

## Klare Worte

In diesem ersten Magazin, in dem ich die Ehre gehabt hätte, Sie ins Thema einzuführen, mache ich spontan Platz für eine der Akteurinnen der globalen Szene und ihren ganz persönlichen Blick auf den Markt. Vielen Dank, Ira van Eelen, für deine ehrlichen Worte. Liebe Leser:innen, Sie lesen das Original in Englisch für einen unverfälschten Einblick.



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Nadine Filko

## Fairy tales come true

When asked "how important is meat in the Dutch cuisine?" initially the question made me laugh because the word cuisine makes me think of the French and Michelin star chefs. Things I do not connect to the Netherlands. Of course we have some



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Ira van Eelen

amazing restaurants with stars and stripes, we have cooking programs and books full of recipes. Still the Dutch cuisine has a ring to it as if it evolved slightly from van Gogh's famous painting "de aardappeleters". Centred around a piece of meat we eat potatoes with gravy and cooked vegetables, or we eat "stamppot" – mashed potatoes with kale or carrots and onions mixed with some crunchy bacon pieces and a smoked sausage called "rookworst". Another classic in the Netherlands is a sturdy pea soup with marrow and pieces of lard, and again "rookworst". Those are our famous Dutch classics. Rough, straight forward, nutritious and practical. We

eat our warm meals at 6 pm and have "boterhammen" for lunch, and breakfast traditionally with ham, peanut butter, jam and of course "hagelstag" – chocolate sprinkles. That is the image I get when asked about this Dutch cuisine ... but am I doing it justice? Around the 1980s after pizza we got shwarma, we have doner kebab, we eat sushi and macaroni. Tacos are popular and gyozas or Indian curry dishes – those are the new normal. Within my family "traditional Dutch food" is replaced with an array of new tastes we happily adapted to over the last 40 years, and new tastes are still being adapted. So never say the consumer will never change, they do all the time.

So, you could say we are open to "alternatives", alternatives to our way of cooking, our meals. I don't think it is seen as an alternative, it is perceived as additional, it is enriching our tastebuds and it is fun. Increasingly I am struggling with the use of the word alternative. Do I really like an alternative, or do I prefer an addition, something complementary or something that tastes amazing? In all the dishes I mentioned, meat is often seen as the centre, THE ingredient we build the dish around and what gives it the taste we love. And for many of these dishes this is the case, and it's hard to mimic the taste we know, the trust we want. It's hard to give us the bite, structure and sensation we expect. As the organiser of the "the alternative protein show" with KINDEARTH.Tech I am currently transitioning into using the words "complementary proteins". I first came to this realisation in Singapore last year. It was one

of the speakers on regulatory issues from Australia and New Zealand that put my thinking about it straight. Let's be realistic, even with the most optimistic assumption on growing the market for these "alternatives" by 2040 or 50, conventional proteins will still be there, will still have the biggest piece of the market. Do I like that? No, I wish I had a magic wand that would magically replace all animal farming, slaughter and abuse. I wish

we would all refuse to be part of that human behaviour tomorrow and I work hard to live in a world where my grandchildren will ask me in disbelief "did we really slaughter animals, in order to eat them?".

I work on making that happen for the best humanity we can be on a daily basis. It often frustrates me but I still care for the current humanity, inclusive of all its faults. I understand how we came to be the humans we are today, and making them feel bad about what they trust, love, or do will not make them

listen to me. And listening to each other is needed to educate, broaden minds and offer new possibilities. Like the complementary protein product becoming more and more available, affordable, and most important tasty. It makes me really happy if I get to eat something amazing like plant based crab meat in London last year. Unfortunately, there are still a lot of products that have great marketing, amazing packaging and huge promises on taste, that are not nice at all. Too often it feels to me they think it will make everyone happy if it is "plant based", only to disappoint the 95 per cent who still love and know these products from animals.

It was the lack of taste that made many of the products already available in the 1970s remain within a vegan market and not reach the flexitarians or meat eaters. 5 years ago, all of a sudden our supermarkets got filled up by much better tasting products. In the Netherlands the Vegetarian Butcher made a real impact with a compelling story, a great spokesperson, tasty products, and original marketing. New technology gave us Beyond Burgers, someday many vegans and

vegetarians don't even like it. Oatly captures many hearts with original advertising and a solid product. And our supermarkets created space for these products that were in trend, even fashionable. It was fun to see the expansion in the supermarkets here in Amsterdam. I tried many, some I loved, others were awful, and sometimes supply was a problem. How many times I wanted to prepare something, and the product was out of stock or taken off the shelves. How disappointing and frustrating when expecting guests.

Guests are important to me and serving food they like is something deeply ingrained in me. With the current products available to me in the supermarket, close to where I live here in Amsterdam, I feel confident that I can serve really nice food to my guests without having to stress if "it is plant based". Unfortunately, that is not the case everywhere in the Netherlands. It became painfully obvious that even in the outskirts of Amsterdam it was already harder to find a big range of plant based products. Further away from the city I was even struggling. Ordering an "oat latte" got me a tired look and the short answer "we serve real milk". Restaurants struggle to serve more than one vegetarian option, seldom vegan and often a lesser choice compared to everything else on that menu still centred around meat.

We, the ones that think we get it, sometimes need to get out of our bubbles and meet the rest of the world. Perfectly nice people, working hard, taking care of their kids, and serving them with products they trust and believe in. Not something "fake".

I am an optimist and I think we can come up with amazing tasting food if we work together. There is a real tsunami of novel production methods, novel food ingredients, and novel ingredients coming our way. Back in London at a plant based event I was asked to speak and I urged all producers to work together and help each other in order to make their products the best they can be.

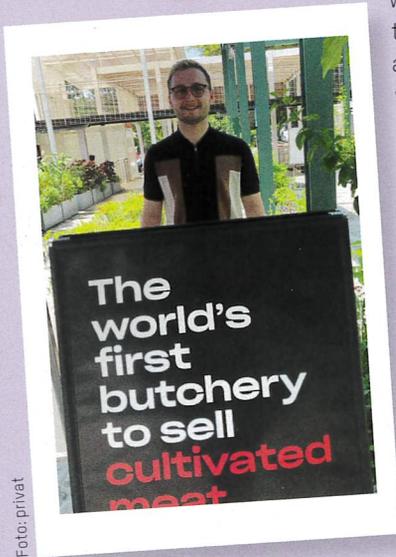


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Die nächste Generation Konsument:innen probiert ein Stück Zukunft. So wie die nächste Generation der van Eelens (Iras Sohn) beim Metzger in Singapur, der Kulturfleisch verkauft.

Weiter geht's im  
Länderspezial  
Niederlande ab  
Seite 48

