



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Bachelor Agrotechnologie
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	11-7-2019 until 08-11-2019
Country (exchange)	New Zealand
City (exchange)	Lincoln
University (exchange)	Lincoln University
Faculty (exchange)	Faculty of Agribusiness and Commerce

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

It seemed like a great opportunity to gain experience in being self-sufficient, as I still live at my parents place. Furthermore, I thought it was helpful to experience studying in a different country, because every country has a different way of teaching, and later on in your working life you will have to deal with non-Dutch-educated people. By studying abroad myself for a while, I think I will be able to understand other people better in the choices they make and the way they deal with problems.

What is the reason you chose for this country/university?

First of all, I was looking for an English-speaking country, because my level of other foreign languages is not sufficient to be able to follow lectures, and I had no time to follow a separate language course. Secondly, as I'm interested in agriculture, I wanted to stick to an agricultural university. New Zealand as a country is totally dependent on its agriculture, making the universities advanced in the topic. Lastly, I was looking for a country that offered great travelling opportunities next to studying, and New Zealand seemed the place to be.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination? (E.g. bus, train, etc.)

I got transferred to the campus from the airport by a shuttlebus. I would recommend everybody who comes to Lincoln to ask for this service, as it's completely free, the shuttle driver will be waiting for you as you leave the airport and will help you find your room, get your keys and get you started with some basics.

4. University and studying

Could you provide some general information about the followed courses?

	Course	ECTS	Short description of the contents	Appreciation of course: 1(low) – 5(high)	Remarks
1	New Zealand Ecology and Conservation – ECOL - 103	7,5	Introduction to ecology as a scientific study, specifically focussed on New Zealand as an ecological wonderland.	4	It was great to follow this course, as it taught me a lot about New Zealand's beautiful nature, and why conservation is such a hot topic here. Being a first years course, it sometimes was a bit easy.
2	Agricultural systems and sustainability – MGMT – 203	7,5	Deal with possibilities available for farmers to make their practice more sustainable	2	I was expecting sophisticated and concrete solutions for farmers to reduce their emissions and leaching, but the course mainly dealt with legislation and never went into some of the solutions in depth. However, some solutions they mentioned are clearly visible in New Zealand's landscape, which is fun.
3	Horticultural Management Analysis – MGMT - 216	7,5	Basic principles of investing, focussed on New Zealand's horticultural sector	4	The lectures in this course were great fun, as they offered lots of opportunities for discussion and questions. I learned some really interesting information about how to go about investing in your own business, which interests me a lot. Sometimes, the lectures felt a bit useless.
4	Animal Health – ANSC – 207	7,5	Deals with most of the common diseases in livestock, how they're caused, how they develop, what you can do to treat them and the consequences for your management.	5	Great course, the pace of the lectures was just right, and it taught me a lot about the biology of live stock and the diseases you can run into. The lecturer was great and it filled the biology-gap in Agrotechnologie perfectly.

How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)

The courses are about 50% assignments, 50% exam, give or take a few percent. The assignments greatly depend on the course, but where close to no work at all for the first years course and one or two days for the second years course. All assignments could be finished in a long weekend. All study material is available online, so if you miss a class there are no problems. I'd say the overall academic level is lower than at Wageningen, but it's more practical orientated. I loved that part, because I think you can't apply theory if you've got no feeling for the reality. The examination consists of more essays and less calculations than in Wageningen. Without studying but a good feeling for common sense, you stand a better chance than in Wageningen. Wouldn't recommend this, as there's plenty of opportunities offered to properly prepare your exams.

What is the culture of the university? (E.g. How approachable are the lecturers, engagement with local students? What are the differences with the WUR?)

It is very small scaled, with only two thousand students of which half are internationals. This is greatly seen in its culture. Lecturers know you personally, approach you after class, you can approach them after class, I even went to the pub with one to chat about the differences in Dutch and Kiwi agriculture. Everything feels very cosy, all students know each other which leads to a very relaxed atmosphere. It doesn't really matter if you're Kiwi or international, as long as you're willing to have a chat everybody is nice. Engagement with local students is very easy for that manner. You can really feel this university is not as big as the WUR, although it resembles Agrotechnologie a lot, as it's such a small study as well.

What does the university offer the student additionally? (E.g. Catering, sports facilities, laundry facilities?)

I'd say all of the above. There is a great sports facility, group exercise and sports like football are daily business. The on-campus restaurant is great and not expensive, and free if you pick to be in the fully catered flats. My flat just had all laundry facilities available. As Lincoln itself is a very tiny village, you're reliant on the campus and they've done a great job at this.

5.Housing-travelling-living

What are the possibilities for housing? (E.g. Availability to sign up for a room on campus, private rooms, rent rates?)

I signed up for a room on campus, in a four-person flat. This is self-catered, which means you have to fix your own food, but as mentioned you can go with fully catered as well, and then your breakfast and dinner is included. Rent is pretty expensive for what you get on campus, but nothing too extraordinary. For my room I pay about €125 a week. You can also try and find a room in Lincoln, but I wouldn't recommend this as it takes you away from all activities and social live, which is pretty important if you go abroad on your own. Rent will be cheaper, somewhere near €70 a week.

What is the culture of the country like? (E.g. Differences with home, local cuisine, habits, manners?)

This could be an endless story about how the cultures differ, but I'm going to keep it short. New Zealand is an Agri-based economy, and all people who don't believe that live in Auckland and Wellington, far away on the north island. Down here in Canterbury, everybody either is a farmer, wants to be a farmer or a combination of both, and that is greatly resembled in the culture. Gumboots to class, lots of talking about hunting and fishing and an occasional beer are daily business. I was surprised by the high amount of females, coming from Agrotechnologie where there are almost none. This farm based culture is really embracing everybody else, and all the non-farmers on campus loved it as well.

Could you give a general price indication of the place of residence compared to living in Wageningen?

I pay approximately €500 per month, whereas in Wageningen you would pay €300. Groceries are a bit more expensive, but if you've got a car you can drive to a bigger, cheaper supermarket. Beer is about twice the price.

Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure? (E.g. Cost public transport card, taxi prices, how to travel to the university?)

Don't go by public transport, get a car. It's a farm based community, the public transport is infrequent and quite expensive. I know you can get a taxi to Christchurch for €30, and the bus will cost you €6. Without a car, or a friend with a car, even groceries take up a large part of your day. I live on campus, making it a 5 minute walk to university. If you chose to live in Lincoln it's more like a 30 minute walk, or a short bus ride if you find one. If you live even further, get a car.

6. Free time

What are must-sees in the area? (E.g. nearby destinations, how do you prefer to travel, when to plan?)

Everything. New Zealand is by far the prettiest country I've ever been, and travelling here is magnificent. Just get yourself a tent and a car. There's heaps of campsites along the roads, varying from free to €10 for a luxury one with showers and drinkable water. Just go for it, pick a destination and don't bother thinking about how you get there or if you get there. As soon as you get of the Canterbury plains, the scenery get better and better. If you think you've seen it all, wait till the next corner. Driving New Zealand's roads is the best experience in life.

What does not appear in the travel guide, but is worth a visit?

Every single pub when the All-Blacks play. There's more travel guides about New Zealand than there are Bibles in the world, and none of them lie. Everything is beautiful. But when it gets really fun is when you engage with the locals. They'll tell you the best places to go, but when the All-Blacks are playing, the world shuts. Around Lincoln there's nothing much to see, apart from some small reserves. I'd recommend driving to Akaroa on the early days, along the Scenic route of course, as it's the most beautiful thing around here. If you wait too long with going there, you're in danger of being spoiled by having seen the west-coast. Then Akaroa is just another drive.

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time (E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?)

Going out is not really a thing. You're a bit stuck on campus regarding this. Once a week you can go to Christchurch, but it's a bit of a hassle to get there, with the taxi and everything. The famous grouse is very good, and so is the Laboratory. Both in the main street through Lincoln. But just hanging around campus with other students is going to be a great time if you're not travelling.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

The exams over here are very different. They are more subjective, and the opinion of the teacher matters a lot. The finals are only about 40% of your final mark, as the rest of the semester is filled with assignments. But the opinion part bothered me a bit. When you hand in a bad report, the lecturer can have a good day and you can get back a 90%, and I got a 70% on a report because I made a spelling mistake. It's not as black and white as that, but it's not as objective as in Wageningen.

What was your best memory abroad?

We went to Stewart Island in the Mid-Term break. The choice was either going by plane or by boat. We picked the plain, because we were told it was faster and pretty nice. When we arrived at the airport, there was a guy looking like a pilot asking for our bags. He dropped them on a belt, asked how many people were with me, I told him 5, and he left again. He would pick us up 5 minutes before departure. The guy didn't only look like a pilot, he was the pilot. 5 minutes before departure he came to tell us we were leaving, counted 5 heads, not bothering who was who, as long as there were 5 people on his plane. We flew to Stewart Island, the best place I've ever visited, on the smallest plane you could imagine. This guy, for me, proved the amazing Kiwi mentality.

8. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Name/e-mail	Tom Stigter / tom-stigter@hotmail.com	