

TITLE: Insects as a Sustainable Source of Animal Protein for the Future

HOST: Wendy Wolford, ACSF Associate Director and Polson Professor of Development Sociology

DATE: Wednesday February 12, 2014, 12:00 -1:00 PM 300 Rice Hall

ABSTRACT: This topical lunch will highlight the work of Marcel Dicke, professor of Entomology at Wageningen University and Rhodes professor at Cornell University. His research on the ecology of plant-insect interactions focuses on **communication among plants and insects**. He was the first to discover that plants respond to insect feeding with enlisting carnivorous insects as bodyguards and termed the phenomenon “plants crying for help”. He actively and effectively communicates about science with the general public and organized the science festival “Wageningen – City of Insects”. He actively promotes insects as the meat of the future (see his TED lecture at www.ted.com/talks/marcel_dicke_why_not_eat_insects.html). He received the Rank Prize for Nutrition (Rank Trust, United Kingdom, 2006) and the NWO Spinoza Award (2007) for his scientific research and the NWO-KNAW Eureka Prize (2013) for science communication.

‘Without insects no life on Earth’ is my motto. This is likely to become even more relevant in the next two decades. The world population is expected to grow until 9 billion people in 2050 and the FAO predicts that we need a substantial increase in food production. At present, already 70% of the global agricultural land is used for livestock production. Insects, however, require much less feed and space and their production results in much lower greenhouse gas production per kg of protein produced. Moreover, the nutritional quality and protein content of insects is comparable to meat. Thus, insects are an excellent protein source for the future. Here I make a case for adding insects to everyone's diet. This message to squeamish chefs and foodies: delicacies like locusts and caterpillars compete with meat in flavour, nutrition and eco-friendliness. A new cuisine emerges from Wageningen (The Netherlands), a town that has even been called the epicentre of entomophagy.

With a chef and a colleague entomologist, he has produced a book with background information, interviews with, among others, Mr. Kofi Annan, and recipes. There will be a book signing session in the Cornell Bookstore on 11 February 2014, noon-1:30 p.m.