



AFECO Newsletter November 2021



Single personal registration at the examination office

For all new AFECO students, please do not forget that you must send the application for admission to Master's examinations (including all necessary documents) to the examination office latest until November 15, 2021. The easiest way to do that is via e-mail to pruefamt-msc@lwf.uni-bonn.de.



Inside UN Bonn - podcast

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the United Nations in Bonn, UN Bonn launches the podcast series 'Inside UN Bonn'. The podcast series is in English and features UN staff. Stories from the UN Campus in Bonn are told that have never been shared before, shedding light on the diverse work of UN Bonn facilities, their partners and some Special Ambassadors. The [podcast](#) is available on all common podcast platforms.

Department for international students & international club

You want to meet other international students? The [International Club](#) and the [Department for International Students](#) offer you the opportunity to do so! Just check their facebook pages for current dates and events.

ARTS seminar series

This winter term the ARTS Master program organized an open seminar series again. This year's topic is "Large-scale land use changes: Challenges and opportunities". All dates, usually it is Thursdays, as well as the zoom link can be found [here](#). Starting from November, they invited some guest speakers from other Universities. Feel free to join the meeting!

Sustainability events in November

Some exciting initiatives are organized in collaboration with various partners over the coming weeks. These will point out how and where each of us can help foster a culture of sustainability at our university and in our daily lives. Look up for the [events](#). For example, there will be a Sustainability Science Slam and a campaign week to celebrate the first year as a fair trade University.

The future of food conference 2021

The [future of food conference](#) will provide a high-level platform to discuss future trends and priorities in food innovation in Europe, in the broader context of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the EU Farm to Fork Strategy. Among the speakers are EU policymakers, EIT Food partners and other key stakeholders. The event will take place online on November 30 and December 01 and is free to attend but you have to [register](#) for it.

PhenoRob women in science talk

On November 23, 2021, from 13:30-15:30 the cluster of excellence of the University of Bonn has organized another science talk. Barbara Caputo (Politecnico of Torino) will held a talk with the title "Towards recognizing new semantic concepts in new visual domains". Additionally Katja Herzog (Julius Kühn-Institut) will talk about "The key role of high-performance phenotyping in grapevine breeding and precision viticulture". Feel free to join them. <https://uni-bonn.zoom.us/j/98090173593?pwd=cm1tVlEra3ZyMlIRaWkwMU01R0ZqQT09> (Meeting-ID: 980 9017 3593; PW: 957157)

Presentation of the polyfarming system manual

Are you keen on learning about regenerative agriculture and livestock farming and why it is becoming more and more relevant in today's world? Don't miss the [presentation of the polyfarming system manual](#)! The manual is a guide to discover the regenerative model, enjoy learning about it and, in some cases, replicate it, both locally and globally. The webinar takes place online on November 3, 2021 from 15:00-16:30. Participation is free of charge, but [registration](#) is necessary.

Animal task force seminar - going beyond the feed vs food competition

One of the controversial aspects of livestock production is the resource competition for feed and food production that necessitates a disruptive shift in resourcing animal feeding and in European agriculture. To achieve the conditions required to deliver sustainable farming systems, it is essential to develop science-based management strategies that reduce the current reliance on non-renewable resources and securing the production in an increasingly unpredictable climate. The [ATF seminar](#) would like to foster discussion with farmers, industries, scientists, policy makers and society. After [registration](#) you can attend the seminar online on November 8, 2021 from 09:00-13:00.

Virtual youth career day

The international student organization AISEC organized a [virtual career day](#) where you can get in contact with companies. The event will take place on November 3, 2021 from 10:00-16:00. [Registration](#) is needed, the event is free of charge.

November 11 - double the culture in Rhineland

At 11:11 a.m., the "Session", carnival season 2021/22 starts in front of Bonn City Hall in compliance with 3G rules. If you're celebrating carnival (with a lot of alcohol) you see double, this is what the date 11.11. symbolizes. There is also a calmer tradition which goes back to Christian story telling: Some hundred years ago, a good soldier called Martin was riding his horse in a cold November night. In front of the town gate, a beggar was freezing and asked for help. Merciful Martin didn't hesitate and cut his red coat into two pieces to give one to the beggar. To remember this story of sharing and helping, around November 11, children build little lanterns and walk around the streets in a singing parade, led by a "Saint Martin" with a red coat, riding a horse. Attention: Although there are two cultural celebrations, it's not a public holiday!



Internship & Job Opportunities*

[IT Student Assistant \(m/f/div\)](#), 20 hrs. p.w., Flocert, Bonn

[Working Student \(m/f/d\) Capacity Building](#), GLOBAL G.A.P., Cologne

[Student Assistant Global Products, Programmes and Policy](#), Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International e.V. (Fairtrade International), Bonn. Application until November 22, 2021

[Praktikant \(m, w, d\) Agribusiness im Fördergeschäft](#), Rentenbank, Frankfurt am Main

[Junior-Berater*in Agribusiness Facility for Africa](#), GIZ, Eschborn, Bewerbungsfrist: 09.11.21

[Wissenschaftliche*n Mitarbeiter*in \(w/m\(d\) Agrarökonomie / Nutztierwissenschaften\)](#), Thünen Institut, Braunschweig, Bewerbungsfrist: 10.11.2021

[Doctoral Student in Agricultural Economics](#), full-time position for 3 years, ETH Zürich, Switzerland, Application until November 15, 2021



Practical insights of writing a master thesis

For this testimonial Ana Vanacker (AV) (right photo) and Tobias Schroers (TS) (left photo) share their knowledge and experience they gained in the final months as AFECO students. We hope this inspires you for your own thesis and takes the pressure of this seemingly gigantic task.

First, thank you two very much for taking the time for our interview. We are looking forward to your insightful answers.



Let's start with the research seminars, that are taught again this autumn. At which chair-group did you have the seminar and what has been your experience with this course? Did it prepare you for your thesis? What did you learn; could you use it later on? And do you have any recommendation thinking back to the research seminar?

TS: Last winter term, I took part in the research seminar in agribusiness which is organized by the TIM and the PE chair. The research seminar in agribusiness consists of a few introductory lectures before the students must choose a topic. I already knew beforehand what my topic is going to be as I already agreed on it with a company and my supervisor.

In my opinion it is very useful to have such a research seminar: We had to prepare a presentation and had to hand in a seminar paper at the end of the semester. Consequently, students can make first basic research and to explore whether their original research question is appropriate for a master thesis. In case a student realizes that the chosen topic needs slight adjustments or should be rejected in total she/he is able to make necessary changes before the master thesis is registered.

AV: As I am writing my thesis at the chair for Technology, Innovation Management and Entrepreneurship, I took part in the research seminar in agribusiness as well. For me, it was great to get the opportunity but also an incentive to already engage with my thesis topic. The course

provided me with a good foundation to actually start with the thesis. We learned about scientific writing and the composition of an abstract. Most importantly for me though we got to already explore the research gap, theoretical background, and methods that built the foundation for our thesis. At the end of the module, everyone presented their topics. This not only was a great opportunity to get feedback before starting with the actual thesis, but it was also very interesting to hear about other thesis topics. My recommendation for the research seminar would be to use this opportunity to already get a head start for the thesis as the work you do in the research seminar is work you don't have to do anymore later on.

Now that we already briefly touched upon the thesis, can you tell us a little bit more about it? What inspired you and how did that evolve while writing your thesis?

AV: Before I started my thesis, I was already interested in biorefineries, in particular later generations of biorefineries that don't rely on food crops as feedstock. Biorefineries could be a sustainable alternative to traditional refineries by converting biomass into products such as energy, fuels, or chemicals. I believe that an important aspect of the transition to a more sustainable economy is the commercialization and scale-up of sustainable technologies. This seems to be a challenging issue. That is why I decided to analyze the developmental state of second-generation biorefineries. I am looking at what might be blocking their development and how the development of technologies in the bioeconomy could be measured.

TS: The research goal of my master thesis is to develop a maturity model for the transition of agricultural farms towards regenerative agriculture. Regenerative agriculture is a very diverse farming approach which aims at regenerating soils, increase soil organic matter, increase biodiversity etc. A major advantage of this farming approach is that it helps to mitigate climate change as carbon is sequestered in the soils. Therefore, this cultivation method is seen as a promising approach for sustainable agriculture

As a master thesis often involves empirical data collection and analysis, we were wondering: How did you go about that? Did you face challenges, and do you have any helpful hints for students that have their thesis still ahead of them?

AV: The method I am using for my thesis is a patent analysis. Thus, the first challenge for me was to find the right sample of patents. This took some iterations. For me, the analysis part is more fun as this is where I can get answers to the questions that interest me. I would say that in this step of the research process one has to be more flexible. You will apply the method as you had planned it, but you also might find other interesting insights from the data that you might want to analyze more in detail to answer your research question. My recommendation for data collection and analysis would be to be patient. Sometimes you might have to do multiple iterations of a research step which can be frustrating but I'm sure you will get good results in the end. I would also recommend keeping track of all the steps you take for data analysis and write down all interesting findings. These things can be forgotten easily, and it will help you in writing the thesis in the end.

You, Tobias, told us that you are writing your thesis together with a company. Were you interested in that before you found the offer? What procedure did you agree on? How do you and the company work together?

TS: I was made aware of the Raiffeisen Warenzentrale (RWZ) announcement by a member of the TIM chair. As the topic sounded very interesting, I decided to choose it. After a first meeting with the company supervisor and the university supervisor we agreed on the specific topic and the procedure. The main reason to write my master's thesis in collaboration with a company was that I wanted to have a certain practical relevance. Furthermore, a master's thesis also allows you to establish contacts with the company. I am in regular contact with my company supervisor because the model I want to develop will be used in RWZ's advisory work. We meet at least once a month to discuss the method or upcoming steps. In addition, I was able to contact some interviewees via the company. This was really helpful as I have chosen a qualitative approach for the model development, which means that I ran several expert interviews. Based on those interviews and by

examining existing farm evaluation systems, I try to develop the model in an iterative development process.

Finally, as you are working on your master thesis topic for some time now, are there insights you want to share?

TS: As I am currently still conducting the last part of the interviews, I cannot say anything about the results of my work yet. What I can tell is that as my work is somewhat explorative, my original plans from the research seminar have changed over time. I would say that it is quite normal to make small changes during the editing period and that you should not be afraid to make changes.

AV: As you can imagine, writing the master thesis is quite different from completing a regular module with regular lectures. Although it comes with challenges, I enjoyed the freedom I had working on a topic that interests me and being able to use my time more flexibly. I feel like many students see the master thesis as a great obstacle that they have to complete to finish their studies. To those, I just want to say that it may be hard at times, but we are all going to make it and can be very proud of ourselves afterward!



We want to hear from you!

This is a student-run newsletter, and we would love to get your input. If you have any helpful information about the AFECO program, job/internship opportunities, events around Bonn or something else you would like to share, let us know! It doesn't matter if you would like to contribute one time or consistently, everyone is more than welcome to join us! Feel free to contact us at jmeder@uni-bonn.de or s7lahoop@uni-bonn.de.

Judith Meder & Lara Hoops