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## **TITLE: Raising awareness for an agrifood future in secondary schools**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The agrifood sector is crucial for achieving global food security and environmental sustainability. In the Netherlands, innovations in food technology and adjacent areas are achieved in attractive projects at Universities of Applied Sciences (UASs) in close interaction with government, industry, other knowledge institutes and society. By providing students central positions in innovative joint efforts that answer to the demands of small and medium sized enterprises, the curricula stay up to date and appealing. Examples of such efforts are the Food Innovation Academy (FIA), the World Horti Centre (WHC) and the Food Innovation Community Amsterdam (FICA). Interdisciplinary projects in these settings help to encourage students to choose for a future in agrifood. Exposure is key to reach the target groups. For that reason, several paths on the roadmap of the human capital agenda have to be taken. We developed inspiring learning materials that appeal to students and teachers in secondary schools. A “Genomics Cookbook” to introduce biological knowledge behind nutrigenomics and a velcro-model called “DNAbAND” to explain principles behind the Polymerase Chain Reaction for food safety applications, are examples. These are ways to increase influx into green colleges and universities, and thereby efflux to the agrifood sector.

### **BIOGRAPHY**

Feike van der Leij is a molecular biologist with a background in microbiology, plant cell- and molecular genetics (PhD at University of Groningen, NL, in 1992), plant biotechnology (post-doc at ETH Zurich, CH, 1993-1994), mammalian molecular physiology and genomics (Pediatrics Research Lab, University of Groningen 1995 - 2006) and teaching. Starting 2006 he lectured molecular biology at Van Hall Larenstein UAS where he became professor Health & Food in 2010. He held this position till 2020. He moved to Inholland UAS in 2014 and became professor Health & Food there in 2021. He is co-founder of the Food Innovation Community Amsterdam (FICA) and co-authored more than 40 peer reviewed scientific publications.



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