

Raksts publicēts LLU portālā: <https://www.llu.lv/en/article/2022-06-07/studies-in-sustainable-agriculture-and-forestry-programs-are-continuing>



Studies in sustainable agriculture and forestry programs are continuing



Last year, for the first time, LLU admitted students to the bachelor's study programs "Sustainable Agriculture" and "Sustainable Forestry", which are implemented only in English. They integrate the principles of sustainable management and the bioeconomy approach, which allows future professionals to gain a broad and innovative understanding of the agricultural and forestry sectors. The first year of studies is coming to an end, but the admission of new students has already begun.

Teaching staff from various faculties, as well as university partners, experts from Latvian research institutes and foreign universities have participated in the development of the programs, which allows them to combine strong academic knowledge with international experience.

Although the programs are primarily intended for foreign students, they can also be studied by Latvian students who have appropriate knowledge of English. Admission to these study programs takes place using the application platform for foreign students <https://apply.llu.lv/>.

Edgars Dubrovskis, director of the study program "Sustainable Forestry", says that the forestry program is based on a bioeconomy approach and consists of three parts - forestry, forest use and wood processing. Each of these specialties is studied in detail by students in other programs of the Faculty of Forestry, but in the new program they are integrated together.

“During the three years of study, we create an understanding of the whole process for students, from preparing the soil for the new tree to processing the wood for various purposes. Initially, we give a focus on forest management in general, natural sciences - applied physics and chemistry - as well as business economics. In turn, we will later introduce geographic information systems and forest mapping, soil issues, forest productivity, plant physiology, forest protection, multifunctional forest management and other issues, ”says E. Dubrovskis.

He explains that in the study process not only the economic side is considered, but also ecological aspects and public interests. In addition, an in-depth understanding of forest development, techniques and technologies is gained.

"Forestry has long been no longer just a hand saw, a horse or an agricultural tractor used for the forest, but it has introduced specific, modern technologies. Including remote sensing and drone use. Forests can be grown for a variety of purposes and are not limited to large dimensions and certain wood. Trees with much smaller dimensions are relevant in processing, but from the point of view of nature diversity, trees with large dimensions are very necessary. The forestry specialist must understand where and for what purposes we work and organize the work accordingly. We try to create this understanding through various study courses, almost half of which consist of practical training and gaining experience in the forest,” explains E. Dubrovskis.

In its turn, the aim of the study program “Sustainable Agriculture” is to provide theoretical knowledge with a little practical orientation, so that graduates can successfully work in various fields related to agriculture.

“We offer students to specialize in two directions: sustainable production of plant products and sustainable production of animal products. In the study direction “Sustainable production of plant products” we plan to prepare theoretically well-educated specialists in the fields of both arable and horticultural cultivation, including current issues and scientific findings in soil science, soil treatment, agrochemistry, plant protection, selection and genetics, crop production and horticulture. On the other hand, in the study direction “Sustainable production of animal products” we will train specialists in breeding and selection of farm animals, preparation of quality fodder, animal nutrition, welfare and production of livestock products,” says the program director Gunita Bimšteine.

Graduates of both fields of study will be able to assess the material technical and economic compliance of the relevant production technologies with the set goal, the quality of the obtained products and their ecological significance, use modern information technology, as well as competent to assess the production process and environmental integrity in sustainable agricultural production.

G. Bimšteine explains that after graduation, graduates will be competent to organize, evaluate and analyze processes in the production of sustainable plant or animal products, make decisions on the application of the most appropriate technology and / or technique, carry out research work, as well as continue their studies.

The study programs "Sustainable Agriculture" and "Sustainable Forestry" were established in the project "Consolidation of LLU study programs and development of new programs" financed by the European Social Fund (8.2.1.0/18/A/007). Its aim is to reduce the fragmentation of LLU study programs and to create four new study programs in the languages of the European Union, strengthening the sharing of resources. Its total funding is EUR 396 114.66, of which EUR 336 697.46 is from the European Social Fund.



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