

In the Harderwijk meeting we had the pleasure to work with students from all the participating schools. Although the level of their studies varies, it was great to see people enthusiastic about novel proteins and cooking with them. Besides people from schools, participating in the meeting were Otto Palonen from a collaborating company EntoCube, and an author and famous Insect Chef Topi Kairenius. Topi gave a comprehensive presentation about insects in western culture and the possibilities of insects.

Thought of insect food as “future food” is a misleading term. Entomophagy (eating insects) as a phenomenon is as old as humankind. We have eaten insects since day one, and still the majority of cultures use insects in their daily diet. The problem is that the western food culture has oriented more untenable century after century. The future problems won't be the lack of food, more like vice versa. We need to struggle with issues like food waste and logistic solutions to feed the entire planet. Not to mention of all the environmental issues linked to food production as it is now.

Insect economy itself is not an exclusive solution for food crisis, but amongst other sustainable solutions, it truly is a potential way for a greener future. Insects as human food is just a fragment of all the possibilities that insect farming may offer. Animal feed and insect biomass as fertiliser are a smart, low-emission way to enhance other livestock farming and cultivation.

As a novel industry in the western countries, insect economy will be a remarkable employer in various kind of fields: farming, technology

development and manufacturing, food design, marketing, research and so on. The Netherlands and Finland are prime examples as

countries innovating and discovering the possibilities of insect economy. You can learn more of building an insect food start-up from Otto's presentation.



Topi Kairenius

In addition to cooking, the students got a crash course in starting up a food start-up. One of the key points was that a company should always have a reason why they are solving the problem they are solving. The reason for EntoCube's existence comes from keeping our planet habitable for generations to come and providing nutrition for everyone.



Students were told not to be afraid of failing and that in fact, most of start-ups fail during the first five years. The best thing is to learn how to fail fast and learn from it. They also learned the importance of choosing your co-founders as one will be spending a lot of time with them. The importance of having the company's legal documents in order was also discussed.

For inventing products or services, the students were told to utilize the Build – Measure – Learn cycle. By creating minimum viable products and testing them with paying customers, one can make sure that their products are Desirable, Sellable and Feasible.

The session ended by telling the importance of networking and reading books. In the end the students got to test their learning in action by developing their own business ideas by using Lean Canvas business model framework.

From the culinary perspective, insects offer a lot of ways to offer completely new kinds of experiences and flavours to people. Farmed insects are a one thing, but Topi always encourages people to get out there in the wild, forest or garden and open-mindedly try out everything that nature has for us. Just like foraging mushrooms, wild herbs or berries, one can find wild insects, bring them in the kitchen and change the way as we see wild food.

It was very uplifting to see creative future professionals being so excited on sustainable cooking and alternative ingredients. Topi and Otto see projects such as SusCop very important and necessary. The lecture and workshop days at ROC Landstede in

Harderwijk, The Netherlands in October 2019 were intense and rewarding, and we wish that the students learned a lot about choices they will have in the 2020's and beyond. The world is an unpredictable place, and we need to make actions to make food production and consuming safe and sure.



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