

China and the Netherlands: Hand in hand for Agriculture

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Healthy food and living environment is an essential part of our lives and only one university in the Netherlands is specifically focusing on this theme. The Dutch Wageningen University & Research (WUR) is one of the most renowned universities in the world in the field of food and living environment. It is no wonder that their activities stretch far beyond the Dutch borders. WUR is very active in the Chinese market and they celebrate their 100 year anniversary this year. The Chinese cities last weekend hosted a number of celebrations, due to their close ties with the Netherlands.



There are many collaboration projects between China and the Netherlands in the field of agriculture and food. Many Dutch companies in the dairy and food production join forces with local partners to explore the Chinese market.

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On a scientific level, Dutch and Chinese institutions work together. Each year, WUR receives many Chinese exchange students. The university already has more than 800 alumni throughout China. "Celebrating Wageningen Universities' 100 year anniversary here in China is very special to me. We are proud to be surrounded by all the Chinese alumni who carry Wageningen in their hearts and are our ambassadors here locally," says Raoul Bino, Managing Director Wageningen Agrotechnology, and Food Sciences Group.

From scientific exchange to business advisory projects, there are many projects with Dutch roots. As such, WUR and its Chinese partners are transforming the complete agricultural cycle:

REVAMPING THE DAIRY SECTOR

In China, WUR is best-known for its efforts in the field of dairy. Together with the Chinese Agricultural University, WUR founded the Sino Dutch Dairy Development Center (SDDDC) in 2013. The center was set up to develop collaboration in the field of dairy and works on making the dairy sector more productive. Since its foundation in 2013, the SDDDC has funded over 32 joint-research projects with a total investment of more than 10 million RMB.

CONVERTING WASTE INTO VALUE

It is no secret that farming includes many animals since large-scale farming tends to be more productive. However, while improving efficiency, a second issue looms: How to cope with the waste produced? Together with the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS), WUR founded the Sino-Dutch Livestock Waste Recycling Center in 2016. Reducing waste and transforming it into something like, say valuable bio-fuels is essential to make the Chinese agricultural industry more sustainable.

ENHANCING FOOD SECURITY

Another sector that is also of interest in horticulture. It is important for the Chinese market to realize food security and safety. In the Netherlands, greenhouses are a central pillar in achieving high agricultural productivity and thus more food security. Therefore, WUR and CAAS jointly set up the Sino-Dutch Joint Research Center for Greenhouse Horticulture. This research center further supports a transition to high agricultural productivity by combining knowledge and technology. Many projects in the field of food safety are carried out by the WUR in China, for instance, in the field of safe use of pesticides or quality assurance. Ensuring the quality of fruit and vegetable is essential to ensure the agricultural market is ready for the future.

BRINGING SCIENCE AND BUSINESS TOGETHER

Besides projects in the scientific field, there are also collaborations with private Chinese companies. Several plans for eco-initiatives such as the COFCO Eco Valley in Beijing and the Distinctive Flower Town in Zhejiang were initiated by WUR. The Wageningen Universities footprint is widely present within the Chinese agricultural sector.

"We are grateful for the support of the Dutch diplomatic network in China. We can only plan and achieve such projects together with the Dutch Government, our Chinese partners, and the Chinese Government. Joining forces and sharing knowledge and experience is key," says Raoul Bino. Yan Jie, Manager of the WUR China Office, agrees: "We'd like to thank all alumni who made these 100-year celebrations possible. They make our network stronger and allow us to build partnerships and relationships for the future."

JOINT COLLABORATION

The Netherlands is ranked second on the world rank of largest exporters of agricultural products. Exports cover many agricultural products: from flowers and vegetables to dairy products. China has the largest export market, hence the match between the two countries is easily made. The cooperation in the field of agriculture, however, is more than just export, it's a partnership. Combined forces such as the SDDDC enable both the countries to impart knowledge and offer room for a close coalition.