Opening lectures

The value and necessity of animal production presented by **Dr. Louise O. Fresco**, The Netherlands

Throughout history, humans have been closely connected to food through hunting, gathering, or farming. Today, urbanization has distanced many from food production and the food chain, with most people only seeing the consumer side. This leads to confusion and a lack of respect for the processes and people behind what we eat. This disconnection also fosters ignorance and fear surrounding food and its production. With 10–11% of the global population malnourished, the challenge is to produce food that is sustainable, nutritious, safe, and affordable. The growing urban demand for animal products drives up cereal prices, highlighting the need for smart, appropriate mechanization to increase production efficiently. The disadvantages of both modern and more traditional agriculture must be addressed. A regional, science-based approach is needed. Ultimately, food should be treated with respect, recognizing the labor behind it and the ongoing struggle many face to access it. Therefore, the value of animal production and the positive effects of sustainable practices, both environmentally and socially, will be discussed, emphasizing the benefits of responsible animal farming.



Dr. Louise O. Fresco

As President of Wageningen University & Research (WUR) since 1 July 2014 till 1 July 2022, received the Norman E. Borlaug Medallion in June 2022 for outstanding contributions to life sciences research and global food security. Her leadership strengthened WUR's societal impact and public engagement. Recognized for sustainable development efforts, she earned honorary doctorates from the University of Liège and KU Leuven in 2017. Fresco was honoured with the Comenius Prize in 2014 for promoting scientific awareness. In 2009, she spoke at the TED Conference in Palm Springs, and in 2008, she received the Groeneveld Award for significant contributions to the nature and landscape debate. Her 15 years in the UN, and many more in multilateral programs have shaped her understanding of how we humans change but also adapt to the dynamics of our planet. Louise firmly believes that we progress collectively through learning and correcting our mistakes. Notwithstanding the severity of the challenge we face, Dr. Fresco remains firmly optimistic about future progress, in food, agriculture, science, welfare and equity.