

It's in our genes

Corporate social responsibility at Rijk Zwaan

Sharing a healthy future



Contributing to a sustainable, healthy future

Sustainability is high on the agenda in today's society. Issues such as climate change, the depletion of the earth's resources and the circular economy are topics of discussion and policymaking worldwide. So, much focus on our planet – and all the life on it – is a good thing. At Rijk Zwaan, we are sometimes asked about our corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities. Companies are expected to do business in a way that shows consideration for the planet, and our company is no exception.

Rijk Zwaan in short

Vegetable breeding

400⁺

million euro net turnover

3,000⁺

employees

30

subsidiaries

25⁺

crops

1,200⁺

varieties

30 %

of turnover invested in R&D

Starting point

Why is CSR important to us? Our primary objective is – and will continue to be – to offer each of our employees an enjoyable and long-term job with attractive pay and conditions. Profit is merely a means to achieving this. Rijk Zwaan's shareholders made that decision back in 1989 and it still holds true today.

Putting employees first automatically implies that you also consider the world those employees live in. In other words, all our company's activities are aimed at making a profit to benefit people and the planet.

What do we mean by 'putting people first'?

First and foremost, it is important how we see people. Rijk Zwaan regards each employee as a complete person – someone with a unique life, a family, friends, joy and sorrow, and unique talents. Someone who can always be himself at work rather than having to put on an act from 9 to 5, and who isn't just a source of labour but instead can work in a role that he is good at and enjoys. This applies to every Rijk Zwaan colleague, regardless of their age or background; in our eyes, everyone is equal and uniquely valuable.

The environments affecting people

Every employee has a work environment: good collaboration with a network of colleagues, a safe and healthy workplace, the right equipment and resources to do his or her job properly, the opportunity to perform well in comfort and safety. For us, it is important that everyone enjoys coming to work.

Besides that, every employee has a social environment of family and friends. We're well aware that those family and friends can sometimes place demands on our employees and that everyone has responsibilities for people in their social environment, so we take that into account.

Additionally, every employee is part of the natural environment. We are keen to ensure that the natural environment is – and remains – healthy and safe for all our colleagues. Our mission of 'Sharing a healthy future' stems from that desire. In our strategic decision-making, we strive to take the environment into account and to do business in a sustainable way, in order to preserve our planet for future generations.

Principles

In line with our way of working, our employees themselves apply the principles of CSR in all kinds of areas, driven by their own intrinsic motivation.

In our everyday work, we contribute to a better world through the way we treat people and through the things we do. Our company is based on nine business objectives that are outlined in the triptych which is handed over to every new employee. Each objective forms the basis for various aspects of our business activities that together shape our CSR approach.

It goes without saying that we take care of the CSR-related basics, such as paying a fair wage, ensuring safe and healthy working conditions and protecting the environment.



Marco van Leeuwen, Kees Reinink, Ben Tax

Our way of working is aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the key aim of which is to end extreme poverty everywhere.

This booklet presents some examples of Rijk Zwaan's CSR-related activities. Rather than being an exhaustive overview, it provides a selection of facts and cases that illustrate what sets Rijk Zwaan apart.

We hope this booklet will inspire you to join us in working towards a sustainable, healthy future.

Board of Directors, Rijk Zwaan
Ben Tax, Kees Reinink, Marco van Leeuwen

The stories in this booklet are linked to those SDGs on which we have an above-average amount of impact. Those are SDGs 2, 8, 12 and 17.

More information about our approach to the SDGs can be found in [the back of this booklet](#) and on our website.




High motivation and close involvement

At Rijk Zwaan, our top priority is to offer all employees an enjoyable and long-term job with attractive pay and conditions.

Putting people first boosts motivation and engagement. For us, stimulating high motivation and close involvement specifically means:

- A permanent contract from the start.
- Focusing on each employee's development needs and health.
- To the employees, Rijk Zwaan feels like their own company.
- Employee loyalty and dedication.
- People-oriented management style.


3,2 %
absence due to illness
in the Netherlands in 2018

Healthy employees

Rijk Zwaan has a low rate of absenteeism: 3,2 per cent in the Netherlands. We believe it is important that our employees feel fit and healthy, both physically and mentally. We prevent stress and illness by carefully tailoring the role and the working environment to each employee. Many of our locations provide free healthy meals, salads or fruit, and we also run vitality programmes, sport training sessions, health schemes and medical checks. At the large Rijk Zwaan facilities we conduct a satisfaction survey once every four years.

Permanent contract

We take the time to invest in an intensive recruitment procedure to find the right candidate for each vacancy. We give new employees a permanent contract from the start and place our trust in them for the whole of their career with us.

Around the world, we select our employees based on engagement, honesty, entrepreneurialism and team spirit. We look for people who are a good fit with our company culture, which includes being interested in CSR.

Our sustainable approach to recruitment has resulted in high job satisfaction and low employee turnover.

Employee participation

Employees have the option to purchase share certificates, so every colleague can share in Rijk Zwaan's success. Around 10 per cent of the shares are owned by over 1,000 employees.



Employee development

We give our employees space to learn, to develop, to show initiative and to take responsibility. We want to recognise and reward our employees' talents and listen to their concerns. People get much more out of themselves if they feel seen and heard.



SDG
8.4



“Towards more sustainable production”

Marc Celis
Crop Specialist Lettuce
Belgium

“Production methods are changing all the time – especially in lettuce, which is a very important crop for Rijk Zwaan at global level. Growers are increasingly producing lettuce hydroponically rather than in soil, and Rijk Zwaan is continuously developing varieties that are suitable for this method. We support the growers throughout the entire process and advise both growers and retailers on the sales strategy.

Lettuces can be grown hydroponically outdoors as well as indoors, but most growers opt for greenhouse production because there is less chance of diseases and pests than in open-field production. It requires more rotations but less use of crop protection agents, which helps to improve the sustainability. Another key advantage of this production method is the higher yield. In the soil, 1m² yields approximately 40 kilogram of lettuce per season, whereas the yield with hydroponic lettuce is around 75 kilogram. On top of that, hydroponics requires less water per kilo, which also makes it an interesting method for areas where water is in short supply.

The consumer demand for safe, pesticide-free crops is a key driver for innovation in production methods. I've noticed lots of lettuce segments switching to hydroponics, just like tomato production previously shifted from soil to substrate growing.

But that's not the only development. There is a growing number of semi-closed greenhouses which save a lot of energy as well as water. These systems produce a higher yield in combination with a smaller carbon footprint. 'Plant factories' take things a step further, saving even more water. So there's a lot going on in our sector in terms of improving sustainability.”

Together with Marc, we are advising our partners and developing varieties that are suitable for more sustainable production methods. Hence, we are contributing to achieving SDG 8.4.



“Focus on more than just the seeds”

Elijah Mwashayenyi
Managing Director
SEVIA
Tanzania

SDG
17.16



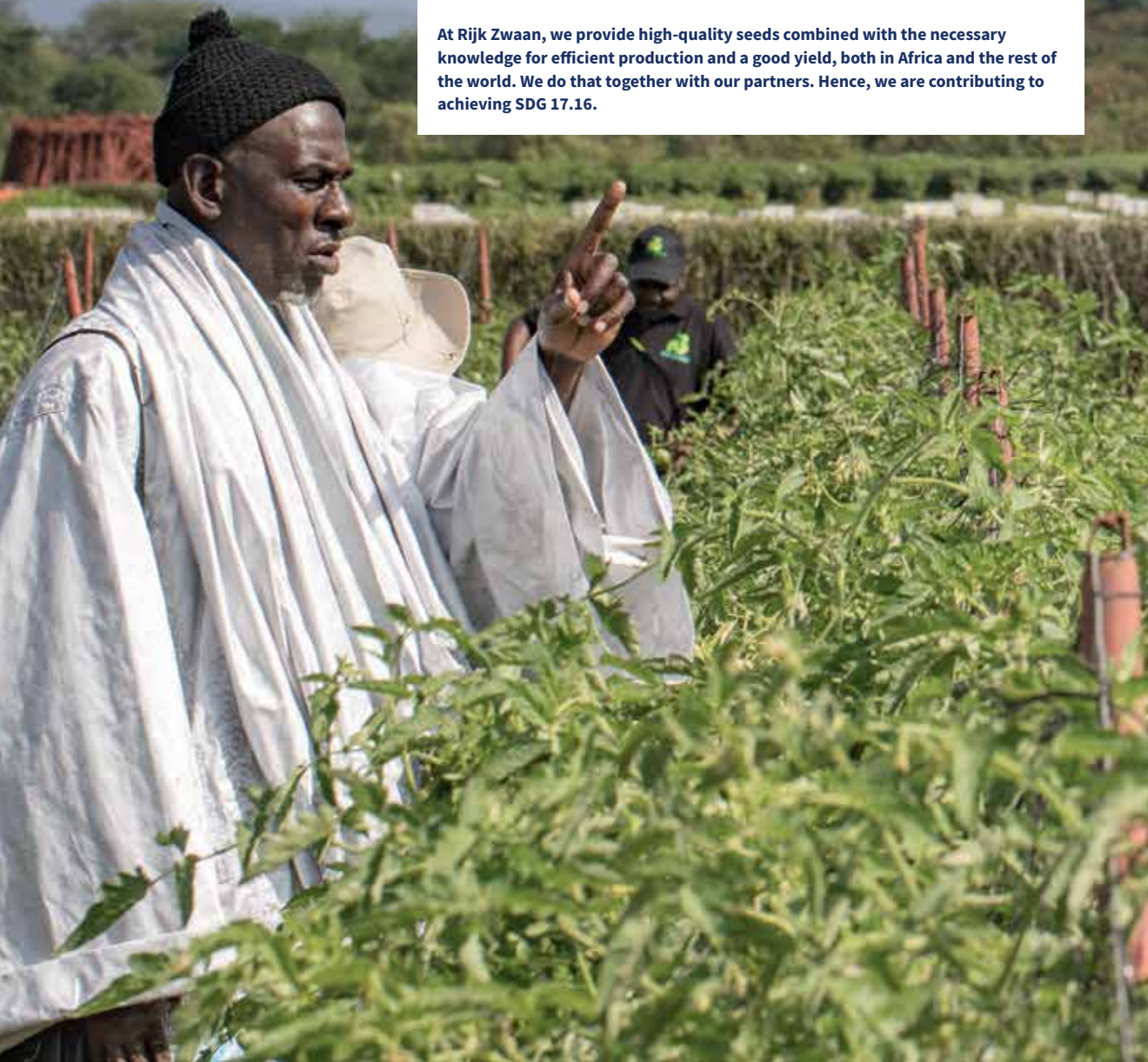
Growers in Africa are often focused on the seeds alone, but knowledge of better production techniques is essential too. “Seeds of Expertise for the Vegetable Industry of Africa (SEVIA) is aimed at transferring knowledge about improved varieties and innovative cultivation methods.”

Our guiding principle is ‘seeing is believing’. We set up demo fields on the growers’ own land so that they can see for themselves how better techniques benefit their crops. We then organise demo days which often attract between 40 and 100 farmers. So far, we’ve held 979 demos and have reached 39,000 farmers.

The project is co-funded by the Dutch government. Rijk Zwaan, East-West Seed and Wageningen University & Research are contributing by sharing knowledge and expertise. We also treat the growers as our partners.

And that approach is paying off. We’re seeing a strong rise in the number of greenhouses in Tanzania. Growers are increasingly using efficient techniques such as drip irrigation, and the use of hybrid seeds is growing too. They produce a higher yield and are resistant against certain diseases, which reduces the need for crop protection agents.

At Rijk Zwaan, we provide high-quality seeds combined with the necessary knowledge for efficient production and a good yield, both in Africa and the rest of the world. We do that together with our partners. Hence, we are contributing to achieving SDG 17.16.



Strong team spirit

At Rijk Zwaan we work as a team and we all share responsibility for the results. Thanks to collaborating, motivating one another and communicating effectively, there is a strong team spirit within the company. We also have strong relationships with our customers, partners and suppliers.

For us, fostering a strong team spirit specifically means:

- Sharing knowledge and successes, internally and externally.
- Genuine interest and a helpful attitude.
- Going the extra mile for colleagues and customers.
- The team works in the company’s best interest.

Knowledge partnerships

We form coalitions with partners who share our societal interests:

- With growers to improve the yield and sustainability of production. We share knowledge such as technical information and data through our crop specialists, apps, tours, demo facilities, study clubs and crop registration.
- Through industry associations to represent the sector’s best interests.
- With research institutes to develop innovative knowledge. We have 220 collaborative R&D partnerships with the 50 leading crop-breeding research institutes.
- With schools to ensure that educational programmes are more closely aligned with industry needs.



200⁺

**R&D partnerships with
the world’s 50 most important
breeding research institutes**

Shared leadership

Shared leadership is in place at virtually all of our locations, with the management team comprising multiple people. Sharing management responsibilities provides more flexibility, a bigger span of control, more collegiality, more knowledge and more resilience.

Giving back

Through our Committee for Development Cooperation (COS), we share our knowledge, experience and seeds outside of our commercial activities. We invest in various educational projects and support Sibusiso, a care home for disabled children which is next door to our facility in Tanzania. We support schools and food banks all over the world, whether with seeds, vegetables or even greenhouses.



Top-quality products and service

We are proud of our products. We offer top-quality products and service to our customers, whom we also regard as our partners. Thanks to our position at the start of the food chain, we can play a role in tackling the global food shortage.

For us, top-quality products and service specifically mean:

- Providing the best varieties, the best seed quality and the best service.
- Investing in the quality of people and resources.
- Fresh produce chain management to ensure consumers receive top-quality products.

Resistant against diseases and pests

We produce seeds from more than 1,200 varieties of over 25 types of vegetables. We are continuously improving the quality of those vegetables, such as by incorporating resistances against plant diseases or pests or by boosting the productivity. Our diagnostic services enable us to advise growers quickly in the case of crop diseases. This means that growers can reduce their use of crop protection agents and make better use of their land. It also offers opportunities for organic production.

Strict quality standards

No matter where in the world our seeds are produced, they all undergo quality control centrally in the Netherlands. We extensively test samples to check purity, germination strength and for infectious diseases. Seeds are only released for sale if they comply with the strict quality standards.



**In-house academy
with 80 study programmes**

Improving the whole fresh produce chain

At Rijk Zwaan, our focus on quality does not stop with the grower. For example, we improve the shelf life of vegetables to reduce the losses during production, transport, in stores and in consumers' homes. This not only tackles food waste, but also enables our vegetables to reach more people and hence contribute to a healthy diet. This often involves collaboration with partners in the sales channels, including processing companies and retailers.

Training and development

We help our employees to keep their knowledge and development up to date through our own training centre as well as intensive collaboration with national and international training institutes, a business school and universities. New colleagues are assigned a mentor and follow an extensive introduction programme, plus they are allowed at least one year to fully settle into their role and the organisation.

Healthy vegetables

Consuming more vegetables is good for people's health. We entice consumers to eat more healthy vegetables by introducing new shapes, colours, flavours and convenience. Rijk Zwaan also promotes vegetable consumption, such as through the Love my Salad consumer platform which currently has over 250,000 social media followers in more than 20 countries. In conjunction with food bloggers, chefs, nutritionists and growers, Love my Salad inspires consumers to eat more vegetables by providing resources such as blogs and recipes as well as organising events and campaigns.



"The World Vegetable Center – or WorldVeg for short – is a non-profit organisation that was founded back in 1971. The institution is focused on improving varieties and production methods in developing countries. WorldVeg helps vegetable growers to achieve a higher yield. This enables them to earn a better income, plus it creates jobs and stimulates a healthy and more varied diet within families.

WorldVeg conducts research into how to improve existing, traditional varieties. The institute also develops varieties with resistances against diseases and pests that are widespread in tropical and subtropical regions of Asia and Africa. Ralstonia, the tobacco mosaic virus and the leaf curl virus in tomato are good examples. The resistances WorldVeg has developed against these diseases are now used in virtually all tomato varieties.

Governments, knowledge institutes, NGOs and seed companies all work closely together within WorldVeg. A joint approach is essential. Rijk Zwaan supports WorldVeg financially and we also share our knowledge and experience whenever necessary. In return, we can utilise genetic material from the WorldVeg gene bank in our work to develop new varieties, so it's a win-win situation."

In partnership with WorldVeg and other organisations, Rijk Zwaan is working on a healthy, sustainable future for everyone – both growers and consumers. Hence, we are contributing to achieving SDG 17.17.



"A joint approach is essential"

**Arun Joshi
Managing Director
India**



"Biodiversity is under pressure. That's a problem today, but above all in the longer term too. We need biodiversity to help us tackle future challenges.

In wild material there are genes that can help us to find ways to deal with new pathogens and problems such as silting and drought. We don't know which genetic source contains which solution, which is why we're building gene banks. A seed sample could seem worthless today but it might be very important in twenty years' time.

We collect, document and multiply the material, working together with governments as much as possible. , working together with governments as much as possible. At the same time, we show how the material can be preserved, so all sides benefit.

At Rijk Zwaan we believe that material in gene banks should be accessible for everyone, which is why we collaborate with governments. To facilitate access to patent-protected biological material, we are one of the initiators of the International Licensing Platform Vegetable. The members of that platform give one another access to patent-protected biological material, in exchange for a reasonable fee. After all, biodiversity benefits everyone and we need to ensure that it stays that way."

Just like Jair, at Rijk Zwaan we believe it is very important to maintain biodiversity, which is why we organise material collection missions' and work closely with gene banks across the globe. Hence, we are contributing to achieving SDG 2.5.



"Biodiversity is necessary to help tackle future challenges"

**Jair Haanstra,
Breeding Manager Aubrika
The Netherlands**

Excellent business ethics

Our approach is based on doing business with integrity and with due consideration for high standards, values and the people around us. This applies in every country, irrespective of the local culture, and we expect the same from our partners. For us, excellent business ethics specifically mean doing what is right:

- Only selling products that we fully believe in ourselves.
- Making honesty, integrity and justice our top priorities.
- Respecting others.



Biodiversity

Biodiversity is very important for vegetable breeding. In order to ensure we can continue to respond to market needs and contribute to food security we are always on the look-out for new genetic variation in our crops. We work with gene banks around the world to help us in this quest. We finance collection missions that enable the gene banks to expand their collections and to safeguard genetic resources for the future. In addition, we help to describe, characterise and multiply these genetic resources.

The cooperation with genebanks and the development of new varieties are our direct contribution to preserving the biodiversity of our planet and to better vegetables for future generations.

Taking horticulture to the next level

In countries such as Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda, we participate in public-private partnerships to professionalise vegetable production. Working with local partners, we provide training to the leading growers who then pass on the technical and market-related knowledge they gain to growers in other villages. As a result, even those growers who do not buy seeds from Rijk Zwaan have the chance to build a better livelihood.

Ethics course

The IESE business school in Spain worked closely with Rijk Zwaan to specially develop an intensive three-day training course called **Business Ethics & Company Culture about doing business with honesty and integrity. 150 colleagues have completed this course so far, including all our directors and business managers.**

No child labour

We are strongly against child labour and actively make it a topic of discussion. In our contracts with producers in India, we explicitly state that we will not tolerate child labour. We subject our growers to external audits and collaborate with other breeding companies and local partners to invest in educating local parents. We now plan to roll out this approach in other countries.



Mutual interaction

We believe it is important that colleagues have consideration for, take an interest in and help one another. Good manners form the foundation for this, and these are specifically based on:

- Telling the truth.
- Communicating in a friendly, clear and open manner.
- Respecting each other's opinions and ideas.
- Upholding high moral standards and values.



**Best Employer Award
in the Netherlands**

2010: no. 1

2014: no. 2

2018: no. 1

Company culture

The Rijk Zwaan company culture is not dependent on the cultures and customs of a particular country. Based on universal standards and values that can be supported by everyone, anywhere in the world, it unites our colleagues.

We also consider it important to create room for diversity. Therefore, within the framework of our company culture, we accept and respect the differences between our subsidiaries stemming from the local culture.

Another important aspect of our company culture is having mutual respect for other people's ideas and opinions. We want our employees to feel safe and secure at work, so we do not tolerate undesirable behaviour such as aggression, violence, discrimination or intimidation.

Dialogue

At Rijk Zwaan, we do not work with appraisal forms; instead, employee development is based on dialogue. A development meeting is a confidential discussion during which the employees can talk to their manager about what is going well and what could be improved. They reach clear agreements together about how certain issues can be tackled even better or more effectively.



“We're all
crew on the
same ship”

Alev Demokan Yapici
HR Advisor
Turkey

SDG
8.5



“At Rijk Zwaan, we put people first. In effect, our colleagues shape the directors' choices. The company cares about the happiness of its employees and takes their opinions into account. This is illustrated by the fact that the board of directors involves HR as a strategic partner having a say in important decisions.

We try to involve our employees as much as possible in their own personal and professional development. We regularly hold development meetings, but these are aimed at helping our colleagues to work on their own development rather than to evaluate their performance.

Our recruitment process entails several interviews and an assessment, and employees who complete this process successfully immediately receive a permanent contract so they feel a shared responsibility for the company as a whole. That long-term view is typical of Rijk Zwaan. We're all crew on the same ship and the responsibility for the success of our company rests on everyone's shoulders.”

Rijk Zwaan shares Alev's view that it is important for our employees to have an enjoyable and long-term job, with attractive pay and conditions. Hence, we are contributing to achieving SDG 8.5.





"We're exploring new solutions and opportunities on a daily basis, resulting in better varieties and more sustainable production, based on favourable traits such as flavour, shape, colour, yield and resistance.

Resilient and robust crops are becoming increasingly important. The world around us is changing and climate conditions are ever-more extreme. We're investing heavily in developing more robust vegetable varieties that can cope with things like drought or excessive rainfall, for example.

Besides that, we're constantly looking for resistances against diseases and pests. By breeding varieties that require less use of crop protection agents, we make a direct contribution to a better environment. Crops that take a long time to grow out in the field have the longest exposure to potentially harmful factors such as diseases, fungi and insects, so we can add the most value by developing resistant varieties for those vegetable types – both for growers, because they reduce their costs, and for society as a whole, because such varieties help to protect the environment."

Together with Beatrice, Rijk Zwaan is continuously developing new varieties. Among other things, our focus on resistances reduces the use of crop protection agents. Hence, we are contributing to achieving SDG 12.4.



"Resistant varieties for a better environment"

Beatrice Lindhout
Breeding Manager Terra
The Netherlands

Decentralisation and decision-making

Within Rijk Zwaan, as part of our decentralised approach, we place the responsibility with the people who actually do the work wherever possible. We expect our employees to act as entrepreneurs, yet always with a sense of solidarity with their colleagues.

5

Rijk Zwaan has a maximum of five organisation layers



For us, decentralisation specifically means:

- A flat hierarchy.
- Argument-based decision-making.
- Room for initiative.
- Taking a critical approach to assignments rather than just following orders.
- Staying loyal to decisions once they have been made.



Dual roles

Within Rijk Zwaan there are a maximum of five levels of organisational hierarchy, and often fewer. The flat hierarchy means that some managers fulfil multiple roles, which helps to speed up communication. For example, some company directors also chair a crop strategic team. This enables them to stay in touch with the practical side of the industry and helps them to make the best strategic choices about the long-term development of the global vegetable market.



Continuous improvement

At Rijk Zwaan, we invest in the development of our employees at every level of the organisation. We encourage everyone to suggest ideas for improving their own workflows and for solving any problems they encounter in their work. This results in greater involvement, higher motivation and a stronger team spirit among our employees, and hence in top-quality products and service for our customers.



Innovation and creativeness

Our business is based on the continuous development and execution of new ideas, always in response to market demands.

For us, innovation and creativeness specifically mean:

- Providing scope for the development of creative ideas.
- Only changing something if the new version is better or in high demand.



Blue Ocean Team

We have a Blue Ocean Team to stimulate our employees' innovative strength and creativity. Every colleague can submit their innovative ideas to the team, which subsequently explores whether the idea is feasible. This enables us to make optimal use of the creativeness within our company.

Solutions

We provide solutions to challenges in the market and in society as a whole, such as:

- Better yield and protection of seedlings.
- Varieties that are suitable for organic production (40 per cent of our range).
- Varieties specifically for sustainable hydroponics.
- Tolerances to drought and salt for production in areas with limited water or saline soil.
- Disease resistances to reduce the use of crop protection agents.
- Vegetables that can be processed efficiently to reduce waste.
- Digital resources such as apps to identify diseases in crops.



30 %

global investment in R&D:
approximately 30 % of
turnover



Intellectual property

We believe it is important that all biological material, even if it is patent-protected, is available for use in the development of new varieties, and that the resulting new varieties can also be sold commercially. That is why we are an initiator and member of the International Licensing Platform Vegetable (ILP). The members of the ILP give one another access to patented biological material, in exchange for a reasonable fee.

No GMOs

The current assortment of Rijk Zwaan contains no varieties that fall under the GMO regulation, and we believe that such GMOs are unnecessary in vegetable varieties. Thanks to our planet's huge biodiversity, there are more than enough opportunities for us to continue our breeding work in a natural way.

Robots and algorithms

Heavy and routine work is increasingly being robotised so that people can focus on the exceptions and their work becomes more challenging and enjoyable. In our phytoculture in Fijnaart we use robots for sowing, sampling and selecting, for example, and self-learning algorithms can also assist in selection work. This supports the quality and rapid development of even better vegetable varieties.



"We're seeing evidence of climate change. More and more agricultural land is exposed to extreme circumstances, right around the world. In some places it has become almost impossible to grow crops. Worldwide, almost a third of the agricultural land that was available 40 years ago can no longer be used because of the changing conditions.

The world population is growing, and vegetables are important in a healthy diet, which is why we need to safeguard vegetable production across the globe. At Rijk Zwaan we are aware that breeding is about more than just disease resistances and a higher yield. In the future, growers will have an ever-greater need for plants that can withstand periods of drought or high salt concentrations, for example.

Technology will play a key role in vegetable development and production. Examples include hydroponics, controlled environments and energy-efficient greenhouses that are specially designed for specific climate zones. We develop the varieties that are suitable for those new technologies."

Together with Agnieszka, her colleagues and external partners, Rijk Zwaan is developing varieties that are suitable for use with new product technologies and for changing climate conditions. Hence, we are contributing to achieving SDG 2.4.



"We don't
just work from
behind a desk"

Agnieszka Doroszuk-
Van der Wurff, Research Manager
Seed Technology
The Netherlands





“We’re focused on improving shelf life. If vegetables stay fresh for longer, there is less spoilage so we can feed more mouths with the same amount of production. Plus the financial yield of the crop is higher which translates into a higher income for the grower.

In the European Union, consumer households account for 53 per cent of all the food that is wasted, and another 30 per cent of the food waste occurs during production and processing. The rising consumer demand for more convenience is reflected in a broad range of fresh-cut bagged lettuce, for instance. That has a negative effect on the shelf life.

At Rijk Zwaan we’ve developed an innovative trait in lettuce which reduces pinking at the edges. Knox™ extends the shelf life of fresh-cut lettuce by at least two days. We’re also working to extend the shelf life of other vegetables, and we’re studying how different types of packaging materials affect the shelf life.”

Together with Nikos, Rijk Zwaan is working to develop resilient varieties that have a better shelf life and retain their flavour and nutritional value for longer. Hence, we are contributing to achieving SDG 12.3.



“Longer shelf life means less waste”

Nikos Ntagkas,
Post Harvest Researcher
The Netherlands

Careful use of resources

We provide the right facilities that enable our employees to perform exceptionally in favourable working conditions.

For us, careful use of resources specifically means:

- Using suitable, reliable and sustainable business resources.
- Using material and equipment that enables us to supply high-quality products.
- Using business resources with restraint, so that they last longer.
- Avoiding excessive luxury.



Building for the future

Our new-build projects are designed for growth. The technical systems and building layouts take possible future expansion into consideration. This avoids demolition or major rebuilding work later on and helps to save raw materials.

Only what is necessary

Today’s rapidly changing society calls for rapid innovation. If a new basic product is a success, we develop it further. If it is not a success, we have not invested in it excessively so there are no major consequences if we stop working on it and move on to something new.



Reducing waste

We use sustainable materials whenever possible and minimise waste, including by making the necessary investments. We sort our waste materials for recycling as much as possible and reclaim waste water for reuse. We are also testing whether we can reuse the biomass from our seed cleaning activities as fuel.



Environmental awareness

In all of our business processes we are continuously assessing whether and how we can contribute to improving the environment.

For us, this specifically means:

- The environmental aspect is one of the key criteria in our decision-making, alongside a focus on people and profit.
- Our varieties help to facilitate increasingly efficient utilisation of agricultural land and lead to an ongoing decrease in the amount of crop protection agents used.
- Healthy soil is a prerequisite for conducting crop trials, so it is only logical that we make respectful and sustainable use of the environment and our natural resources.

Less energy and CO₂

We strive to minimise energy consumption by stimulating an energy-saving mindset and also through technical measures.

Some examples include:

- Some of our facilities have a heat recovery system which stores heat underground in the summer so that it can be used for heating in the winter. Likewise, it can store cold air in the winter to use for cooling in the summer.
- Our facility in Welter, Germany, has been using solar panels since 2002 which cover 12.5 per cent of its electricity needs. At our Dutch facility in Fijnaart, 1,300 solar panels were installed on the roof in 2017, and solar panels were installed on the roof of our new warehouse in Italy in the same year.
- Many of our new facilities have charging stations for electric cars.
- In Australia we have arranged for two hectares of forest to be planted to compensate for the CO₂ generated by air travel.

Preserving the environment through breeding

Varieties that can cope with less energy, water or chemical crop protection are better for the environment, and we bear that in mind when breeding vegetable varieties. Our pre-breeders are constantly on the look-out for ways to incorporate resistances. We have also developed varieties that are naturally more resistant against diseases and pests, such as Blueleaf cucumbers.



“All our company’s activities are aimed at making a profit to benefit people and the planet”

Environmental management system

We comply with all the environmental requirements in every country at the very least, and for our Dutch facilities we publish an annual environmental report. This provides details of all our environmental measures, from how we minimise our use of energy, water, raw materials and crop protection agents to how we produce less waste, light and noise. The annual environmental report is part of our environmental management system in the Netherlands, and Rijk Zwaan Ibérica also publishes an annual environmental report.



Our mission of ‘Sharing a healthy future’ partly stems from the desire to preserve our planet for future generations. That is why, in our strategic decision-making, we strive to take the environment into account and to do business in a sustainable way.



Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015 the United Nations presented the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), an ambitious agenda leading up to 2030, comprising 17 global goals aimed at eliminating poverty and inequality worldwide and putting a stop to climate change. The SDGs are widely used by policymakers and NGOs, among others, to monitor and evaluate the progress of governments, organisations, companies and citizens towards achieving these goals.

17 goals, 169 targets

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are fairly broad, which is why 169 targets have been defined to make the goals specific and hence easier to put into practice. We have compared these 169 targets against our own business objectives stated in the triptych. This booklet presents each of our nine business objectives in the context of the most relevant targets. A full description of all SDGs can be found on the website of the United Nations.

Modesty and conviction

Rijk Zwaan has an impact on a lot of elements of each of the 17 SDGs and the associated targets. For example, in the case of SDG 1, 'no poverty', the supply of high-quality seeds and the provision of intensive support to growers can help them to achieve a higher yield, which substantially improves the income position of small-scale farmers. And in the case of SDG 3, 'good health and well-being', through our convenience line – such as snack peppers – we contribute to boosting vegetable consumption and hence to improving people's health.

Independent analysis has shown that the main areas in which we already make – or could make – a difference are: ending hunger (SDG 2), creating decent work for all (SDG 8), stimulating responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) and seeking partnerships to achieve the goals (SDG 17). This booklet is focused on those four goals.

As explained in the introduction, corporate social responsibility goes without saying at Rijk Zwaan. It is an integral part of who we are and what we do. We don't claim to have a solution for all of the world's problems, but we shoulder our responsibility wherever we can and we put our mission of 'Sharing a healthy future' into practice.

For more information about CSR within Rijk Zwaan, see www.rijkszwaan.com/csr.

In the circle to the right all 17 SDGs are mentioned. Rijk Zwaan mainly contributes to SDGs 2, 8, 12 and 17.





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