



Programme information and requirements

Placements

Placements are available in dairy (e.g. traditional, with robot equipment, or with cheese making), livestock (e.g. pigs, cattle, poultry, sheep, or goats), mixed, arable farming, horticultural companies (field vegetable production -regular or organic, shrub nursery, tree nursery, plants, flower bulbs, glasshouse - potted plants, cut flowers, or vegetables), and a few placements in equine, garden centers, or flower shops.

Arrival throughout the year is possible. Most placements are available in the spring and summer. Some placements are available year-round. Finding placements can be more difficult in winter, depending on the requested placement for example. Hosts might offer training placements in a certain period of time, which might not correspond with the time that you would like to do your training.

If you would like a different type of placement, please feel free to contact us beforehand.

Accommodation?

Some trainees will live with their host/ employer and experience Dutch family life. Other trainees, mostly horticultural trainees, will live with another host family, or independently in an apartment or trailer, or you may share a separate house with other trainees or colleagues. Therefore it is important that you are able to ride a bicycle and cook. We will determine your housing situation. It is not possible to live with a host family and cook yourself.

How much will I get paid? - short term programme

If you participate in our short term programme (6-12 weeks) or if you are less than 18 years old, you will receive board and lodging.

How much will I get paid? – long term programme

If you participate in our long term program (13-52 weeks) and if you are 18 or more, you will receive in total € 780,00 net per month. From this amount €167,50 is reserved for lodging, €197,75 for meals and €414,75 for pocket money. You need to pay for insurance yourself. In practice, if you live with a (host) family, you receive € 96,- net per week + board and lodging. If you live on your own, you receive € 96,-net per week + € 45,50 to buy food + housing. The host will then pay for the accommodation. If you are 16 or 17 years old, you will receive board and lodging.

For how long can I stay?

Placements are available for 6-12 weeks (short term programme) or for 13-52 weeks (regular programme).

Do I need insurance?

You must have fully comprehensive insurance that covers health, personal liability, medical, holiday and work & travel. Examples can be provided.

Hours

You are expected to participate in the company for about 40 per week on average. You can make overtime, which will be compensated with extra free time. However, you should be flexible and understand that farming is a way of life. Due to seasons, weather and other influences hours may vary. You will have at least 1 ½ day off per week and 1 ½ day off as extra holiday per month.

Certificate

When your training is over and you are home, we will send you your certificate as soon as we receive a copy of your boarding pass, return ticket, or a copy of your passport with exit stamp.

Requirements

- Have a reasonable language level in English, or German and able to read in English. You should be able to have an easy conversation, understand explanations and ask questions the moment you hand in your application form.
- Be motivated to build your professional career in this field
- Be interested in the Dutch culture
- Be between 18 and 26 years old. (If you are younger, you need to have good references and we need to discuss your application)
- Have experience in the field of choice so you know what you sign up for.
- Be able to ride a bicycle
- Be in good health
- Be single
- Be free from a criminal record and in possession of good references
- Available for a training period of 6-12 weeks or for a training period of at least 13 weeks
- Student or recent graduate, preferably from an agricultural educational institution or an Erasmus+ participant.

What will we do for you?

We will arrange a placement for you, if necessary we will also arrange housing. In the Netherlands, you will be invited to a one day introductory meeting, you will receive a welcome package with a dictionary and a handbook, and have help with all the paperwork to be a legal trainee and invite you for our 4 day Midpoint meeting in spring and autumn. In case there is a problem, you can contact us any time and we will do our best to help you. If you are unhappy in your placement, we will try to sort out the problem.

We do our best to make sure that you as well as your host will regard your training as a positive experience which will have a positive effect on you for the rest of your life!

Introductory meeting

There are introductory meetings for all new trainees in Alkmaar every month. This introduction is obligatory and we will pay 50 % of your travel costs. Upon arrival in the Netherlands, you will be given additional information concerning date, time and location.

We organize these introductions because:

- It gives you the opportunity to meet representatives and vice versa
- Questions regarding initial experiences in the Netherlands can be asked and answered immediately and problems (if experienced by the trainee or the host) can be looked at and dealt with immediately
- The (complicated) procedures can be explained
- It offers you the opportunity to meet participants from other countries (networking)

Midpoint Meeting

Every year, there are two so-called Midpoint Meetings, one in June and one in September, organized by Stichting Uitwisseling and a rural youth organization. You will be invited to participate in these meetings that last for four days from Thursday until Sunday. You will get extra time off from your host to attend one meeting.

Follow-up

Follow-up is done by means of introductory meetings, Midpoint Meetings, monthly reports and a competence document. We also ask you to fill out a monthly report and we will stay in close contact via email and phone. If we suspect that things are not going smoothly, we will call you and the employer/host family several times to hear how you are doing. If a visit is necessary, this will be done either by a representative of the contact committee or by someone from the office.

Furthermore, you will receive a competence document in which you can write down with your host what you did the past month and at what level. This gives you, the host and us, insight in what tasks you performed, if you made progress, what needs to be addressed etc.

Screening

We have more than 300 companies in our database who are willing to offer training placements to good and motivated trainees. The screening of the trainees is accomplished by the Training Partnership and SUSP. The Dutch host however, decides on the basis of your application and his needs, if he can offer you a training placement. Stichting Uitwisseling functions as a matchmaker and therefore cannot guarantee a placement. If we cannot find a placement, you do not pay us.

Who can I turn to for help while I am in the Netherlands?

If problems arise while you are in the Netherlands, there is support in England and the Netherlands. In case of an emergency, you can reach TTPL and SUSP 24 hours per day. However, you will be treated as adults and therefore it is expected from you that you solve minor problems yourself. You should also abide by the law. The use of drugs for example will result in terminating the program immediately and having your visa or work permit cancelled.

When do I get news?

When we have found a placement for you, we will prepare the contract and training programme. You will receive this information via our contact person. You need to sign the contract and return it to us. We will ask the host to sign some documents as well.

When can I book my ticket?

You can book your ticket when you have heard that you have a placement. Do not make a final booking before you have heard that all documents are okay. You can check for the cheapest fares already and maybe you can book an option on a ticket.

Do I contact my host beforehand?

Yes! Your host will appreciate it very much if you make contact before you arrive. Ask about their company and/or family, ask for pictures, check their website, tell them about yourself etc. You can e-mail them easily but if you like to call them, the country code of the Netherlands is +31, and then dial the number without the 0.

Arriving in the Netherlands

Inform your host and possibly the host family and TTPL well in advance of your arrival. If you live in a student house, your host will accompany you to the student house. TTPL needs to know when you will arrive to confirm it. Besides this, we need to inform the insurance company of your arrival. If you fail to do this, the Dutch partner will not accept any responsibility for your medical coverage or any other aspects of your travel and welfare in the Netherlands. For a train schedule from the place where you arrive in the Netherlands to the place where you should travel to, see www.ns.nl, and then click English. For a map of the Netherlands and the place where you will stay, see www.routenet.nl. Make sure you have arranged your insurance and send Stichting Uitwisseling a copy of the policy.

What to bring?

- Work clothes and work shoes (no flip flops)
- Warm waterproof clothes and footwear
- Pictures from your friends and family
- Valid passport or ID card (this must be valid for at least 3 months after your return in your home country).
- Return ticket (if this is not possible, enough money to buy the return ticket)
- Legalized translated birth certificate - *only if you stay for more than 90 days* - check the following website : http://www.minbuza.nl/en/Services/Consular_Services/Legalisation_of_documents
- (International) driver's license
- ISIC Card (if possible)
- Copy of the insurance papers if you have additional insurance
- A credit card might be handy when you would like to travel and book your tickets online

Registration in the Netherlands

Once you arrive in the Netherlands, you have to register at certain institutions to be legally here. We will inform you upon arrival, and during the introductory meeting. Your host also knows what to do and will help you with this.

How to prepare for a stay in the Netherlands?

Everybody needs preparation in order to do a good training. It might be your first trip abroad; or maybe you have travelled a lot already. However, every trip and every stay abroad is different.

However, when you come from a neighboring country, you think that how we do things in the Netherlands will be almost the same as how you do things at home. You might be surprised to see that there are still so many (cultural) differences. Therefore, it is very important to prepare yourself for your stay in the Netherlands. Do some reading, ask around, check the internet (f.e. www.holland.com).

There will be many good things such as new friends, new experiences, new knowledge, but you also have to prepare for the bad days (when you feel homesick, when you miss your friends, there will be days with many hours of work, there will be muscle ache etc.) In total a host is almost paying the minimum wage for you so something is expected as well.

It is not a holiday, nor learning by watching experience. It is a learning by doing experience which means that you have to perform at a certain level. Hosts are not waiting for trainees who say that they are really interested in a training while reality is that they are here for sightseeing, party, holiday, making friends etc. and finally also remember that they have to do a training.

Everybody will arrive in the Netherlands with an image that you made up out of stories that you heard, information you read on the internet etc. The reality might be different from what you thought that it would be like. If you are flexible, social, positive, interested, motivated, and speak the English or German language well, you will have a great time.



Overview of sectors and placements

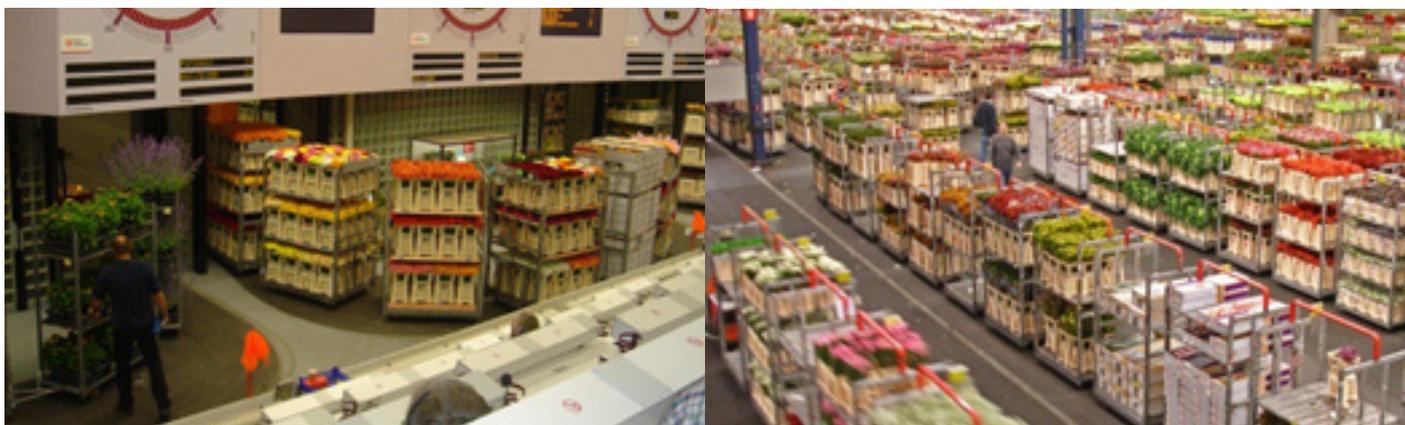
Flower nurseries

Holland is famous for her tulips and clogs. The clogs almost disappeared from the daily Dutch life, but that does not go for the tulips. When you are here in April and May you are able to enjoy the bright colored tulip fields. Besides tulips the Dutch flower growers also grow many summer flowers and other varieties. Many of these companies are situated around Aalsmeer. But you can also find them in other parts of the Netherlands. Some varieties of flowers that our host companies grow are chrysanthemum, alstroemeria, lilies, sunflowers, phlox, peonies, tulips, roses, freesia's. Too many to mention.

At a cut flower company you will learn the art of cutting the flowers in the right way, how to select them, bunch them and learn what is the best way to achieve the best quality. Possibly you can run some tests, like checking the sustainability of a flower in a vase and figure out ways to prolong this. Besides learning about growing flowers, you will also learn something about the technical instruments used, the business aspect of the company and the overall horticulture in the Netherlands. Most host companies arrange a visit to another company or to the auction FloraHolland. When you show a lot of interest the learning possibilities are endless.

Example

In the province Noord-Holland we have a host company who grows lilies year round and sunflowers in the summer. Two brothers run the company together and both have their own tasks within the company. When you are doing a training here you will work in a team. You will live in a decent mobile home which is fully equipped. You can prepare your own meals. There are more flower companies and dairy companies in this area which also have trainees via SUSP, so there are enough students you can meet to have some fun in the weekends. You are close to the city of Alkmaar and in about 40 minutes by train you are in the capital of the Netherlands: Amsterdam.



Potted plants nurseries

The Netherlands is famous for her horticulture. During a training in the Netherlands at a potted plants company you can learn a lot about the growing, harvesting and selling of different varieties of potted plants. Our host companies would love to learn you something about their company and about the overall horticulture in the Netherlands. Most companies that sell their products via the auction FloraHolland will take you to the auction to see how this process works. There are also companies who deliver directly to customers or exporters. Here you can also learn a lot about the marketing of the products. Most of these companies have their own website, are present at important agricultural trade fairs and spent a lot of effort in selling their products. They prepare the orders that come in and make sure they are ready on time to be delivered to the customer.

When you work at a potted plant company you will do different activities, from taking care of the plants, to preparing them for the auction or for an order. Besides that you will do some weeding, potting of the plants and learn about the best ways to grow a certain variety. Most host companies have different varieties of potted plants, so they have products to offer to the auction or customers in every season. There are also companies that have a research and development division. They try to find new varieties of plants. Sometimes the host does this by him- or herself. If you are here for a long-term training you are able to learn something about this as well. When you are interested and ask many questions you are most likely to learn about every aspect of the company, from the history, to the economics of the business, the technical aspect to the art of plant growing.

Example

One of our host companies is a company that is in the horticulture business for many years. Today the fifth generation of this family runs this company. The company started in 1837, so you can imagine the amount of knowledge that this company has about growing plants. Their mission is to deliver the best quality possible. It goes without saying that at this company you will learn how you can grow the best quality of plants and what is important to achieve this quality. Besides that you will learn about the business aspect as of the history of the horticulture in the Netherlands. They are situated very close to the auction, so a visit there is definitely a must! When you are doing a training here you will live in a student house with other students who are doing a training at other horticultural companies in the same area. Besides having a great place to learn, you are also able to meet friends for life and explore the Netherlands together!



Dairy, Arable, Field vegetables and Mixed farms

Every dairy company is different. All have their own amount of stock from 60 to 520 cows and young stock. Mainly for milking, breeding and just a few keep their cows for the production of meat. Several companies have other cattle as well; sheep, a few horses, poultry and/or pigs. Some companies have one to four robots, others have a herringbone or carousel milking parlour. Some farms also have their focus on touristic activities. They offer Bed & Breakfast or run a camping during the summer months.

The cheese farms sell their products in their own shop on company ground or have a stand on markets.

In almost all dairy companies, you will live with the family. Some offer housing on company grounds in an apartment or mobile home. It is a unique way to experience Dutch family life. You can be involved with everything the family undertakes, from eating to day trips. Some students even go on vacation together with the family. Farming is a way of life and you will certainly experience this when you do a training on a dairy farm.

Every day a dairy farm has routine tasks and tasks that depend on the season. Milking, feeding and cleaning will be something that needs to be done every day. Making silage, helping at calving, health care, learning from the veterinarian doctor, and taking care of the calves are some of the many things that you can do as well.

We also have other livestock companies such as pigs, goats, sheep's and poultry.

Some companies run a **mixed farm** and grow field vegetables or arable crop besides keeping animals. A lot of farms grow grass and maize to feed their animals. Those crops has to be sowed, harvested and stored. In order to do this, machines such as a tractor, shovel, mower, shedder etc. are being used. Other companies grow **arable** crops like potatoes, sugar beets, wheat etc. and **field vegetables** as onions, spinach, carrots, cabbage or broccoli for example. If you have a driver- or tractor licence and are able to handle the machines with care they absolutely will offer you the opportunity to drive their machines.

Some companies cultivate their crops without using fertilizer. They also do not spray against diseases so they do not use chemical pesticides. Those **organic or biological companies** are usually smaller than regular farms. There are also biological livestock farms.

Example

One of our companies is a host for over 10 years now and accompanied about 16 trainees already. It is a dairy (90 milking cows) company with young cattle (65) and sheep (70).

The company cultivates 40 ha grassland and 10 ha for bulbs and potatoes.

This host prefers a trainee who can come for 6 months or more because he wants to really teach a trainee something and feels that he can do so only when somebody stays for a longer period of time in a his company. It is a very friendly and open family and if you do your best to have a good contact with the family and interact well, you will have a wonderful time here.



Fruit

Fruit in the Netherlands is a seasonal product. The companies mainly depend on the weather and can offer a training when activities happen, so at picking time and pruning time. We have placements on companies who cultivate apples and pears but also on the so called soft fruit companies whose products for example are strawberries, cherries, raspberries, gooseberry, blackberries etc.

Example

One of our companies cultivates the following types of fruit; apples, pears, sweet and sour cherries. What they are looking for in a trainee is somebody with a friendly and helpful nature and who wants to learn. The company is also interested to know if somebody has other skills such as technical knowledge, experience with agricultural vehicles or marketing or social media skills, so they can use these talents as well if possible. They have a placement available in the period of approximately May until July. And the period from August until October. Depending on the season and the weather of course!



Tree nurseries

Most tree nurseries can be found around Boskoop. This city is close to Gouda in the province of Zuid-Holland. The cultivars that our host companies grow are for example: climbers, cytiscus, berberis and viburnum. Most tree nurseries also grow perennials like hydrangea and lavendula. During a training at a tree nursery you will learn the different varieties the host has and the best growing techniques of these varieties. Besides that you will learn something about the soil and fertilization.

You will learn about the technical equipment that the company uses. Besides that if the company works with the auction, you will visit the auction. You will learn about the economics of the business and the history of the company. The Plantarium in Boskoop in September is the biggest fair when it comes to tree nurseries and perennial growers. If you are here in the fall, you will most likely visit this fair. People from all over the world and especially Europe visit this fair to see what will be on the market the next season/year and sometimes already place their orders.

Example

One of our host companies is a tree nursery in Boskoop. They have students the whole year around. This tree nursery is a young, modern and dynamic company of about 6 hectares. The team exists of five enthusiastic employees and they grow about 1 million potted plants every year. They grow cytiscus, hydrangea and more. The atmosphere of the company is very informal and social. On Friday afternoon the team will have a drink together to close of the working week. The accommodation is on the company grounds and you will prepare meals yourself.

Vegetables under glass

The Dutch also have a large amount vegetable growers. Besides field vegetables, you can also find many large vegetable greenhouses. We can offer training placements in greenhouses with tomatoes, eggplants, cucumbers and different kind of peppers. The Netherlands grows 685 million kilograms glasshouse vegetables per year all together. You can find 1.545 ha of greenhouse with tomatoes, you can compare this with 3.000 soccer fields. For a tiny country as the Netherlands, this is quite a lot.

Just imagine the knowledge and skills the growers possess about vegetable growing. When you do a training here there is more to learn than just the core business; harvesting of the vegetables and taking care of the plants. For example many companies arrange their own packing and transport of the products. You can learn a lot about the machines that are used and also about the logistics. Besides that you will learn everything there is to learn about growing under glass, how you can manage the water flow and temperature controlling. Also in this sector marketing is a very important subject for many companies, because sometimes products are sold directly to customers and exporters.

There are also vegetable companies who sell their products via the vegetable auction called the Greenery. This is also very interesting to visit or to learn about. Again; if you show a lot of interest and enthusiasm the learning possibilities are endless and you will most definitely have a great experience. Our training placements and hosts can't wait to show you around and share their knowledge.



Talk to us

If you would like more information, email or call us to find out more:



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