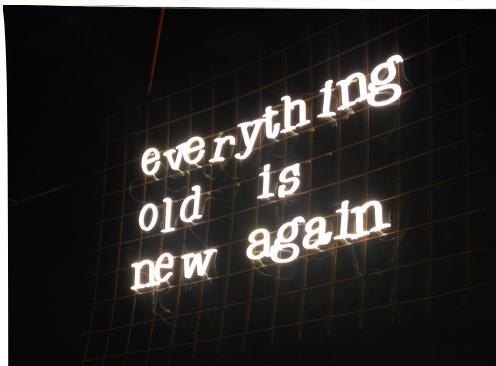


# PABLO

## MSC ORGANIC AGRICULTURE



Imagine being Sir John Harrington in 1592, and having just flushed a toilet for the very first time in human history (1). Whether you call it a latrine, privy, lav, golden throne, or porcelain god, the flushing toilet is an invention whose daily use has become the norm in many countries with roots dating back to the modern sanitation movement of the 16th century. What glory to bid farewell to human waste! Be gone city-wide stench, be gone disease and olfactory sorrows! But wait, when we flush where does it go? And is poo really as 'dirty' as our collective imaginations make it out to be?



Enter HUmanure: a concept so painstakingly obvious that it can hardly be flaunted as new or revolutionary. You may be wondering, what is HUmanure, and why is there an entire handbook dedicated to it? Put simply, HUmanure (human manure if it hasn't sunk in by now), is human fecal matter and urine recycled for agricultural purposes via composting! (2). This all sounds very exciting, but dangerous. Isn't poo dirty and worthy of being cast away into the oceans never to be smelled again?

Pablo, a recent WUR graduate and resident of Ppauw ecovillage, is here to remind us that there is nothing really wrong with getting your hands dirty (as long as you wash them afterward). The threat of human manure comes from discarding it into the environment as a waste product, but as properly composted material it becomes a major source of soil fertility.



Through controlled decomposition of our fecal matter, it is possible to close the waste cycle, save water from flushing, and produce gold from poop. This composting is performed by two members of Ppauw, including Pablo, in 120 liter plastic bins that are placed strategically far, far away from the kitchen.

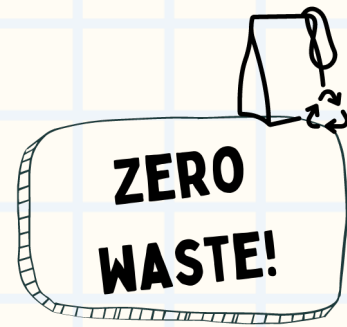
Our resident HUMANure handler laments that people are grossed out by the thought of seeing their own fertile fecal matter, or that processing it by hand might make us look like dirty squatters or large-scale industrialists. Creating gold from poop isn't easy, and requires a paradigm shift paired with dedication.

Pablo suggests that we lack campaigns really focusing on the other side of food. We need small-scale poop composters that people can trust. Biolan composter 550 is an example of something industrial on a smaller scale that is easy to use and clean, looks legit, and can be copy-pasted into many home situations. Old Japanese poop collecting systems could also be a way to excite people with stories of how excreta management has been working for larger cities. The circulation of good stories is what makes change happen; the human is a storytelling animal, ready for change when the narrative feels right.



# MATHILDE

## MSC ORGANIC AGRICULTURE



The challenge to the linear model by which we live and is gaining rapid momentum in Wageningen. Mathilde, student of agroecology and zero-waste warrior, has been pushing for circularity in and around the university from the beginning. With parents wary of plastic's endocrine-disrupting properties and a growing concern for where 'recycled' plastic really goes, Mathilde felt the need to speak up in favor of a package-free life. However, it was not until very recently that the transition to a package-free lifestyle became accessible in certain sustainability hotspots.

Mathilde recalls when only five years ago she interviewed one of the first organic shops in France to sell all items in bulk. At the time, it was considered an inconvenience to buy milk in a glass bottle instead of a Tetra Pak (a hybrid paper-plastic recycling nightmare that continues to plague us all, so just use glass!). Similarly, you might feel awkward asking the laughing cheese man at the market to put your gouda in a small container from home instead of that irresistible waxy paper. But rest assured that you are being awkward *while* saving the turtles from a sea of microplastic! In all seriousness, the world becomes a better place every time you remember to bring your own containers and bags while grocery shopping.

### The 5 R's of Zero Waste

**REFUSE**

**REDUCE**

**REUSE**

**RECYCLE**

**ROT**

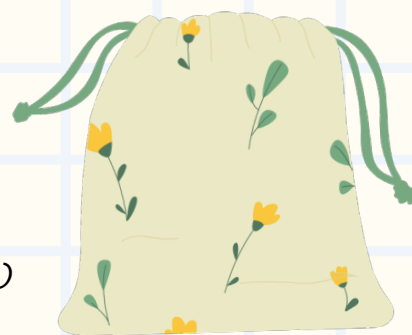
As a pioneer with a well-worn bag of tricks, Mathilde has some advice for anyone at the beginning of their zero-waste journey. First thing's first, go to the zero waste shop! (not sponsored). De Gieterij, sometimes referred to as 'heaven on Earth', but more often 'that cute little organic bulk shop on Junusstraat', makes it almost too easy to cut the packaging out of your life with everything from soap to spaghetti. That being said, there are endless other ways to make small changes in your life, some for no cost at all. A great place to begin is inside of your own house.

### IN THE HOUSE

- *Bake and cook things yourself instead of buying the equivalent in a store with packaging*
- *Sew cotton bags with old clothes to put your groceries inside and always bring your own bag*
- *Share food with your house, buy bulk flour from the mill and support local processors*
- *Make your own hygiene products like deodorant and toothpaste out of different oils*
- *Create universal cleaning liquid with  $\frac{1}{3}$  vinegar,  $\frac{2}{3}$  water, and essential oil*
- *Use soap bars or refillable soap containers whenever possible*
- *Invest in a sponge that lasts more than 3 days before becoming an unrecognizable color*

### OUT & ABOUT

- *Know what you want to buy before shopping - you will be tempted to buy more in the supermarket, so it is an idea (no pressure) to avoid the supermarket altogether ;)*
- *If you're into organic food, subscribe to receive weekly veggie bags from local community supported farms like de Stroom or de Ommuurde Tuin (see more in **Resources**)*
- *Shop at the market on Saturdays because the supermarkets always package organic food in plastic*
- *Try to buy products that come in paper or glass instead of plastic as much as possible*



## GIFTS!

- *Wrap sustainably - try swapping tape and wrapping paper for string and recycled paper*
- *Gift a zero-waste starter kit or upcycled item*
- *Give an experience like a picnic with loved ones or tickets to a concert in 2025 (yikes!)*

Perfection is not the goal in these pursuits, and it is important to be proud of every little gesture you can make toward closing the circle with 'waste'. To keep enthusiasm high, come up with challenges to motivate yourself and your friends. Soon everyone will be competing to reuse instead of recycle (on Wednesdays, we wear upcycled shirts).

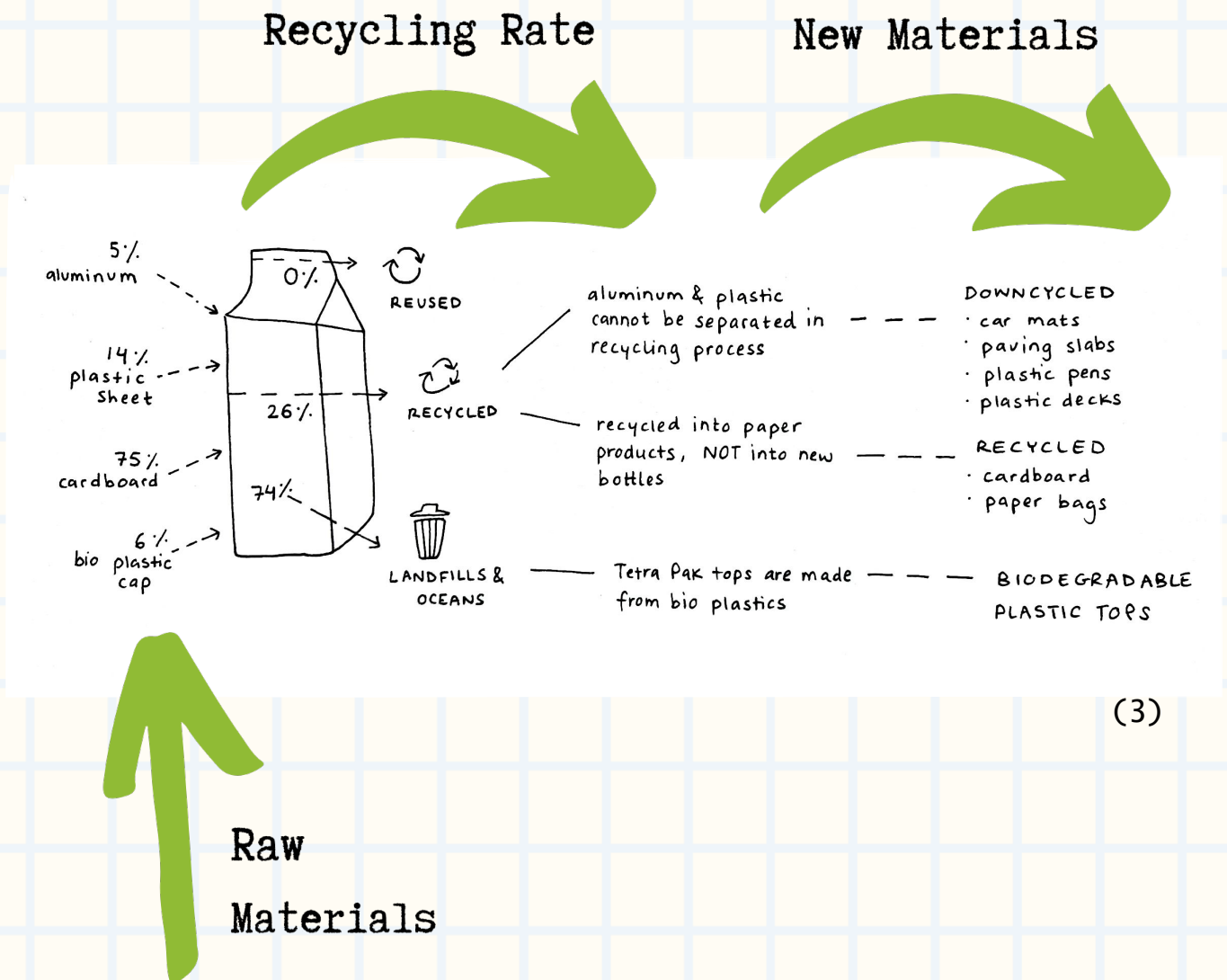
Now, if you already bring your collection of jars and bags to the market, then what's new? Good for you jar hoarder, and there are ways to take it further from here!

Mathilde's vision for a package-free Wageningen (not to mention the world), goes beyond the beautiful start made by De Gieterij. In the spring of 2020, she and a fellow student generated interest at the university around creating a bulk shop right on campus. The idyllic vision features a tiny house on the grass in front of Forum or Aurora where students can buy their pasta (without plastic!) on the way home from class, pandemic permitting. It would be even *easier* than shopping at the supermarket. The little bulk store could host zero-waste workshops on waste reduction, and serve coffee in Billie cups while people chat about their sponges made of actual plant fibers. It almost sounds like...paradise?

While the progenitors of this idea have left the Netherlands, their vision can still sprout legs. Attention all zero-waste warriors, composting fanatics, and future ACT students: it is entirely possible to form an association and put pressure on the university to make this project happen! As you might have heard, a little gesture from many passionate people goes a long way.

# THE LIFE AND DEATH OF A TETRA PAK

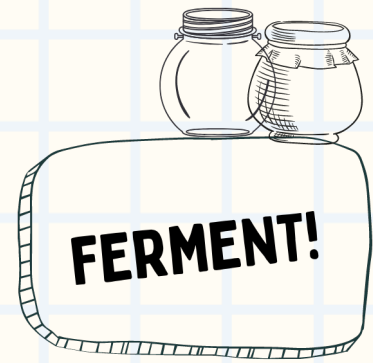
#RecyclingNightmare



(3)

# ROBERT

## MSC ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE



**How did you first become interested in fermentation?**

R: I have always loved cooking. Fermentation seemed like the next step, both in technicality and process. I enjoy making food taste better by matching flavor and spice profiles and combinations. My first experiments were rudimentary chili pastes and oils. They were sloppy, spicy and had no finesse. My plan for my retirement is to own a chili and pepper farm and ferment hot sauces. So my “priorities” for now are to experiment and learn how to balance flavor and heat, as well as which flavour profiles go with which types and crosses of chilies.

**What has been your biggest lesson learned while fermenting?**

R: You need patience. But you also cannot leave your ferments unattended.

**Has the practice of fermenting changed your relationship to food?**

R: It has made me more aware of the potentials of raw material. For example, instead of throwing vegetable peels away, collecting them and making a broth and canning that. Or purchasing unconventional products. I think one begins to recognize the possibilities more readily. One loses the inhibition of their culinary comfort zone.



*cayenne & habanero  
hot sauce*



*ginger beer*



*rhubarb kimchi*

**Do you experiment with food  
in other ways at home?**

R: As much as I can. At regular intervals I will try a recipe that I either look up, or just invent myself. I try to push my boundaries a little in those instances. Sometimes it is excellent, sometimes it is just good.

# JUSTINE

## MSC ORGANIC AGRICULTURE



*"I wanted to get involved in activism in some way but didn't know how. I thought: who am I to say something about these issues? Then I realized if I didn't do anything it would be even worse, and that I would learn along the way."*



Our final food pioneer is Justine, student of organic agriculture and founding member of the Food Sovereignty Sloths (more on that later). Whether it is through the speech given at Unilever's 1st birthday party or marching in protest, Justine is a firm believer in activism through

direct action. Upon arrival at the WUR, she was drawn to Extinction Rebellion (XR) for being the only direct action group in Wageningen. However, she is wary of organizations funded by the university and members of such groups tending to take a neutral stance in their activism. While XR is known for its acts of defiance, Justine feels that her core interests are not outwardly represented by the group.

*"XR is mainly focused on climate change, and I am mainly interested in food and food sovereignty. The problem with campaigns around climate change is that they tend to be too general, focused on a white, Western audience, and do not often address the root of the problem (i.e the link to food is usually missing). Solutions, especially coming from the university, are often embedded in green technology, and power relations involved in the problems of climate change are not acknowledged."*

Since joining XR in 2019, Justine has made efforts to clarify the link between the climate crisis, food justice, and food sovereignty. A powerful case can be made for questioning the university's attitude toward transformative food systems change. This is especially relevant considering its central position in the Silicon Valley of food.

*"It is very important to be critical of the WUR (who claims to be sustainable in relation to food) and how their research is tied to private interests and companies on campus. This culminated in the 'Unilever (F)unfair' and 'Behind the Image of WUR' webinar. I believe provoking change at the university level could bring about real, institutional change if enough people raise their voice."*



Source: ASEED Europe

Four hopeful activists and a lovable mascot are the force behind sustained criticism of the WUR. The Food Sovereignty Sloths made their slow, but steady start in the fall of 2020 and came together over one key agreement: food sovereignty requires radical system change rather than topical green technologies such as the ones being pushed in the movement toward food security at the university.

*"The name started as kind of a joke, but then we realized sloths symbolize how radical change takes time. The group came together recently, keep in mind that we are 'under construction'. Since we are not funded by the university, we can come together and really do what we want. I also feel that the food culture at Wageningen is missing the element of food sovereignty."*

Sidebar: all of this talk about radical change might make you wonder what kind of future the sloths are slowly moving toward.

Originating from movements such as Via Campesina, the concept of food sovereignty has taken off

since the 1990s and entails the

right for people to decide about their own strategies and policies to guarantee their food safety while considering the effects on others

(4). Individuals have a role to play in empowering small-scale farmers to reclaim autonomy on the land.

**"FOOD CULTURE AT  
WAGENINGEN IS MISSING  
THE ELEMENT OF FOOD  
SOVEREIGNTY."**

*"I think consumer-driven change is important, but remains too focused on the individual and limited to people who have the financial means to make this change happen. If you are interested in activism, but don't know where to start then just explore. Contact people doing things that inspire you and find what fits you the best. Make sure you are happy and getting energy out of your pursuits. Realize that trying is better than not doing anything. You will learn and reflect on the way, stop thinking and just do it!" (not sponsored by Nike).*



Remember, there is no perfect way to be sustainable and sometimes "even veggie burgers are made of shit!"

Check out the XR University Rebellion Manifesto [here](#).



Source: *Extinction Rebellion Wageningen*

# THE FUTURE OF FOOD SYSTEMS



Everything is connected - this is especially evident when it comes to food. As we have seen, things like 'waste' and leftovers can either be cast away or celebrated as composted and repurposed materials. In the midst of a global pandemic, many of us have come to question the habits we considered to be normal. With closed borders, increasing isolation, and a growing emphasis on immunity, can we continue to deny the fragility of global food supply chains?

At the onset of the crisis, an unprecedented number of people turned away from supermarkets in search of resilience. What they found were small-scale, community supported farms *designed* to thrive in moments of uncertainty. Connection to our food, farmers, and members of the community form the promising foundation of short food supply chains.

Industrial farming systems enable the spread of highly infectious viruses and continue to uphold oppressive power relations (1). Top-down and quick-fix solutions to the crisis should be regarded carefully, because building back better will not be easy. As the Food Sovereignty Sloths suggest, radical change takes time. Other futures are bountiful, if we wish to seek them. From meatless waste to traditional farming, read what students at the WUR envision as the ideal future of food systems.

fresh, creative and delicious



local, sustainable, organic, no-waste, ideally  
vegetarian/vegan

no animals being harmed to produce our food

a sustainable production system where we can keep  
our current way of easy-access supermarkets

short supply chain

no animal suffering implied

mostly vegan, 100% organic, fresh and at  
least 60% local/seasonal

homegrown, sharing, healthy

circularity

regional systems (preferably local, but can be  
EU scale as well) that take into account  
seasonal produce

access to healthy food for all

small-scale traditional farming

a lot more plant based foodscapes, but with the occasional inclusion of sustainable meatless waste

no waste from field to dish



Forest gardens and peatland crops (like cranberries and azolla) are dominant in the Netherlands, followed by smaller vegetable and grain hobbyists. Animal production or animal manure is NOT the norm, and is very scarce in the landscape. Supermarkets are all cooperatives. There are federal laws against dumping of food with high sanctions. Certification of a product when using any form of pesticides.

organic, diverse, local, social, sustainable, zero carbon footprint, including local wildlife, not destroying the resources for future generations

a system where consumers have access to (and choose to) consume organic, local and seasonal products

First and foremost, we need to make sure that nutritious food is easily available and affordable. Reading tip: The Conquest of Bread by Piotr Kropotkin, who already 130 years ago claimed that an accessible food system was the most essential factor for a successful social revolution.

Secondly, I want people to question what they eat and the conditions under which it was produced. We have been alienated from our food system, often don't know where our groceries came from and how much work it took to produce them. Local, organic agriculture, ideally based on permaculture is what I hope will completely replace mass agriculture. An ethical food system should be sustainable, not be based on any exploitation whatsoever, and should work with nature instead of against it.

Lastly, I dream about food being produced within the community for the community, so that we get to feel what it is like to eat the food we ourselves grew and harvested.



vegan wherever people are privileged enough,  
mostly local, not packaged in plastic

My ideal vision of the food system is a system where we work with nature, we include nature and most importantly we respect nature. It is about partnership, about taking and giving and not trying to control everything.

In the future, I see urban farms and I see agriculture moving more into the cities. I also see more space given to nature in the rural areas. That is one of our main concerns now, right? We don't have enough space; we do not produce enough. In the end everything comes down to space, as well as to efficiency. However, I think we are looking at them the wrong way at the moment. We are already producing a lot, but we are also wasting a huge amount of food. We are losing a lot of space too: by degrading the soils, making them infertile and abandoning them in our search for new places to farm.



So, I see the future food system more circular. I see it not only concerned with how much food we produce, but also with how and with whom. That it is why I love the idea of community farms, bringing people together and back to earth and teaching them about our food system, by connecting them with the soil, with their food. Seeing how everything grows from your own hands, harvesting your own food, I think in the end is what makes everybody happy.

# **DINNER TIME TUNES**

**Come Meh Way - Sudan Archives**  
**Blackbird - Tash Sultana**  
**Island Song - Zac Brown Band**  
**Ik Wil Dansen - Froukje**  
**Weird Times - Morisse Monty**  
**Something in the Water - THALA, Bearcubs**  
**Save Your Tears - The Weeknd**  
**Someone to You - BANNERS**  
**Space Drum Machine - The Mauskovic Dance Band**  
**On the Low - Burna Boy**  
**Acid - Ray Barretto**  
**1542 - Xique-Xique**  
**Salad Days - Mac DeMarco**  
**Sirens of Jupiter - The Olympians**  
**Illegal - Cultura Profética**  
**Limón y Sal - Julieta Venegas**  
**Abusey Junction - KOKOROKO**  
**Raga Yaman: Alap - Zia Mohiuddin Dagar**

**FOR STUDENTS, BY STUDENTS!**

# RESOURCES

## Local Farms & CSAs

Wageningen: De Hoge Born, De Nieuwe Ronde, Pluktuin Sayuran

Ede: De Wilde Peen, Makandra

Renkum: De Ommuurde Tuin, Veld & Beek

Randwijk: De Stroom

Rhenov: De Lingehof

## Organizations & Groups

Wageningen: Wageningen Student Farm, Boerengroep, OtherWise, RUW

Foundation, Wageningen Eet Duurzaam

International: Fridays for Future, Extinction Rebellion, URGENCI, Re-Peat, Landworkers' Alliance, La Via Campesina, Cultivate! Collective, Rural Youth Europe

## Podcasts

Investing in Regenerative Agriculture and Food

From What If to What Next

Farmerama Radio

Learning Otherwise

## Books

The Humanure Handbook

Entangled Life

Who Really Feeds the World?

Farm City

Wilding



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