



## eLIFE – news on life at LIFE

Thursday 12 March 2009

Email to the editors: [elife@life.ku.dk](mailto:elife@life.ku.dk)

Final deadline for editorial changes is Wednesday before publication of eLIFE on Thursday.

Editorial changes may occur in relation to the online newsletter.

As regards links in the newsletter, please refer to the Danish online version at the faculty's website  
[http://www.life.ku.dk/Maalgruppe/medarbejdere/life\\_internt/nyhedsbrev.aspx](http://www.life.ku.dk/Maalgruppe/medarbejdere/life_internt/nyhedsbrev.aspx)

Gudrun Lau Bjerno, Editor, LIFE-Communications, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk)

## Life at LIFE

### **“It calls for success rather than failure”**

(Quote from an upper secondary school student who presented the results of a workshop at the celebratory seminar on developing countries on Friday 6 March.)

These simple words are right on the mark when it comes to designing good development projects. And that was just what the student was trying to do. He participated in the seminar entitled “Ulande – klimaet og vores naturressourcer” (Developing countries – the climate and our natural resources), where his group drew up an outline for a development project proposal aimed at initiating a new green revolution in Uganda.

Before that, he had listened to four exciting presentations by the LIFE researchers Henrik Hansen (FØI), Maria Vang Johansen (IVS), Jens C. Streibig (IJØ) and Ida Theilade (S&L) and spent at least an hour working intensely in the workshop before presenting his group's project to a panel comprising Maria Molde (Operation Day's Work), Christian Friis Bach (DanChurchAid), Poul Erik Lauridsen (CARE Denmark) and Mickey Gjerris (Centre for Bioethics and Risk Assessment/FØI).

Even though what he said caused some laughter among the student's 150 colleagues in the lecture hall, Christian Friis Bach noted that in reality that was just what it would take!

The panel had a lively discussion with the students on how to ensure success rather than failure as each project was presented and commented on along the way by the judges in best X-Factor fashion. There were compliments on the creativity and considerations of the proposals and, especially, for how much the groups achieved in just one hour. But there were also reminders:

- Not to think of development aid as an unsolicited donation from one country to another. Instead, aid requests today are formulated by the recipients themselves.
- To carefully consider the culture you will be operating in as a project participant.
- That dialogue is the most important tool to ensuring success.
- To take care not to create parallel systems to ones already existing in the recipient country.
- To consider the sustainability of projects – whether they will continue once the funding is used up.

The development project proposal outlines were subsequently sent to members of the Africa Commission's African Youth Panel, and their comments were sent back to the students so that work on the projects could continue in the classrooms at the Metropolitanskolen, Sorø Akademi, Sankt Annæ, Christianshavns, Svendborg and Borupgård upper secondary schools.

[See seminar programme here](#)

*Lykke Thostrup*

*Godrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 11 March 2009*

### **University students to submit specific proposals for joint climate effort**

This week, 300 university students from more than 40 countries have come together at the University of Copenhagen – including students from LIFE – to develop new ideas for ways in which the world might solve the global energy problems.

The youth summit will be attended by, among others, US President Barack Obama's senior advisor on energy and environmental policy, and its objective is to produce specific proposals for how politicians and companies all over the world can support joint climate efforts in practice. The summit is the first of a large number of similar youth conferences being organised around the world and is taking place at the same time as the climate congress hosted by the University of Copenhagen, along with, among others, Yale University and Oxford University, to bring together thousands of climate researchers from all over the world.

[Read the press release](#)

*Godrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 11 March 2009*

### **Green facts: Did you know that...**

... If you switch to an energy-efficient laptop, you can save DKK 550 a year in electricity.

[Source: Grøn Gerning](#) (Green Deed)

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 10 March 2009*

### **University students produce free climate newspaper**

LIFE students are standing ready, along with other University of Copenhagen students, with microphones, pens and paper to cover the climate congress taking place this week in Copenhagen (10-12 March), where climate experts from all over the world are meeting to discuss climate change issues prior to the UN Climate Summit. Alongside their daily studies in the natural sciences, the students have also taken communication courses to prepare them to produce a climate newspaper for the benefit of other young people.

[Read the press release](#)

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 9 March 2009*

### **Did you know that...**

... LIFE has its own 'Hall of Fame'?

In the Foyer outside the Main Lecture Hall, the Senate's Conference Room and the adjoining antechamber, you can find a variety of marble busts and paintings. The celebrated collection of portraits features important historical figures who have roamed the halls of the Frederiksberg Campus, including P.C. Abildgaard, Niels Bjerrum, B.S. Jørgensen and J.E.V. Boas.

Read more about the prominent researchers at <http://www.historienom.life.ku.dk>

<http://www.historienom.life.ku.dk/Fortellinger/Forskere>

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 9 March 2009*

### **The Faculty's collection of medicinal herbs – a place for life and death**

On Grønnegårdsvej near the collection of summer plants, you will find the old gardener's lodge, which was once the service tenancy for the head gardener. It came with a little private garden south of the gardener's lodge – a quiet haven should the head gardener feel the need for a breath of fresh air. At some point, a head gardener was appointed who was not interested in the service tenancy, and the little garden, comprising only a lawn and a couple of solitary bushes, was neglected. To make the little garden more interesting, we planted a collection of medicinal herbs in 1994.

Now there are already quite a few historical collections of medicinal herbs throughout Denmark, including those at the Steno Museum in Aarhus, the Cloister Garden in Øm, the Herb Garden in Nørresundby, Spøttrup Castle Museum, Ebeltoft Cloister Garden and the Historical Botanical Gardens in Vordingborg. Since we did not want our collection of medicinal herbs to just be a copy of other medicinal herb gardens, we trained our sights on the modern pharmacopoeia to find plants that are still in use today, making it more of a modern medicinal study garden. The garden comprises 60 beds as well as border vegetation in the form of trees and shrubs, which also still play a role in modern medicine. As a supplement to the modern medicinal herbs, we have also included some of the most interesting medicinal herbs from the days of monasteries and witch doctors to add a bit of spice to the stories we tell on tours.

Even though we deal mainly with medicine for animals here at LIFE, it turns out that veterinary surgeons use many of the same medicines as ordinary people doctors, and both sciences have always used many plant-based drugs, while new drugs are being discovered in the plant world all the time.

If you are interested in DIY medicine, you have to be 100 per cent certain about what you are doing, because while the active substances in plants can have healing effects in small amounts, they can be lethal in large doses. It is safest to buy homeopathic drugs at your local chemist's and carefully follow the dosage on the label. One of the few medicinal herbs I know that can be harvested and ingested in unlimited amounts is camomile – but be careful with all the others.

I will only name a few plants from the medicinal herb collection here, starting with *Ricinus communis*, which is the castor bean or castor oil plant. The plant is incredibly beautiful and can easily grow to a height of 2-3 metres in Denmark in a single summer. There are several varieties when it comes to leaf colour, which can vary from green to a kind of dark red. However, it is its flowers and seeds that are particularly beautiful and distinctive – the seeds or beans, with their beautiful marble-like finish, grow in round spiny balls. The plant's name *ricinus* actually means louse or tick because the seeds resemble these creatures.

The seeds, known as castor beans, can be used to produce motor oil as well as castor oil, which is as you know a highly effective laxative. The seeds are extremely toxic and must be handled with great care, and it is excessively dangerous if the beautiful beans are used to make necklaces, which is what happened at a preschool a few years ago.

In fact, the seeds are so toxic that there was a debate in the media in 2006 about whether the castor bean plant should be banned in Denmark. But that would not help much, because although it originates from tropical Africa, it grows like a weed in large parts of the world, and is also cultivated for commercial purposes in some areas. The reason for requiring a ban was that after pressing the oil out of the beans, the waste material can be used to produce an extremely toxic poison called ricin, which terrorists can use with deadly consequences. The British actually developed a ricin bomb during World War II, but luckily they never used it. Later, both Iran and Al Qaeda in Kabul have experimented with ricin, and a ricin lab belonging to a presumed Al Qaeda member was discovered in 2003 in a flat in London.

So enjoy the beauty of the plant but do not touch the seeds – stick to camomile tea instead.

Another toxic substance growing in the collection of medicinal herbs is deadly nightshade, in Latin *Atropa belladonna*. Linné called the plant *atropa* after Atropos, the goddess of the land of the dead Atropos, who cuts the threads of life. The species name *belladonna* means beautiful lady, and was given to the plant because the Italian ladies used a diluted infusion of the plant as eye drops to enlarge their pupils in order to attract the attention of the gallant gentlemen.

The plant grows wild in Central Europe and is extremely toxic, containing large amounts of sedative substances. The green, and later black, berries are also very poisonous, so the plant is only for looking, not touching. Because of its extreme toxicity, it has not been used as a homeopathic remedy, but in Bukovina, it has been used for abortions and in Romania, as a love potion.

Our own Vikings also used belladonna because the toxin stimulates the nervous system, and when consumed in the right amounts, the Vikings would go berserk, spreading fear and terror.

Belladonna is still used today for medicinal purposes, where an extract of the leaves is used in a drug to treat stomach cramps, and before the advent of antibiotics, it was useful in the treatment of whooping cough. The substance atropine, which is extracted from belladonna, is still used as a heart drug, and in eye surgery atropine is used to dilate the pupils. Atropine is also an antidote for war gasses, which are of course forbidden under the Geneva Convention, but not everyone follows the rules. So, do not self-medicate – drink camomile tea instead.

The most magical herb of all – practically a witches' herb – is the mandrake, *Mandragora officinarum*, whose

magical powers have been known since antiquity. For instance, Tutankhamen had mandrake root woven into the necklace he wore to the grave.

The mandrake comes from southern Europe and western Asia, where it sprouts in the very early spring and grows a lush rosette of green leaves. The plant dies back again in mid-summer, and many incorrectly think that it has died, but it is just storing up energy for the next season.

The plant's deep root often has branches that can resemble the arms and legs of a human. It generally blooms after five to seven years with small whitish flowers, and on a long stem, large green fruit grow that are filled with seeds about 2-3 mm in size. These fruit, which resemble green tomatoes, are called the Devil's testicles and they, like the rest of the plant, contain the pure devilishness for which the plant has been known throughout history.

In the 1500s, belief in the powers of the mandrake developed into a mania, and the root became so attractive that pedlars sold false mandrake roots at exorbitant prices. It is therefore wise to beware of imitations, and in England there is actually a law against imitation mandrake roots.

The root had weird effects. In addition to causing hallucinations, it could give a man renewed energy and vitality, which was sure to attract buyers.

It has also been used for medicinal purposes as an emetic and as an anaesthetic for operations, as well as to treat insanity. The leaves are also good for infected wounds and other skin problems, and today it is used to treat hay fever, coughs and asthma.

A piece of root is also a powerful talisman for all kinds of luck, and with its wondrous effects on all manner of problems, it has survived to this very day. However, such a talisman must be treated with care. According to the old medical books, a person who owns a mandrake root when they die will go to hell. If it is thrown away, it will return, and it cannot be burnt, so the only way to get rid of it is to sell it, but always for a lower price than what you gave for it.

If interested readers have been inspired to dig up a mandrake root, they are strongly advised not to, because when the plant leaves the ground it lets out a scream that can kill you in an instant. The only way to dig up a piece of the plant is with a double-edged sword at midnight in the moonlight. And before that, you have to tie a chord to the plant and then to the collar of your neighbour's dog, stuff cotton in your ears, go far away and call the dog. The plant is then uprooted, it screams and the dog falls over dead. That is why you should always use the neighbour's dog, because then it can no longer run around and make a mess in your garden.

According to a more modern method, it should be possible to dig up the root and stay alive by playing the trumpet while digging. I have not tested this method though, so it is probably safest to just drink some more camomile tea.

To change the subject a bit, I am happy to announce that we have moved the 60 different herbs in the herb collection to the collection of summer plants so that the Gardens' guests can see and, perhaps, be inspired to use herbs in their cooking. The herb collection is beautifully edged by cobblestones and is located near the little pool and the mini-golf course, which was thankfully never built.

*Kim Greiner, Senior Gardener*

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 9 March 2009*

## Announcements

**Lecture: Charles Quest-Ritson: Gardens of Europe**

Sunday 22 March 2009, 2–5 pm, lecture hall 3-14, Marble Hall.

The lecture in English by the recognised author and speaker Charles Quest-Ritson will be based on his latest book *Gardens of Europe*, and will deal with historical and botanical gardens, and illustrated with by fantastic photos. Charles Quest-Ritson has been editor of the *Royal Horticultural Society's Gardener's Yearbook* since 1994. In addition to writing several books, he is also co-owner of Corsley Mill Nurseries, which specialises in producing roses on their own roots. The book, *Europas Haver* can be purchased at the lecture.

Registration: Tel.: +45 3670 6944/+45 6094 8501/+45 4444 1491 before 5 pm.

Email: [haven.kbh@gmail.com](mailto:haven.kbh@gmail.com)

Price: DKK 175/200

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gjb@life.ku.dk](mailto:gjb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 11 March 2009*

### **Hot or Not – guide to greater knowledge about the climate**

It is now much easier to access qualified material on climate change. A web portal has been created to facilitate access and call attention to a number of climate-related resources available through the University of Copenhagen Library and Information Service (KUBIS), including journals, books and databases – resources that have not previously been available within a single climate category.

Until now, the material has been scattered among scientific publications in a wide variety of disciplines. The new climate guide – Climate Information Guide – is intended as an aid to finding relevant literature on climate change and its impact on Earth's natural foundation and social, political and economic systems. The guide is primarily aimed at researchers, lecturers and students.

The Climate Information Guide has been prepared in collaboration with the University of Copenhagen's Climate Secretariat and is associated with the University's climate-related focus areas. The English-language guide is published on the University's [Climate Change Portal](#).

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gjb@life.ku.dk](mailto:gjb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 10 March 2009*

### **Universitetsavisen no. 3 – Can the University green-wash Fogh?**

The latest issue of the university newspaper *Universitetsavisen* is out, bringing news, background articles and debate.

Read the newspaper online as e-pages at <http://www.e-pages.dk/ku/187/> (in Danish)

Or as a PDF file <http://www.e-pages.dk/ku/187/fullpdf/1.pdf> (in Danish)

Read the newspaper online as e-pages at <http://www.e-pages.dk/ku/187/> or as a PDF file <http://www.e-pages.dk/ku/187/fullpdf/1.pdf> (in Danish)

Enjoy!

Richard Bisgaard, Editor

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 10 March 2009*

### **Junior Researcher Forum: The students' climate press coverage**

Junior Researcher Forum, 19 March at 5.15 pm in the Library.

Drop in and hear how 18 students from the University of Copenhagen and the University of Southern Denmark produced their own climate newspaper for all the universities in Denmark.

Everyone is welcome!

[www.juniorforskercafe.life.ku.dk](http://www.juniorforskercafe.life.ku.dk)

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 9 March 2009*

## Education

### **FN's Newsletter March 2009**

Chirping birds and longer days – spring is finally coming! Here is some news (in Danish) about what is going on in FN – your academic association:

[Read the newsletter here.](#)

On behalf of the FN board,  
Jens Møller Christoffersen, PR Coordinator, FN

In this issue, you can read about:

- News from the union chair
- Climate conference, "Legos – what's going on?"
- Come and discover sliced bread!
- Clean-up in FN's office
- Climate and agriculture
- Run a marathon on nature's resources
- The International Grant for Natural Resource Students
- Biotech Network is hosting a debate on using lab animals in research
- The Environmental Science group visits COWI

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 12 March 2009*

### **Open in the evening for veterinary medicine students**

The veterinary medicine guidance counsellors at Student Services have extended their opening hours to give veterinary medicine students better access to guidance.

Student Services is aware that it can be difficult for many veterinary medicine students to find the time to use the guidance services within the standard opening hours – especially those who spend a good deal of time in Taastrup.

Student Services is generally open Monday to Friday, 9.00 am–3.00 pm. As of calendar week 11, the veterinary medicine counsellors will be available at the following times:

Monday: 9.00 am–12.30 pm

Tuesday: 4.00–7.00 pm (only in person, telephones are closed)

Wednesday: 9.00 am–3.00 pm

Friday: 9.00 am–12.30 pm

The new later opening hours on Tuesday are on a trial basis until the end of the academic year.

Read more about the guidance offered at Student Services at: [www.life.ku.dk/studievejledning](http://www.life.ku.dk/studievejledning) (in Danish)

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 11 March 2009*

### **Veterinary Medicine programme introduces entrance exams**

More and more universities all over Denmark are introducing entrance exams for new students. The goal is to find those students with the greatest likelihood of achieving success in their studies and later in their careers, which is not necessarily those with the highest grades. The latest study programme to implement entrance exams is one of the most popular programmes in Denmark: the Veterinary Medicine programme at LIFE.

[Read the press release](#) (in Danish)

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 9 March 2009*

### **UCLE 09 – Conference on new media in the classroom**

UCLE 09 will focus on the correlation between the virtual and physical dimensions of the learning environment with inspiring presentations, discussions and plenty to think about.

Conference: New media in the classroom, Thursday 23 April 2009, 9 am–4 pm, South Campus (KUA).

[Programme](#).

Meet David Hirsch, Yale University, Hanne Mathiasen, Aarhus University, Markus Ketterl, Universität Osnabrück, Chresteria Neutzsky-Wulff, University of Copenhagen and many others.

More information and registration at <http://ucle.ku.dk>

**Peter Aagerup Jensen, CWBL, Centre for Web-based Learning, [paaj@adm.ku.dk](mailto:paaj@adm.ku.dk)**

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 9 March 2009*

## **Staff news**

## **The International Grant for Natural Resource Students: Neda Trifkovic, Kwame Appiah Owusu and Bidya Nath Jha**

The Union of Natural Resource Students (FN) presented The International Grant for Natural Resource Students to three Erasmus Mundus students at LIFE's annual celebration on 6 March. [Flyer – read here.](#)

From Sustainable Development in Agriculture (Agris Mundus), the grant was given to **Neda Trifkovic**. Neda Trifkovic, from Serbia, took the first year of her MSc at University College Cork and is now finishing her second year here in Denmark. Throughout her studies Neda has been highly devoted to her courses and has achieved excellent results. At this very moment she is collecting data for her MSc thesis in Morocco.

From Sustainable Tropical Forestry (SUTROFOR), the grant was awarded to **Kwame Appiah Owusu**. Kwame Appiah Owusu is from Ghana, where he earned a BSc in Natural Resource Management with excellence from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana. Kwame Appiah Owusu is now in his first year of his MSc studies. He is a committed student, full of initiative and shows academic distinction. After this year of his study programme, Kwame Appiah Owusu will move to the University of Wales, Bangor, UK. His ambition is to return to Ghana to carry out forest research.

From Sustainable Forest and Nature Management (SUFONAMA), the grant was given to **Bidya Nath Jha**. Bidya Nath Jha is from Nepal and has chosen this study programme despite the fact that he cannot support his wife and two children while he is on this programme. Bidya Nath Jha has shown high academic skills and distinction in his earlier studies at Bangor University and now here at LIFE. He is very devoted to his studies and popular among his fellow students.

The grant is sponsored by:

Novo Nordisk

HedeDanmark

Faculty of Life Sciences

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 12 March 2009*

## **Senior Researcher Marina Bergen Jensen, Forest & Landscape, receives the 2009 Innovation Prize at LIFE**

Marina Bergen Jensen has discovered a very special system that can filter the water that is collected in rain gutters so it can be recycled as drinking water. Today, a pilot version of the system has been built and is being tested in Ørestad. And it looks as though the technology will be put into production and become a climate and environmentally friendly system for the benefit of us here in Denmark and the rest of the world.

The Innovation Prize is awarded every year to a researcher or team of researchers at LIFE who has made a major contribution in relation to innovation and business collaboration. This includes inventions, knowledge networks and research collaboration, among other things. A researcher or team can be considered for the prize if they have actively worked to industrialise their research findings and have transferred their research for the benefit of society.

*Charlotte Aabo*

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 11 March 2009*

## **The Golden Bull Award (*Den Gyldne Tyr*): Professor Helle Tegner Anker, FØI**

The students' Lecturer of the Year Award went this year to Professor Helle Tegner Anker, Institute for Food and Resource Economics (FØI).

Veterinary Medicine student Michelle Abel Elmer, who conferred the award, writes:

The Lecturer of the Year Award is given by the Golden Bull Committee, which is a committee under the Students' Association.

This year, the Gold Bull Committee has placed special emphasis on communication skills that go beyond the lectern and motivate students regardless of discipline and level of difficulty. It is not so much a question of WHAT is taught as HOW it is taught.

Students can nominate lecturers via the Golden Bull's website throughout the year. This means that for each nominee, at least one student has taken the time to write why they think their nominee is LIFE's best lecturer. Many of the students who took the time and energy to write nominations attended the ceremony, hoping that their favourite lecturer would win the Lecturer of the Year Award. The nominees will be listed on the website [www.dsr.life.ku.dk/DSR/udvalg/dgt](http://www.dsr.life.ku.dk/DSR/udvalg/dgt) (in Danish).

In the speech, the following was said about this year's recipient:

This year's Lecturer of the Year understands how to bring an entire lecture hall to life and motivate the individual students with questions that need answers and rhetorical questions, and knows how to do something that may seem straightforward but which isn't: making sure that every student understands what is being said.

Teaching students from different academic backgrounds is a challenge this lecturer has clearly mastered by understanding the composition of the class and the prerequisites each student has in relation to the subject.

The teaching method is well-structured and there is time for questions and in-depth answers with explanations and helpful illustrations on the board. This makes the teaching personal and relevant.

Based on good and meaningful examples from 'real life', the lecturer involves the students in the subject, which helps bring the class together so that even those in the back row feel like they are sitting up front.

Congratulations to LECTURER OF THE YEAR Professor Helle Tegner Anker from the Institute for Food and Resource Economics.

### **Facts about The Golden Bull Award (from the website):**

The Golden Bull Award was created by the Students' Association, DSR, (and originally supported by the Hundefonden foundation) in appreciation of excellent teaching skills, which in the eyes of the students should not be second to research but should be valued and demanded in its own right.

The Golden Bull is a bronze bull created by the artist Liselotte Pedersen, who trained at the Academy of Fine Arts in Aarhus. From 1990 until 1999, the bull was DSR's mascot.

The Golden Bull is awarded to a scientific/academic staff member at LIFE who has displayed excellent teaching skills.

The award is passed on from recipient to recipient and is awarded every year at LIFE's annual celebration in March. The first award was given on 8 March 1990.

The award comes with a certificate and a nameplate engraved with the lecturer's name.

*Michelle Abel Elmer*

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 11 March 2009*

### **Inaugural lecture: Professor Jens Lykkesfeldt – Friday 3 April, 2 pm**

Professor Jens Lykkesfeldt will be giving his inaugural lecture entitled 'C-vitamin – et molekyle i medgang og modgang' (Vitamin C – a molecule in sickness and in health) on Friday 3 April 2009 in the Main Lecture Hall 1-01, Bülowsvej 17 at 2 pm. There will be a reception in the Senate's conference room after the lecture.

**Dorthe Lauritzen, Department of Veterinary Pathobiology, [dol@life.ku.dk](mailto:dol@life.ku.dk)**

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 10 March 2009*

### **Professor Peter Sandøe awarded LIFE's 2009 Communication Prize**

Is sex with animals OK, or should it be banned by law? Can testing chemical substances on animals be justified? And should we accept cloning? Professor Peter Sandøe is a true master at discussing such issues, and he is happy to do so, and he often does. Most recently at [www.dyreetik.dk](http://www.dyreetik.dk), a site for, amongst others, upper secondary school students. For this, he was awarded the 2009 Communication Prize on Friday, 6 March in connection with LIFE's 151<sup>st</sup> birthday.

[Read the press release \(in Danish\)](#)

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 10 March 2009*

## Research

### **Scientists and university managements must enter into dialogue on good university management**

The freedom of scientists to conduct research must be ensured via a basic grant. At the same time, university managements must, to a much larger extent, enter into dialogue with scientists on what constitutes good university management. The approach to university management must be more international and professional.

These are some of the key points presented by the Danish Council for Research Policy at its research policy conference on 10 March 2009. The Danish Council for Research Policy provides consultancy on Danish and international research policy to the Danish Parliament and Danish ministers.

According to the assessment presented by the Council in its annual report published for the conference, the Danish University Act (*Universitetsloven*) from 2003 is a useful act, but the way in which it has been implemented has given rise to a number of problems. Better dialogue is called for, and, in addition, the scientists find that increasingly more control mechanisms, both from their own and external institutions, hamper their work considerably.

### **Basic grant for free research**

The Council thus recommends that scientists be given a basic grant allocating time for the projects which scientists follow out of curiosity only, without taking into account the university's priorities and strategies.

"The Council is very concerned about the growing dissatisfaction with the control and management of the universities. The scientists are conducting excellent research, but their frustrations about the framework conditions and managements are affecting the working and research climate to such an extent that it may have a negative impact on the quality of the research findings," says Professor Svend Erik Hougaard Jensen who is a member of the Danish Council for Research Policy.

"It is time for the university managements and scientists to enter into dialogue. The parties must together develop agreements and models for how universities should be managed. A basic grant for free research may be part of the agreements, allowing the scientists to pursue good and exciting ideas which are not planned or part of the planned strategy, but which are a key element in innovative research," says Svend Erik Hougaard Jensen.

### **Reduced resources for natural sciences**

At the research policy conference, the Council will present a number of further recommendations for how Danish research can and should be strengthened.

The Council has, for example, reviewed Danish natural science research and was surprised to find that the resources for this field have seen a relative decline over the past ten years, even within a number of the classic areas where Denmark traditionally has had a strong position.

- More funds must be allocated to Danish natural science to bring its relative share of Danish research back to the level it was at ten years ago, says Leif Kjærgaard, Deputy Chairman of the Danish Council for Research Policy.

[You can find the annual report of the Danish Council for Research Policy \(in Danish\) here](#)

Further information:

Professor Svend Erik Hougaard Jensen, Copenhagen Business School, member of the Danish Council for Research Policy, mobile: +45 2075 7807

Manager Leif Kjærgaard, previously employed with Danisco, Deputy Chairman of the Danish Council for Research Policy, mobile: +45 4059 8831

Karin Kjær Madsen, Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation, Secretariat for the Danish Council for Research Policy, tel.: +45 3392 9994, email: [kkm@fi.dk](mailto:kkm@fi.dk)

Linda Bang Jessen, PR Consultant, Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation, mobile: +45 4132 6030, email: [libj@fi.dk](mailto:libj@fi.dk)

The Danish Council for Research Policy is an independent council which provides consultancy on Danish and international research policy to the Danish Parliament and Danish ministers. The Council members are

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*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 10 March 2009*

### **BRIC's RNAi Core Facility**

Offer to all researchers at the University of Copenhagen: High throughput applications in cell-based screening assays:

shRNA libraries

siRNA libraries

Gene knockdown studies in microtiter plate format

We offer assistance within:

Assay development

Target validation

For more information, visit: [www.bric.ku.dk/core\\_facilities](http://www.bric.ku.dk/core_facilities), or contact us at: [rnai@bric.ku.dk](mailto:rnai@bric.ku.dk)

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 9 March 2009*

### **New model for therapy gardens and garden therapy for people affected by stress in Denmark**

A therapy garden should be a safe and enclosed space, with living and growing plants and flowers as a key element.

Specially designed therapy gardens can be developed to play an important role in the treatment and care of different patient groups.

[Read the press release \(in Danish\)](#)

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 9 March 2009*

## **Research funds etc.**

See the updated information on the Research & Information website.