

# AFECO Monthly Newsletter

## December 2018

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### **AFECO Student “Year End”-Party**

The student representatives of the new intake year 18/19 [Estera](#) and [Tobias](#), together with the student representatives of the intake year 17/18 Catharina and Antoinette are organizing once more an AFECO student “Year End” party. AFECO students can join on **Wednesday, December 19<sup>th</sup> 18:30 SemRoom Nussallee 19** for a little bit of Christmas music, hot wine and sweets. If you are interested you can bring a bottle to contribute to the pot or show what food or sweets you like most during winter, or both!

### **BoWaCo Informational Lecture**

Interested in the double-degree program with Wageningen University? Please join the Wageningen Study coordinator, who will call in via skype, Sietse Sterrenburg on **Tuesday December 18<sup>th</sup> at 15:00 c.t., SemRoom Nussallee 19** to discuss and ask questions about the program. Information about the program can be found [here](#).

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### **Dies Academicus: Wednesday December 5th 2018** **-no AFECO lectures that day-**

Every semester, the Dies Academicus at University of Bonn gives all students the opportunity to widen their perspective with an interesting selection of talks and presentations at different locations at the university (full [programme](#)). At **11:15 Hörsaal II**, Prof. Dr. Jan Börner from the ILR Chair for Economics of Sustainable Land Use and Bioeconomy has his inaugural lecture on: **Landnutzungswandel und Bioökonomie: Herausforderungen für eine globale Nachhaltigkeitsgovernance**.

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### **ZEF colloquia on Thursday December 6th 2018**

Dr. Anselm Rink (Konstanz) on [Missionaries and Social Capital](#) at 13:30 and

Dr. Berber Kramer (IFPRI) on [Picture-based Crop Insurance](#) at 14:30

**Venue:** ZEF ([Center for Development Research](#)), Genscherallee 3, 53113 Bonn, ground floor, right conference room.

### **ESN Bonn goes to Aachen \*Winter Edition\***

Interested in exploring more of what NRW has to offer? Head to Aachen on **Friday December 14<sup>th</sup>, 14:30 – 22:30!** Located on the border to Belgium and the Netherlands, the city combines a rich history, medieval appearance, and modern European atmosphere. Among other reasons, Aachen is of great historical importance for Germany as it was the crowning site of the emperors of the Holy Roman emperor! Open to all students, more information [here](#).

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## Internship and Job Opportunities\*

[Studentische Hilfskraft](#) to support incoming AFECO students as a “study buddy“ for the WS 19/20

Bewerbungsfrist 09.12.2018

[Studentische Hilfskraft \(6-8 Stunden/Woche\)](#), Lehrstuhl für Technologie- und Innovationsmanagement im Agribusiness

Bewerbungsfrist: 15.02.2019

[Internship Transdisciplinary Research](#), TMG Thinktank for Sustainability, Berlin

Application deadline: December 5, 2018

[Studentische Hilfskraft](#), Bonn International Graduate School for Development Studies (BIGSDR) am Zentrum für Entwicklungsforschung (ZEF)

[Intern Inhouse Consulting \(m/f/d\)](#) / [Praktikant Inhouse Consulting \(m/w/d\)](#), Bayer AG, Leverkusen”, English and German speaking positions open

[Hochschulpraktikant \(m/w/d\)](#), RWZ Raiffeisen, Köln

Check out the ILR [website](#) for PhD positions and other post-graduate job opportunities.

**\*job descriptions in German require fluent German skills**

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## ILR testimonial: Prof. Dr. Jan Börner

The University of Bonn is conducting research in the cluster “PhenoRob - Robotics and Phenotyping for Sustainable Crop Production,” one of the Clusters of Excellence won by the university this year. I spoke with [Jan Börner](#), who has worked at ILR since June 2017, and is responsible for the [Chair for Economics of Sustainable Land Use and Bioeconomy](#) to find out more...



**AT: For those who don't know, what is a Cluster of Excellence?**

**JB:** A Cluster of Excellence is a funding modality of the German Science Foundation (DFG) that seeks to establish well-articulated research themes as strategic and internationally competitive long-term profile areas in German Universities. Clusters are generously funded for at least seven years and if Universities manage to obtain funding for several clusters they may apply for additional funding under the modality of Excellence Universities.

**AT: Please describe the work of the PhenoRob.**

**JB:** In a nutshell, PhenoRob anticipates the next big transformation in agriculture that will be driven by digitalization and automation. This transformation comes with the promise of reducing air and water pollution through mechanical plant and soil management and more eco-efficient use of agro-chemicals. PhenoRob integrates scientific key competences needed to move towards this vision of sustainable crop management, such as robotics, digitalization, big data analytics, and machine learning as well as modern methods of plant phenotyping, modeling, and crop production.

**AT: What is your focus in working with PhenoRob?**

**JB:** Of course there are challenges related to transforming agriculture in this way. For example, farmers may hesitate to adopt new technology packages and even if they did, we do not know whether large-scale adoption will actually bring about the expected benefits. Plus, there might be unexpected pitfalls and social as well as environmental implications that require new or different policies and governance frameworks. Researchers at ILR thus contribute to PhenoRob under a research unit called “UPSCALE” that combines empirical adoption research with the development of a model-based “virtual laboratory” designed to simulate technology diffusion and assess alternative policy scenarios from farm to landscape scale.

**AT: What do you think the biggest challenge is that we face regarding sustainable food production?**

**JB:** Personally I think that governance is currently our biggest challenge. We need better technologies to achieve sustainable food production, but more often than not it is poor governance at both national and international levels that inhibits sustainable technological innovation and that fails to properly respond to undesired social and environmental impacts of change in agricultural systems.

**AT: How do you address the challenges of introducing the necessary technology as well as explaining what’s at stake (e.g. food security) to stakeholders?**

**JB:** PhenoRob will rely on a number of strategies including partnerships with the private sector to engage with stakeholders. But, the Cluster’s main goal is to produce excellent basic and applied research. It is on all of us University researchers to contribute to making scientific knowledge available to society. My personal take is that we are still too busy raising awareness. Most people know what is at stake. The major challenge is to identify and implement solutions in socially acceptable ways.

**AT: If food production were to continue the way it has, what consequences could we expect to see in the near future?**

**JB:** Climate change, land degradation, pollution, and biodiversity loss including their related social and economic consequences are probably the four most important negative trends often associated with food and non-food biomass production that we want to revert in the future. I want to end on a more positive note though: We economists and social scientists are actually getting better at identifying which solutions work and which don’t. Let’s use these skills to make a difference! More information about the PhenoRob can be found [here](#).

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## **We want you to contribute!**

This is a student run newsletter and we want to hear from you! If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, whether it be on a recurring basis or one time, please contact Alex at [afeco.info@ilr.uni-bonn.de](mailto:afeco.info@ilr.uni-bonn.de). If you have any helpful information about the AFECO program, job/internship opportunities, going-ons around town or advice for first year AFECO students that you would like to share, don’t be bashful and have your voice heard!