

Herman van Keulen passed away on the 9th December 2013. Herman was emeritus Professor in the chairgroup Plant Production Systems and senior researcher in the business unit Agrosystems Research of Plant Research International of Wageningen University and Research centre.

Herman began his career in Wageningen in 1969, when he was appointed as research assistant in the departments Theoretical Production Ecology and Soil Science. After this he worked in Israël and Indonesia before he joined the Centre for Agrobiological Research (CABO). In 1992 the CABO was absorbed into the Institute for Agrobiological and Soil fertility Research (AB-DLO) which in turn became part of Plant Research International. From 1987 to 1993 Herman was appointed visiting professor at the ITC in Enschede and from 1994 to 1998 Professor of Animal Production Systems of Wageningen University. In 1999 he returned to Plant Research International, with an appointment as Special Professor at the chairgroup of Plant Production Systems until he retired in 2010.

Herman specialised in agroecological research, combining experimental and modelling approaches to improve food security in developing countries, in particular in South-east Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. He made a major contribution to sustainability of the Dutch dairy sector, particularly related to nutrient management. He was closely involved in the experimental farm "De Marke". He was a generalist, and knew enough about crops *and* soils *and* animals to integrate this knowledge to the benefit of sustainable systems. He was a fore-runner in interdisciplinary research between the natural and social sciences.

He was a prolific author, with more than 175 publications in international peer-reviewed scientific journals. Herman was an excellent teacher with the ability to give thought-provoking lectures. As a committed, meticulous and stimulating supervisor he launched the academic careers of 57 scientists through their PhD. With many of these scientists he retained strong personal bonds, also in retirement.

In 2009 we celebrated Herman's 40th years of service and a year later marked his retirement. During this highly memorable celebration with family, friends and colleagues, Herman received the high accolade as an Officer in de Orde van Oranje-Nassau from the Mayor of Wageningen on behalf of Queen Beatrix. Although his health declined rapidly, Herman remained active in support of his two last students who successfully defended their PhDs on 15 November, this year. Although he was no longer well enough to attend the ceremonies he was immensely proud of their success and followed every minute through Wageningen UR TV.

We will miss Herman sorely. We remember him with warmth as an excellent and influential researcher and a fine, committed and humorous colleague. We wish his wife Clara and their sons strength in this difficult period.

Jacques Neeteson, Martin van Ittersum, Ken Giller and Martin Kropff