

# FEl manual:

## organizing a Farm Experience Internship at your University

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# Organizing a Farm Experience Internship at your university

Organizing a farm experience internship can be *your internship* for your studies, like I have done for my Msc. study MDR at the Wageningen University. I would recommend to have one or two interns dealing full-time with the organization of the FEI. Next to that, you can attract a group of volunteers, who'd like to help you organizing the first course completely set up by students!

Since you are the pioneer of starting the first FEI on your university, I will try to help you along with this manual. Everything will fall into place and moreover this will be a learning process, where the organizers of next year can benefit from : ) So if you are the first organizer, the evaluation is of great importance! I will explain the following to help you out a little:

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If you would like to participate and/or organize the FEI at the Wageningen University, you can send a mail to [farmexperienceinternship@gmail.com](mailto:farmexperienceinternship@gmail.com)

# 1 What is the Farm Experience Internship (FEI)?

## – a description of the FEI at the Wageningen University

Each summer, the Wageningen University is offering the Farm Experience Internship (FEI) for students and non-students. The FEI is a 3ECTS international summer course, which intends to bring together theoretical knowledge from (non-)students with practical skills and knowledge from farmers. Are you interested in growing your own food, discovering local knowledge and practices on organic farms in the Netherlands? Do you want to learn about permaculture, agroecology, food sovereignty and sustainable food systems? Or would you like to interact and discuss with farmers to find creative, innovative ways of farming? Join the FEI and send a mail to [FarmExperienceInternship@gmail.com](mailto:FarmExperienceInternship@gmail.com).

Are you having the idea that milk comes from a factory and tomatoes grow underground? No worries, everyone can join – because you will be prepared during the first week, full of lectures, workshops, debates and excursions!

1. PREPARATION – *Lectures, workshops, excursions, group work.* During the first phase of the FEI, you will get to know about all kinds of topics related to agriculture, e.g. agroecology, permaculture, sustainable food systems, food sovereignty, seed patents etc. We cook together and eat together – sharing knowledge, food and have a good time. The preparation week will be held at Droevendaal Experimental Farm of WUR and the schedule is full day.

2. LET'S GO FARMING! *Practical experience on a Dutch farm.* After the preparation week, each student is sent to a different farm somewhere in the Netherlands. (Before the start of the FEI, you can tell us your preference, e.g. food forest, goat farm, organic garden etc.) For two weeks you will be full time working together with the farmer, following his/her working rhythm, learning practical skills and local knowledge. The participating farms are mostly organic, however some are currently still seeking for a more sustainable management practices (which is very interesting for you as a student: can you find ways to support the farmer?!)

3. EVALUATION. After two weeks harvesting, feeding cows, goats, or making cheese, students will come back to Droevendaal Experimental Farm in Wageningen for the evaluation phase. Share experience and discuss what you've learned.



CREDITS or CERTIFICATE. Wageningen University is supporting the FEI 2014 through the chairgroups Farming Systems Ecology (FSE) and Rural Sociology (RSO). Via these chairgroups students can obtain 3 ECTS after completing the Farm Experience Internship and after handing in the evaluation report. For non (WUR) students, a certificate is handed out by the FSE group.

ACCOMMODATION. During the Preparation and Evaluation phase, you will have to arrange your own accommodation. The FEI team recommends participants to first try to arrange a place to stay themselves via couchsurfing (free hosts). Later we will send a mail in advance to all participants so we can arrange hosts for those participants who do not live in Wageningen and have not find a host yet.

COSTS. The Costs for the FEI are only 50euro's, since we think it is important to offer this knowledge to everyone interested in sustainable food production. This fee includes organic breakfast, lunch, snacks, drinks and also workshops, excursions and lectures during the preparatory and evaluation phase. Your stay at the farm is for free (unless the farmer is not able to host you – however most farmers can host). You are expected to pay the farmer some money for the food and drinks he/she provides you during your stay.

PARTICIPANTS. The FEI mainly aims at university students in order to connect them (and thereby the University) to farmers. However, non-students with an interest in sustainable agriculture are most welcome as well!

Check our website for [FarmExperienceInternship.wordpress.com](http://FarmExperienceInternship.wordpress.com) for more info about:

- ♥ Agroecology
- ♥ Permaculture
- ♥ the Great Story Book of the FEI
- ♥ Info for organizing a FEI yourself at your own University
- ♥ Inspiration, with many links to documentaries, movements, articles
- ♥ Our contact details (FarmExperienceInternship@gmail.com)



## 2. The goals and learning outcomes for your internship

As an intern, you can first search for a foundation, NGO and/or chair groups of your university to cooperate with during your internship. For example, your goals and learning outcomes can be the following:

My **goals** are to:

- Organise the FEI. The main goal of this part of my internship is to organise the Farm Experience Internship.
- Help to make the FEI an official university course with an official code. In order to do so, I will cooperate with agro-ecology related chairgroups of the university and write an official course outline together
- Create a FEI manual for other students of other universities or for the next organisers, where I explain how I have organised it, tips and tops etc. (Let's work together towards a European FEI, where students can go to farms in different countries. In this way, we can support each other in connecting people to sustainable agriculture, and also learn from each other!)
- Keep all information well organised in folders.

I listed a set of **learning outcomes** for this internship to be a meaningful learning process. I aim to:

- Gain knowledge on project management, with special focus in communication.
- Execute certain professional skills better such as, communication, collective or participative learning processes, working on group dynamics (including energizers).
- Combine to work both independently and in a group with a feeling for the organization.
- Better time management and planning.
- Expand my professional network.
- Create a Wordpress website in order promote the FEI and give an overview of all documents and information:  
farmexperienceinternship.wordpress.com
- Be more organised. I want to keep all information well organised in folders.

Write a proposal for your internship. You can make use of all the information (and pictures) of our website: [FarmExperienceInternship.wordpress.com](http://FarmExperienceInternship.wordpress.com)

### 3. The three core principles of the FEI

As an intern, you are going to work with the **three core principles** of the FEI:

- 1) Agroecology
- 2) Interdisciplinary and participative learning processes
- 3) Partnership.

**Core Principle 1: AGROECOLOGY** is a central theme in the Farm Experience Internship. The term Agroecology is derived from two scientific disciplines: **agronomy** and **ecology**. The Farm Experience Internship is an initiative brought from Brazil, where agroecology is a powerful social and political movement. There, the foundation of agroecology was created by different kinds of movements and based on traditional agricultural practices – not on science. In the 1970s, these movements emerged as different forms of alternative agriculture, as a critique against the effects of the agricultural modernization (the **Green Revolution**), the use of petrochemicals and up-scaling of farms. Modernization of farms meant introduction of hybrids (later GMO's), oil-dependent technology and chemical fertilizers and pesticides which ultimately destroyed most of the soil life. This destruction of soil life made it more difficult for local varieties to grow there, while High Yielding Varieties (needing a massive demand of water, fertilizers and pesticides and moreover contain less nutrients compared to local varieties) took over in agriculture. This meant a big **loss in diversity** both for natural ecosystem as well as a loss in diversity of the human diet. Besides this, the change in agricultural was also the start of the rapid **loss of local knowledge**, which was formed over thousands years of experience in agriculture. This is one of the biggest disasters in agriculture history. Third, the up-scaling and modernization of farms, meant that a small group of farmers became more rich, started investing in technology and now started **out-competing the small family farms**. Industrialized agriculture replaced human labor and left millions of people without a job, forced to sell the land and move towards the now fast growing slums. This process was even worsened, since Europe and USA started dumping huge amounts of food and dairy at the world market – which was so extremely cheap due to **subsidy** – that local farmers could never sell their products for such a low price and were therefore totally out-competed. So indeed – when the Western World is producing *more* food, it is thereby also creating *more* poverty in the Third World, since it takes away the income of millions of local farmers!

The movements started to fight against the modernization and up-scaling of farms. They started promoting family farms, as well as autonomy (independence of the free-market economy) and food sovereignty. They had strong objectives to break with organic agriculture third-party certification systems and formal markets. (Wezel *et al.*, 2009). They do this, because products can only be called 'organic' when they have an organic *certification*. This certification is often



expensive, and small farmers are not able to pay this. Also, organic products are often sold at formal markets (e.g. big supermarkets), which out-compete local markets or small shops owned by local people. Agroecological movements focus instead on approaching local markets through a partnership with consumers. In this way, paying a lot of money for an (expensive) label is not necessary anymore, both for the farmers and consumers.

Agroecology became more and more a strong social and political movement, dealing also like environmental, social, economic, ethical and development issues – not only on the scale of the field, but now encompassing the farm as a whole and even focusing on the complete agroecosystem scale. Currently, agroecology is dealing with the complete food system. It's fighting against the agribusiness' idea of 'producing more food to feed the hungry world'. We already have enough food to feed the world 3 times. Producing even more food led by agribusiness is not going to feed the world – it is only going to fill the pockets of the corporations, as it always has been doing throughout history. It's in fact the agribusiness that made people poor due to the introduction of technology, chemical pesticides and fertilizers, High Yielding Varieties, GMOs, heavily subsidized food from the West, as well as privatization and land grabbing, justified in the name of 'feeding the world'. Therefore it's time to fight for **food sovereignty**: fair distribution of food, water, land and labour, fair prizes for the producers, the defense of local markets, healthy and nutritious varieties/food for all, recovery and revalorization of traditional peasant farming methods and a strive for closed nutrient cycles.

*“Solving the sustainability problem of agriculture is the primary aim of agroecology. It is maintained here, however, that simply focusing on the technological aspects of the problem, even though promoted technologies are low-input, obscures the fundamental problems that lie behind the technology-induced environmental crisis and rural poverty affecting the agricultural regions of the world. Agroecology can provide the ecological guidelines to point technological development in the right direction, but in the process, technological issues must assume their corresponding role within a strategy of rural development that incorporates social and economic problems.” – Altieri, 1989, pp1*

The Farm Experience Internship is one little step forward in the fight against agribusiness, by putting students in contact with the reality of farmers, instead of solely being educated by (agribusiness-driven) Universities. Since the FEI is an initiative from Brazil, it is important to go in one line with the Brazilian concept of agroecology, which strongly emphasizes the social and political movement behind it, as well as the right to food (food sovereignty), and the benefits for the concretization of this human right. Therefore, we use a combination of three definitions of agroecology for this FEI:

**“AGROECOLOGY** can be seen as a **scientific** discipline, **agricultural** principle and practice, and/or **political** or **social** movement (Wezel, 2009), working with basic **ecological** principles for how to study, design and manage **agroecosystems** that are **productive**, natural resource **conserving** as well as **culturally sensitive**, **socially just** and **economically viable** (Altieri, 1995), thereby not only showing strong conceptual connections with the **right to nutritious food**, but also providing proven **results** for fast progress in the **concretization** of this **human right** for many **vulnerable** groups in various countries and environments (de Schutter 2010).”

## Core Principle 2: Interdisciplinary and participative learning processes.

As the name already suggests, the Farm Experience Internship is not only about the technological question concerning agriculture, let alone is it solely concerned about 'how to increase the yield in order to feed the world' - this is a very narrow minded approach, which is unfortunately still dominant on many universities. As Olivier de Schutter already mentioned, agroecology shows a very strong connection with the human right to nutritious food, which calls for *food sovereignty*.

*“FOOD SOVEREIGNTY is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It ensures that the rights to use and manage lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food. Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just incomes to all peoples as well as the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition.”*

- Declaration of Nyéléni, 2007

Therefore, a mono-dimensional approach to agriculture (e.g. 'knowledge-transfer') would not be in compliance with the concept of agroecology. A search for more interdisciplinary, holistic views is necessary.

Besides this holistic approach of tackling current challenges, we are also implementing *participative and interactive activities* during the learning process of FEI. That is to say, the process is not limited to a set of lectures in which 'participants' listen in a passive way. Workshops, debates, group-work, energizers, games etc. are all scheduled in the FEI programme in order to make the learning process more meaningful, interactive and inspiring.

In order to facilitate an interdisciplinary, holistic approach and moreover create an interactive, participative learning environment, it is useful to study the Barefoot Guide, about *Creative Space: Designing and facilitating learning activities* (Book 2, Ch. 15). Here, seven important principles are explained that need to be kept in mind for creating a proper learning activity, like the FEI. You can download the Barefoot Guide from our FEI website ([FarmExperienceInternship.wordpress.com](http://FarmExperienceInternship.wordpress.com)) and read the chapter on *Creative Space* as an inspiration for the design of the Farm Experience Internship.

In the beginning, some people might find this awkward or childish way of learning. Nevertheless, it is very important to keep it interactive and creative. Our brains are namely divided into two halves or hemispheres. The left half deals mostly with logical thinking processes and orientates on details while the right half deals more with imaginative and emotional processes and focusses on the bigger picture. Most learning activities stimulate people to only use the left part of the brain. However, using both hemispheres will enable us to have more insights and bring new dimensions and ideas to the learning. As the facilitator we will need to get people out of their comfort zone by introducing unfamiliar activities. Also, putting more emphasis on creativity stimulates the brain. Therefore, it is important to work with colourful posters and theatre during the FEI.

### Principle 1: Including the right people.

It is crucial to involve the 'right people' in a learning process. For the FEI, we have a list of certain criteria in order to make it work and have a potential impact, e.g. 'the farmer needs to be willing to share knowledge' or 'the student needs to speak proper English' (we have held the FEI in English).

### Principle 2: Explore the 'whole elephant'.

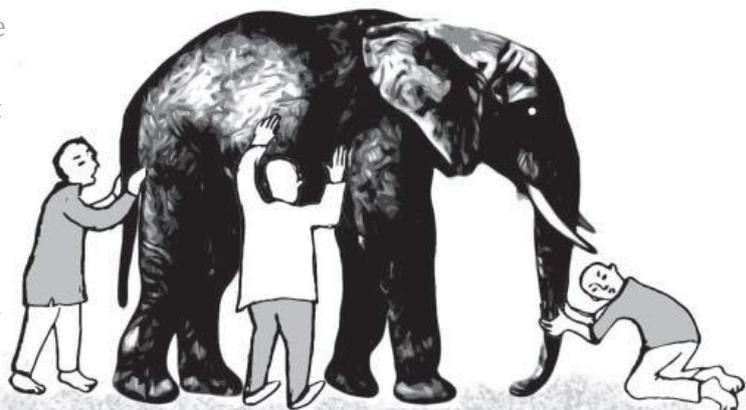
When working with complex situations, we often deal with specific parts and thereby miss the root causes of the problem, or find that fixing one part, results in a negative effect on other parts. It is important to realise that it is often the *relationships* that need to be improved rather than the separate parts of the system (see fig). Therefore the FEI aims to bridge the gap between university research and the needs of the farmer. Also, we will emphasise on the difference in reality between farmer and student. Pay attention to this during the FEI: how to (re)connect these relationships?

### Principle 3: Work with the whole person – head, heart and feet.

Most courses and lectures only focus on learning about facts and figures, ideas and theories, opinions and thoughts – but this is only one of the three facets of learning. Humans would be walking computers if this learning about facts and figures is all we can do. No, we also have our emotional life, our heart-level, which is a key part of who we are. We experience and respond to the world through our emotions and feelings as well.

*Do people feel safe and comfortable enough to speak out, be honest, to share what really happened, without fear of being punished or laughed at?*

What's an elephant? Three blind men touched an elephant, one touching at the front, one at the side and one at the back. The first told his friends: 'An elephant is long and about as thick as a man's arm.' The second one said, 'No, it isn't. It's flat and feels like paper. It is very thin.' The third one said, 'You're both wrong. It's large and hot, smelly stuff comes out of it.'



#### Principle 4: Appreciate and encourage diversity.

Both topics addressed in the program, as well as the (scientific and cultural) backgrounds of the participants need to be as diverse as possible. In this way, it is possible to approach a sustainable way of agriculture in the correct way, namely in a holistic, interdisciplinary way. If possible, try to make the FEI intercultural and interdisciplinary.

#### Principle 5: Help people to find common ground.

There is a huge diversity in the world and we must learn how to work with it and *understand* it's causes – in this way we start to realise diversity is not an obstacle, but rather an enrichment. An enrichment to different points of view, ideas, ways of seeing something which can give us new insights and work towards a common ground approach.

#### Principle 6: Work with the left and right brain.

Our brains are divided into two halves or hemispheres. The left half deals mostly with logical thinking processes and orientates on details while the right half deals more with imaginative and emotional processes and focusses on the bigger picture. Most learning activities stimulate people to only use the left part of the brain. However, using both hemispheres will enable us to have more insights and bring new dimensions and ideas to the learning. As the facilitator we will need to get people out of their comfort zone by introducing unfamiliar activities. Also, putting more emphasis on creativity stimulates the brain. Therefore, we involve colourful posters and theatre into the FEI.

#### Principle 7: Keep an eye on the 'real work'.

As a facilitator/leader of learning activities, you always have to keep these key roles in mind:

- Inspire and motivate people
- Energize people (see our website for energizers). People might be afraid to be honest. Or they feel stupid and don't want to expose themselves. They might be exhausted. Is the room too hot and low on oxygen? What is de-energising people from fully and willingly participating in the learning activity?
- Focus on what matters. Are the learning questions clear? Are the activities focussed?
- Ground the learning in *experience*. Is there enough space for experience and reflection on it? Are 'mistakes' seen as an opportunity to learn?
- Challenge people and help them to break out of the comfort zone (see our website for Icebreakers and Energizers).
- Support learning with enough *human warmth*, make sure you have a good group dynamics. You can do this with Icebreakers, energizers, providing snacks and drinks, keep the atmosphere informal. You can also make tests to make people understand what kind of person they are in a group, or how they learn (e.g. KOLB test, Belbin Roles, Learning styles etc.)
- Make use of dragon Dreaming: focus on dreams, and have the time keeper, energy keeper and 'pinakarri keeper'

## Core Principle 3: Partnership

The third and last principle of FEI is partnership. Partnerships or lobbying is a key strategy in order to find supporters, funding, credibility and visibility. With the FEI, the criterion we looked for, was that the partner had to show genuine interest in the project and willingness to help in any way - e.g. financially, publicity, structurally, offering food for free or with discount etc.

**NGO's.** In this way, NGOs such as Boerengroep and Otherwise supported the project providing interns who coordinate and organise the FEI, offering their network (e.g. for contacting farmers and lecturers), and help with the funding and promotion. Other NGOs such as ETC-international also joined as partner. This NGO brought Henk Kieft as a guest speaker. ILEIA helped during the FEI by explaining how to gather insights from the FEI and write a story.

**Movements.** The Youth Food Movement used their social media network (4500 followers) to promote the FEI via Twitter. Moreover, they were a key speaker during the FEI.

**Initiatives.** The initiative 'Future Farmers in the Spotlight' promoted the FEI on their Facebook page and allowed us to use their short documentaries as a way of inspiration during the FEI. The initiative 'What To Film Wageningen' helped us to create a promotion movie for the FEI. Also Jeroen from the Community Garden Wageningen offered to give meditation in the garden for a small price.

**Companies.** Diverse companies such as Boerenverstand (Sustainable Agriculture consultancy) and De Bolster (organic seed company) contributed to the project as well, with publicity and a guided visit respectively.

**Food Shops& producers.** It is important to *practise what you preach*: with agroecology as the first core-principle, it is important to offer organic and locally produced food during breakfast and lunch. This might add up in price of the FEI. But be creative! Ask organic shops and local&organic food producers to sponsor your wonderful project. In return, you can put a link on your website, and their logo on your posters and booklets. E.g. Lazuur Food Community Wageningen offered free bread for the FEI breakfast and a 5% discount on all other products. But we can also find other creative ways to obtain food. A friend, doing his internship in a bio-control company, offered us big bags full of organic paprika's (not able to be sold due to small dots or 'strange shapes') which were otherwise thrown away.

## 4. Let's start organizing!

Now you know the three core principles, you can start organising the FEI (It is recommended to start about 4 months in advance, but preferable 5 or 6 months if this is possible). It is good to have one or two coordinators (interns) and at least 4 volunteers. A summary of activities:

1. Arrange an **internship contract** and discuss about the FEI with your supervisor. Who do you want to target: only students, or are non-students and activists also allowed? In what way can the chairgroup contribute to the organisation? (Maybe they know people who'd like to join in the organisation/ promotion/ contacts of speakers etc.)
2. Create a **mail** account
3. Arrange a meeting and make a first set-up of the planning for organisation, as well as a first **task division**: have people in charge of several topics. Please note that 'being in charge' means that you are *responsible* for this task. So it is possible to ask help from other people, but you are responsible that this task will be done and it is you who keeps the overview. Several tasks to divide:
  - a. **Make FEI Poster**  
**In charge:** ...
  - b. **Spread Posters**  
**In charge:** ...
  - c. Photographers  
**In charge:** ...  
Making pictures during the FEI as documentation and promotion for the next year FEI.
  - d. Promotional activities.  
**In charge:** ...  
E.g. an Agroecology evening or seed swaps
  - e. **Finances**  
**In charge:** ...  
Make sure everyone paid, keep all the receipts etc. and keep the overview of income and payments.
  - f. **Funding**  
**In charge:** ...  
(money as well as food, drinks, snacks, seeds etc)

**g. FEI gmail.**

**In charge: ...**

One person is in charge of the mail (preferable an intern). If there's no intern and not someone with a lot of time, you can make subfolders and one person makes sure all the mails go to the right subfolders:

- Farmers
- Participants
- Catering
- Speakers Week one
- Speakers Week four
- Online PR

**In contact with the FARMERS.**

**In charge: ...**

Regarding the FEI itself it's important to have all FEI farmers confirmed (give them a call - that's the most fast). Make sure you keep this all very well organised in an overview, and also have space for comments. We need minimum 10 and maximum 20 farms for the FEI. You can find the overview here: <https://farmexperienceinternship.wordpress.com/farmers/>

**In contact with the PARTICIPANTS.**

**In charge: ...**

Participants sign up and often have questions you need to answer. So make sure you keep in contact.

**In contact with the Catering.**

**In charge: ...**

We always ask Theo de Vries (Capuchinha Catering) if he wants to provide lunch again during the 1st and 4th week of the FEI (we paid 5 eur pp per day). If he cannot make it, then search for someone else who can be in charge of the food (as organic and local as possible and vegetarian) for approx. 25 people.

**In contact with the Speakers Week one & Make the schedule**

**In charge: ...**

Note: in the schedule you also put time for breaks, energizers, transport, biking to the garden etc.

**In contact with the Speakers / Excursion people Week four.**

**In charge: ...**

## **In contact with chairgroups (online PR)**

### **In charge: ...**

Promote the FEI to all chairgroups. Give a small introduction, the poster in attachment, a link to the website and how to sign up. A list of chairgroups and contacts can be found in the Boerengroep manual.

- Try to set a **prize** for the FEI. How much do you think you need to cover expenses? (Here we had set 50euro's per participant, but you can also make it cheaper).
- Start **promoting** the FEI as soon as possible (preferably half a year in advance, since people are planning their holidays, but not later than 4months prior to the start).  
Ways of promotion are:
  - Make a list of all agro-ecology related chairgroups and student associations. Send a mail to the contact persons, where you explain the concept of the FEI, and if they could help you promoting it. Don't forget to mention contact details.
  - posters with short info about the Farm Experience Internship and some nice pictures (feel free to use pictures from our website as well).
  - Plan and organise an event related to agro-ecology/ permaculture/ impact of Green Revolution/ Food Sovereignty etc, e.g. invite a teacher to give a lecture about it in the evening. Have a discussion afterwards and then promote the FEI. Take paper with you where students who are interested in participating/organising can write down their names and mail.
  - You can make a promotion video (keep it happy and funny : ))
  - Send a mail to all movements/NGO's/foundations in your country, related to agroecology and ask if they can promote the FEI (in return you can place their logo on your website). Make use of networks of your organising team.
  - Try to arrange sponsored seeds. Put these in packages, attach a flyer and hand these out on your university. On this flyer will be a short description of the FEI and a link to the website where people can find more info.
- Create a **website** where people can find all information. I used wordpress, since it is easy to use and it's for free. I didn't know anything about making a website, but slowly, step by step I learned more myself, since Wordpress is quite easy to use. Make a setup, and during your internship use a few hours a week to add some more info.
- Start **contacting Farmers** (preferably who embrace Agroecological practices or try to go towards that direction). If this is the first time of organising the FEI, I recommend to visit them and talk to them in person. Explain them the importance of the FEI, that students are very interested in learning from them, and tell them that we aim to have the university research more directed towards the needs of the farmers. Ask if he can hosts students for free. In return students will help him for two weeks (and it

is expected that the farmer will explain about farming while working together). Students are expected to give some money to cover the expenses for food and drinks.

- **Link students to farms.** On your website, you can make a summary of participating farms. Send a form of preference (first, second, third) to the students and arrange.
- Start **contacting key speakers** of different topics. Explain them about the FEI and the importance of their contribution to it.
- Start **designing the program** for the preparatory and evaluation phase. Also divide tasks:
  - Who keeps track of time and makes sure you stick to the schedule
  - Who will arrange the food, snacks, drinks etc.
  - Who will give a small thank-you-gift to the speakers?

**And don't forget:**

- Keep the FEI student-driven, horizontal, holistic, participatory and fun! Both during the FEI itself, but also during the organisation.
- Ask the speakers to keep it interactive and creative (see the documents on our site for inspiration)
- Have a lot of breaks, energizers, ice breakers, provide snacks, coffee, tea etc. to keep people energized, focused and relaxed.
- Have regular meetings with the organizing group, keep good contact and make minutes with Action Points & deadlines (what to do before next meeting per person)
- Make pictures / videos which is a great way of promotion for next year's FEI
- Have all the information well organised in maps, so that the organisers of next year can easily access it.
- Try to structure around themes, and elaborate also on the political side (post WWII), the Green Revolution, and agroecology. Emphasise in that way the importance of this project and local, organic food production. On our website you can find a lot of info on various topics: <http://farmexperienceinternship.wordpress.com/inspiration/>

## 5. An Example of a FEI program

I will give you an example of a FEI programme, so you can get an idea about the topics. Of course, feel fully free to design it your way: you are the organiser : ) On our website you can find a lot of information, see: [farmexperienceinternship.wordpress.com](http://farmexperienceinternship.wordpress.com) . For making this schedule: keep it centred around **themes** and place the **learning goals** in the schedule, so student feel more guided.

### *Week one*

Organize week one together, e.g. via Dragon Dreaming method. “Which topics should be in the course, so that you think this is the best course you can imagine? What makes your eyes spark, your heart happy?” Write the topics on post-its and try to make a draft program. After that, start contacting the lecturers / farmers / gardeners, and ask for several options of dates when they can make it. In this way, you can shift the program and try to fit it all in.

Make a detailed programme as well, where you also add things like time for transport “14:00 – 14:30h biking to the garden” (also emphasise participants need to bring a bike!)

### *Week four*

In order to share our experiences of the two weeks on the farm or garden, everyone will give a presentation. It will be held by means of pictures (no text!), drawings or a video (see example [here](#)). It is thus important to take pictures or videos from the farm that illustrate the topics you need to address in your presentation and report. The presentation should include your **personal experience** and a **general description** (which farming style fits your farm, how big is the farm, how many people work there, is there something unique about the farm etc.).

What worked great with our FEI, was short presentations in the morning and relax time in the afternoon, including time to make the storybook or write your report. Presentations are 10 minutes presentation, 5 minutes Q&A. After two or max three presentations you take a break / energizer.

Monday 25<sup>th</sup>

Welcome everyone ☺



Potluck

Organic Garden  
'Ommuurde Tuin'



SOIL

Dinner  
at the campfire

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup>

Peasant  
Movements  
&  
Food  
Sovereignty

lunch

movie:  
MST & Agroecology

Agroecology

Student  
Garden

Empathy

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup>

Food Forest  
'Ketelbroek'



lunch

Gender

the fight for  
Land  
- a story from the field

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup>

SEED



lunch

Participatory  
Approaches



Dairy farm  
Remeker

Friday 29<sup>th</sup>

Eco Village  
'PPAUW'

lunch at PPAUW

Analysis of  
Farming Systems

Community  
Supported  
Agriculture  
'Nieuwe Ronde'

Fiesta ♡

FEI  
week 4

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

9:00  
10:00  
11:00  
START

\* pinboard & energy keeper.  
**Storybook methodology**  
present programme  
schedule? rearrange?

Lunch  
12:30-13:30

Brainstorm  
Storybooks.  
cookies

Pizza party  
15:00

Bring your vibes  
instruments  
& looove  
and veggies :)

Presentations  
e x 1/2 h  
break 1/2 h  
e x 1/2 h  
4

ENERGY

STORY  
BOOK



Presentations  
3

REPORT  
WRITING

ENERGY

ART

Presentations  
(no pp. circle)  
and slides  
3

ENERGY

fokomsbreep

DEAD

Storybook  
(we'll print)

Presentations  
3

Mystica  
burn the dream, plant a seed

Dreaming  
circle  
+ proj. plann.  
15.00

## 5. An Example of a FEI university course description

### Farm Experience Internship (RSO-51303)

*Experience the daily reality of farming, broaden your views and expand your skills through this summer course on participatory methods, agroecology, permaculture and much more.*



Course: Capita Selecta Agricultural and Rural Innovation Processes  
Code: RSO-51303 (Capita Selecta)  
Dates: 25<sup>th</sup> July until 19<sup>th</sup> August 2016  
Credits: 3 ECTS  
Contact: [farmexperienceinternship@gmail.com](mailto:farmexperienceinternship@gmail.com) (regarding the FEI and subscriptions)  
[st.boerengroep@wur.nl](mailto:st.boerengroep@wur.nl) (regarding organizational aspects and general information)  
Maria Borrás (FEI organizational member team): 00316 4438 9463  
Elske Hageraats (Coordinator Boerengroep): 00316 4866 3589

**Week 1**                      **Preparation phase**  
8:30 - 17:30 [Building with the Clock](#), Generaal Foulkesweg 37, 6703  
BL Wageningen

**Week 2 and 3**              **Farming experience**  
Working on an organic farm or garden during two weeks. See the farms  
[here](#) .

**Week 4**                      **Sharing experience and evaluation phase**  
8:30 - 17:30 [Building with the Clock](#), Generaal Foulkesweg 37, 6703  
BL Wageningen

#### Contents

1. Relevance of the course
2. Description of the course
3. Learning outcomes
4. Learning material and resources
5. Study time

## 1. Relevance of the course

In the Netherlands, and Europe in general, policy advice and research is often disconnected from the reality of farmers, gardeners and peasants. On the one hand the knowledge of farmers is not valorised, on the other hand the knowledge produced at educational institutes is often too abstract, creating gaps between farmers' needs and research. Within Wageningen University, many students of agriculture-related topics have no experience with farms or farming and are not aware what is happening in the field. Students, destined for a future career as researcher, policy maker, entrepreneur or farmer will benefit from a more qualified professional education if they understand and experience the daily reality of a farm. Many universities in Europe and around the world have developed courses, internships or projects that allow students to gain practical experience on a (local) farm. The results of these initiatives are often very positive, as students can connect their on farm experiences their studies and vice versa. Moreover, such experiences can reproduce beneficial spin-offs, such as the creation of a farmer-student-university network, and contribute to the connection of several organizations involved in sustainable food production and consumption. It all contributes to a move towards more applied and effective research and policy.

The organization of and participation in the Farm Experience Internship will offer participants an opportunity to put new **farming** and **research methods** and **approaches** into practice. How can we truly work in an interdisciplinary way? How to work most effectively in groups with participatory approaches and in collective cooperation? These are two of the many challenging questions that will be addressed.

### Important for the positioning of the course

The ultimate goal of this course is to offer students the opportunity to experience the daily reality of farming, challenge their theoretical knowledge and stimulate the development of critical and creative thinking.

## 2. Description of the course

The program consist of three parts: an introductory week, two weeks of practical work on farm and three days of collective evaluation and report writing.

The introductory and evaluation phase will take place at the '*Building with the Klok*', Generaal Foulkesweg 37, Wageningen, the Netherlands. During the first week the participants get to know each other, the organisers, farms and gardens in the Netherlands as well as basic knowledge on agroecology. Guest lectures, excursions and workshops will be organised to give insights in different components of agroecology - like food sovereignty, soil, seeds, land and gender - as well as basic knowledge on farm diagnostics, rural sociology and participatory research methods: all in interactive and participatory ways. Students will have space to develop their personal learning goals. For the practical period on the farm, the interests of the students and the farmers will be matched as much as possible. Each student will go to a farm. These can be located in or around Wageningen, but just as well anywhere else in the

Netherlands or abroad. If the participant wants to go to a different farm contact the organization first, but it is very possible. Farms abroad should be sought by the student itself.

During the internship period the student will be working with the farmer and his family with their daily farming activities, adapt to the rhythm of farm life and engage in active exchange with the farmer (family) to understand the functioning of the farm and be able to grasp the challenges and opportunities of the farm. Besides research questions will be investigated.

The last week, students will have the opportunity to individually reflect on their experience in a collective reflection as well as a presentation with pictures or video and a written report (100% of the mark). Farm practices and realities are compared and discussed. A collection of interactive **methods** is used to stimulate sharing and reflection, like Dragon Dreaming, story telling, ‘a letter to myself’ and other.

### 3. Learning outcomes

After participating in this course students are expected to:

1. Understand and reflect on **Agroecology as a science, practice and movement**.
  - Formulate and discuss their opinion and view on agroecology. Students can critically reflect on the gained knowledge and skills and actively use this during discussions and debates, e.g. regarding the need that we have to combine knowledge of peasant agriculture, ancestral knowledge and scientific research in order to co-create innovative farming practices.
2. Understand and reflect on the different **components of agroecology**, like food sovereignty, soil, seeds, land and gender, and apply this knowledge in the analysis of your farm.
3. Understand the notion of **applied research** which supports individual farms or the farming sector.
  - Apply the knowledge and skills gained during the workshop of **playing with methodology** conducted by Michelle, while participating on the farm.
  - Apply the knowledge and skills gained during the workshop **analysis of Farming Systems**.
  - Achieve their own **learning goals** and discuss them with farmers.
4. Analyse the **farming reality** and adapt to this farmer reality and farmers concepts.  
Understand the concept of reality regarding research vs. farmers and try to meet these realities in order to cooperate together.

### 4. Learning material and resources

More info can be found on our [Website](#) and/or [Facebook page](#). This platform is used to build a community and dynamically communicate about the various events organised during the organisation of the course. Students are invited to join in the organisation of the course and attend a series of evening meetings throughout the year. This Facebook page is also used during the internship period to inform students and for students to share their experiences.

Students have to attend all parts of the course (lectures, workshops, excursions, working on the farm, presentations etc.). The provided literature is optional to read. Students who have signed up for receiving the 3 ECTS are obliged to hand in the report at the end of the course.

## 5. Examination and Assessment strategy

The study load of the course is equivalent to 3 ECTS. This implies that 84 hours are spent on the course. Please note that, as the course is about experiencing farmers' life, flexibility and adaptation to the rhythm and working hours of the farmer are required. Secondly, you might notice that you spend more hours than the 3 ECTS refer to. This is partly due to the working hours on the farm which you partly have to see as a life experience rather than studying time.

| Activity                              | Hours spend |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Participation in the preparatory week | 40          |
| Farm internship                       | 80          |
| Participation in the evaluation phase | 40          |
| Individual reporting                  | 10          |
| <b>Total hours spend</b>              | <b>170</b>  |

The examination is based on the individual review paper. The student is obliged to attend all parts of the course (introductory week, farm experience, evaluation week) in order to pass. The last week everybody is expected to present their own experience and the students that want the ECTS will have to present a report, in which 100% of the mark will be based on. The individual review papers will be assessed by the [Rural Sociology Group](#) of Wageningen University.

**The Presentation.** In order to share our experiences of the two weeks on the farm or garden, everyone will give a presentation. It will be held by means of pictures (no text!), drawings or a video (see example [here](#)). It is thus important to take pictures or videos from the farm that illustrate the topics you need to address in your presentation and report. The presentation should include your **personal experience** and a **general description** (which farming style fits your farm, how big is the farm, how many people work there, is there something unique about the farm etc.)

**The Story Book.** The story book is an artistic, passionate reflection of your personal experience. Bring out the paper, scissors, glue, paint, glitters, seasonal recipes and pictures!

**The paper\*** The paper should include:

- A **scientific analysis** of your farm/garden/food forest
  - Give a general description of the farm/garden/food forest and apply at least 3 of the **components** of agroecology (learning outcome **2**) in the analysis of your farm
  - Describe the **methods you** used and the outcome (learning outcome **3**)
  - Did the farmer provided any **Research Questions** for further research (e.g. thesis)?

*Choose either restricted optional A or B:*

- Restricted Optional A: A SWOT analysis (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats)
- Restricted Optional B: How did the farmer/gardener got access to:
  - Land (rent, buy, inherited?)
  - Knowledge / Skills (Warmonderhof? University? Meetings with other farmers?)
  - Money (crowdfunding, loan from bank etc.)
  - Market-Consumer?
- **A reflection on**
  - **Agroecology** as science, practice, movement, and the need to combine different types of knowledge (learning outcome **1**)
  - The **farm reality** you experienced at the farm/garden/food forest. Reflection on the different realities of research vs. farmers/gardners. (learning outcome **4**)
  - Your **Dreams** - any Dream that came to you, during the FEI. (learning outcome **5**)
  - The **FEI**. Reflection on personal experiences from the FEI in general (preparation, farm, evaluation phase). Any tips/tops/points for improvement?
- **Conclusion.**

\*Make sure your report has a front page, table of contents, introduction, conclusion and proper reference list.

**Optional: publish an article at the magazine of ‘Toekomstboeren’ (Future Farmers)**

You are encouraged to transform your report into a short article for ‘Toekomstboeren’ (Future Farmers), an organization of young people who make portraits of ‘Future Farmers’ as a way to inspire people to start working the land and farm in agroecological ways. More info and contact details: <http://toekomstboeren.nl/>

**Length paper:** approximately 2500-3000 words, more or less equally divided between the two different parts.

**Examined by:** RSO Chairgroup

**Deadline:** 4<sup>th</sup> September (for those who need the credits before, send a mail to farmexperienceinternship@gmail.com)









