



@AeresUASIntOffice



#Alumni - Aeres UAS (University of Applied Sciences) - CAH Dronen

## Dear alumni,

We are heading for Christmas, but unfortunately we are heading for Christmas in an online mode as the Netherlands is in lockdown again. The emotional impact of the pandemic is big on everyone, but our international students especially. It is difficult if you are abroad but you are bound to stay in your room and thus miss all the fun of exploring new places and make new memories with new friends. At the same time it is tough if you have opted for an international programme but there is the uncertainty whether you can travel. We try to find ways how to internationalise in a digital mode but the best learning experience requires an in-person interaction.

Over the last months we were able to meet some international partners in person again and we were able to physically participate in some international projects we are working on. Being together makes a huge difference. We are working on a project on Climate Smart Agriculture in Egypt, have developed at poultry training centre in Tanzania, we work on a horticultural education project in Kenya and another agricultural education project in Benin. Being there and working together is important!

The big news we can bring just before Christmas is that the new double degree programme International Food Operations Management is approved and will be launched September 2022! We have been preparing this programme with the University of Wisconsin, located in River Falls (US) for some time now. We are already working with the university in the field of dairy management but we hope to further expand this to equine business programmes as well.

Another important development is our new building at the location Almere. We moved in this summer and although the building is stunning, the area surrounding us is still under construction. By mid-April 2022 the area where we are located at will be the Floriade Expo 2022 for half a year. Many countries will use the expo to demonstrate the latest innovations on how to feed the urban areas. Aeres will offer an educational programme during Floriade sharing our expertise with the visitors. We hope you will schedule a trip to the Netherlands sometime next summer and visit us at the Floriade.

Although we are in lockdown we are alive and kicking! We try to embrace the challenges and use it to innovate as well as maintain the quality of our work. We can only do so in good health...

Which leaves me with a last sneak peak... We are preparing a third Master programme in the field of Food and Health! Hope to share more in our next newsletter. For now stay healthy and may 2022 bring lots of happiness, togetherness and new insights!



**Natasja Spaargaren**  
 Head of Internationalisation





## Aeres Projects in 2021

Aeres is involved in various international projects. Throughout the years Aeres has implemented a range of educational development projects, but is also involved in Tailor-Made Trainings of diverse nature.

Even in these turbulent times, project work has a high priority within Aeres. Below a glimpse into several projects in which Aeres participated in 2021.

### 1. TAILOR-MADE TRAINING IN ZAMBIA DURING JANUARY AND MARCH 2021

**Title:** Integrated Farming Systems: Dairy, small livestock (indigenous chickens and goat) and Vegetable Production

**Target group:** Lecturers and extension workers of the "Natural Resources Development College" located in Lusaka.

**Objective:** To improve the technical capacity of above target group in:

- Vegetable production on small holder farms
- Poultry production on small holder farms
- Dairy/ small ruminant production on small holder farms
- Development of effective farmer training programs ▶



Conducted online; in the picture you can see the laptop used by the local consultant, and on the other side of the screen Aeres colleague mr. Hermann Schilt providing a hands-on lesson.



## 2. TAILOR-MADE TRAINING IN ZAMBIA DURING APRIL AND MAY 2021

**Title:** Enhancing knowledge and skills in farm management and entrepreneurship to improve agricultural productivity and food security

**Target group:** Zambia College of Agriculture (ZCA) – Mpika lecturers, extension workers under Ministry of Agriculture in Mpika and local “lead farmers”

**Objective:** To improve the technical capacity of above target group in:

- Vegetable production on small holder farms
- Poultry production on small holder farms
- Dairy/ small ruminant production on small holder farms
- Development of effective farmer training programs



Practical lesson in poultry production conducted by local consultant coached by Aeres colleague mr. Ernst Beitler.



## 3. FINALIZATION OF THE “DAIRY TRAINING PROJECT” IN KOSOVO IN AUGUST 2021.

**Title:** Dairy Training Project Kosovo

**Target group:** Kosovo Association of Milk Producers (KAMP), its extension workers and its members

**Objective:** To improve the technical capacity of above target group in:

- Hygienic Milk Production
- Dairy Cattle Nutrition and Forage Production
- Housing of Dairy Cattle
- Development of effective farmer training programs ▶



Mrs Jashari, extension worker of KAMP, active in training of farmers in improving milk quality



Training group of female farmers



Training of farmers and KAMP trainers in determining the best ripening stage of maize for silage making



#### 4. TAILOR-MADE TRAINING IN KENYA DURING NOVEMBER 2021

**Title:** Towards Reduced Malnutrition through Gender Inclusion: Strengthening the technical and entrepreneurial skills of women and young girls of RDFCS for gender inclusive and sustainable livelihoods in the dairy value chain

**Target group:** Rukingu Dairy Farmers' Cooperative Society (RDFCS), Kirinyaga County in Kenya, particularly female small holder farmers

**Objective:** To improve the technical capacity of above target group in:

- Dairy farm management
- Local dairy value chain improvement
- Adding value to milk on small holder farms
- Developing farmer training programs ■

If you want to know more about Aeres projects: <https://www.aeres.eu/expertise-all-projects/overview-of-all-projects>

## Aeres for Professionals: Lifelong Learning

### What's cooking in 2022?

National Restaurant Association has prepared "What's Hot 2022 Culinary Forecast". Do you know what is coming? Find out by taking this quiz! In every row choose either answer A or B.

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. <b>A.</b> Protein based cocktails   | <b>B.</b> Milk-based cocktails |
| 2. <b>A.</b> Egg-based breakfast bowls | <b>B.</b> Breakfast salads     |
| 3. <b>A.</b> Carbonated coffee         | <b>B.</b> Canned wine          |
| 4. <b>A.</b> Nut milk                  | <b>B.</b> Potato milk          |
| 5. <b>A.</b> Vietnamese kitchen        | <b>B.</b> Surinamese kitchen   |

*(correct answers at the bottom of the page)*

Increased focus on sustainability, packaging demands, plant-based foods/drinks, supply chain security.... these and others change your business environment continuously.

As Aeres, your trainer in food business careers, we would like to know: How do you cope? What do you focus on amidst all these changes?

We are committed to business development and sustainability in your field. Maybe the SWOT-analysis you used to make at university is not relevant anymore. Perhaps you need more tools to secure a safe supply chain or food safety. We want to know, but what we already know is that....

at Aeres for Professionals, we believe in the profound impact you can make in your field of expertise. We do that by coaching, educating and training you based on your (organisation's) needs. We do the research, you make the impact!

### @2022, What's cooking Aeres alumni?

What is coming for you? What business aspect do you need to focus on? Let' us know and the 1st and 3rd to last person who reply will get a business booster!

**Click here:** <https://forms.gle/muVGpCHNn4gfX6fd8>

**Deadline:** February 1, 2022.

**Answers:** 15, 29, 32, 42, 52  
(source: National Restaurant Association, 2021)



## Aeres Almere has a new university building!



Building from distance

Since September 2021 Aeres University of Applied Sciences Almere has a new home base. The university is located in the Floriade (International Horticultural Exhibition Floriade Expo 2022) terrain. We are actually one of the first "inhabitants" in this area. Pictures say more than thousand words – see images below for an impression. You are kindly invited to visit our new building in Almere!

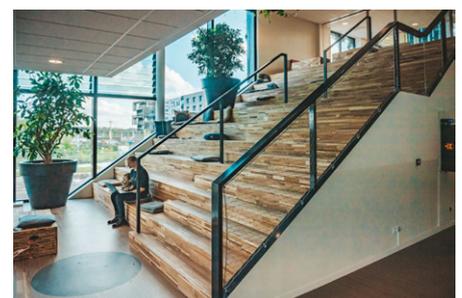
### Some interesting facts about the building:

**Roof and Rooftop:** we chose for a "tropical" roof to combine solar panels with biodiversity. Solar panels provide all the power needed for the building. In the same time these panels provide 60% energy and let 40% light through for the plants on the rooftop. The plants are native flora and fauna. Under the roof is a water retention tank, so rain can be stored and used later for watering the plants. You can also find an insect hotel on the rooftop. The deck is made from rescued tropical hardwood.

**Building:** there are five themes present in the building. You can detect these themes by the color patterns and images used. The building is built from noise downstairs to peace/quietness on the upper floor.

There are three labs on the first floor. The Geolab, the Biochemistry lab and the Soil lab. The Geolab has a 16 TV screen big video wall. The Biochemistry lab and the Soil lab have all the equipment needed for teaching and research. Two more labs are located on the basement level: the Growing Lab for plants and the Citizen Lab for food related research.

At the entrance, one immediately notices the grandstand stairs and reception area made of reclaimed wood. The cushions on the stairs are made of old tent canvas. Throughout the building you will find a combination of old, refurbished and new furniture. ▶



Entrance area with grandstand stairs



Green plant wall

# NEW UNIVERSITY BUILDING



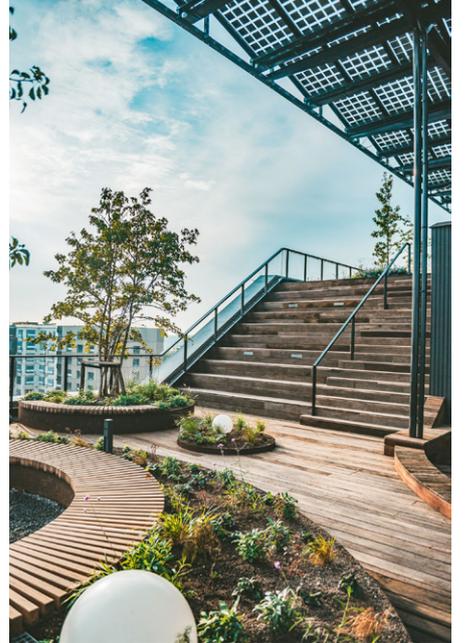
Wall with plants outside



Wall of solar panels



Wall with plants outside



Rooftop terrace



Inside the classroom



Upper floor with classrooms



Inside the classroom



Workspace or free time space for students. ■



# Connector between the Netherlands and Egypt

**Alumnus:** Ahmed Arini (Egypt)

**Study program:** Master of Agribusiness Development (MAD). MAD is a one-year professional master programme. The programme centres around working on a challenging business assignment at a "Master Company".

**Academic year:** 2016/2017 (graduated in January 2018)



After the thesis defense in Dronten for the Masters degree (January 2018)

**To start with – how comes that you changed your career in banking sector and decided to step into the field of agriculture? And as a result came to the Netherlands (Dronten) to study Master of Agribusiness Development?**

I graduated from the German university in Cairo (economics). Then I worked in the banking sector for almost five years. Then I decided that I don't want to continue with a career in the banking sector. It had a good career potential, but it did not fulfill my ambitions/goals. That is when I started thinking about work in the agricultural sector. We have a family farm, but it has always been a secondary job for my father. And I thought – if I will go and work directly in the family farm and will not succeed, then I might get bored or even start hating agriculture, which I did not want to happen. I want to learn something more about agriculture first and I want to learn from the best! That is why I thought about studying in the Netherlands. Then I started "googling" and found Aeres Master programme (MAD) that perfectly fitted to what I wanted to do. I did not want to study something technical about agriculture, because I did not have any agricultural background, but business background. I was attracted by the presence of the Master Company in the programme – a mix between scientific knowledge and practice. I was looking to go to the Netherlands not only for scientific knowledge about agriculture, but my main goal was to learn how do companies, markets and sectors work. To get insights from inside of a company. This is what I admired about the programme in Dronten – company visits, exposure to agricultural sector. At first I did not have any idea in which sector of agriculture I would like to get into. Then I went to Aeres, it took me some time to get the right Master Company. But it was good that

during the search process I had to go through several sectors (e.g. dairy). It was very insightful for me to visit different farms, different factories; to have different insights about various agricultural sectors. I even had a two-month internship at a dairy farm in Cairo in January and February (2017), where I lived on a farm. Then I decided that I don't want to go into dairy... I just didn't find myself in this sector. But it was very insightful and beneficial as it gave me insights about this sector. If I wouldn't have done this internship for two months, then I probably would not have the correct idea about it.

Then I realized that I am very interested in greenhouse technology and started reading about it. I was very lucky to get an internship at Priva in Delft (climate control and water solutions for greenhouses). It is a very well-known company and I learned a lot there. My main assignment was to make a market study about the opportunities for Priva (or Dutch technology vendors) in the Middle East. This company assignment was also helpful for my Master thesis, which was about the level of technology adoption of export-oriented agribusiness in Egypt. The market study for Priva was based a lot on desk research, and also based on primary data collection: I met experts in Wageningen, company representatives. They all provided me with valuable information about how the sector is operating in the Middle East and how the Dutch technology vendors could help there.

**What did you do after the graduation?**

After the graduation I had two ideas in mind. I knew that eventually I will go back to my home country. So the first idea was to have some experience in the Netherlands and then go back to Egypt. The second idea was that even if I would get the experience ▶



A field visit for the Egyptian trainees with the Dutch project team members for the Nuffic training project TOT (Training of Trainers). We are providing training for 40 applicants in Egypt on climate smart agriculture

In Rijk Zwaan trial station in Egypt with the trainees for the Nuffic TOT project





For the Nuffic training project - team members celebrating World Soil Day with Egyptian farmers



During a reception at the Dutch embassy in Egypt with the Dutch Agricultural Council in Egypt and the managing director of NABC and the chairman of EABA (Egyptian African Businessmen Association)

in the Netherlands, I would still need to know the dynamics of the market in Egypt. So I decided that I want to go back to Egypt and start learning about the market dynamics. One of the findings of my thesis and market research was that Middle East is a good destination for the Dutch agri-tech companies. There are still a lot of areas developing in the agricultural sector. There is still a huge difference if we compare Egyptian/Middle Eastern market to the Dutch market. The Dutch market is well advanced, structured and experienced. But that is not yet the situation here. I believe that there is a need from the Egyptian/Middle Eastern side for the Dutch market. On also from the other side: the Dutch companies are interested in investing or offering knowledge in Egypt/Middle East. I believe in the huge technological transfer that has either started or is ongoing and will eventually increase in the coming years. When I returned back to Egypt I thought – I want to play a role in this technology transfer. I did not have a concrete idea about what exactly I wanted to do. When I came back I got in

contact with the company Bosman Van Zaal, they sell greenhouse solutions. I worked with/for them, I tried to sell their greenhouses in Egypt. Then I decided that I need more experience in agronomy. If I have this knowledge, then I can know and understand the needs of Egyptian farmer and companies better. Two years ago I decided to establish a start-up in the field of algae production (spirulina). I am still learning about it, learning by doing. Now I am concentrating on the production side, learning how to have a consistent supply, how to have a good quality product. Let's say that I am taking baby-steps in it. This is my "baby" that I am taking care of, slowly, not rushing.

#### The spirulina you are growing, for what is it used?

I am selling it now to people in fertilizer industry. I am also looking into selling it for food consumption, but not yet. For the food consumption you need the highest quality. I am also doing trials to make it suitable for animal feed. I am not yet concentrating on the marketing/selling side, but on the production

side, to master the production, to know everything about it.

#### How did you come up with this idea to grow algae?

As I told before, when I returned to Egypt I was trying to sell high-tech greenhouse technology. But then I realized that I want to take a step back and construct a greenhouse by myself to learn about it and only then sell the technology. So I wanted to make a greenhouse for leafy products (lettuce), but then I met someone who told me about algae. There are not a lot of growers of algae yet and therefore I expected the competition to be lower in algae than in leafy vegetables. That is when my idea to grow algae came.

#### I also saw in LinkedIn that now you have a new job next to your start-up.

Yes, I also work now for Go&Grow Farm Solutions (mechanization company). But actually I wear many different hats. One of them is algae. The second one is freelance consultancy for different Dutch companies and universities. I am involved in total in two projects with Aeres as a local consultant. When I came back to Egypt I was still in contact with people from Dronen (Aeres) and when they came to Egypt they told me there was a project with Kafrelsheikh University, which was a Tailor Made Training (TMT) by Nuffic. Partners in this project are Aeres, Maastricht University and Kafrelsheikh University. That was my first involvement as a local consultant to work with Aeres and I am still involved in this project. We provide training to Kafrelsheikh University and they provide it further to the farmers. I am also involved in another Nuffic project with Aeres – we provide 40 people in Egypt a training about climate smart agriculture. Sometimes ▶



Picture after successfully finishing the trade mission with the Dutch Agricultural Council in Egypt (Dr. Melle Leenstra)



I work closely with the Dutch Embassy. Recently I was involved in a trade mission within NABC (Netherlands-African Business Council). There were 13 companies from the Netherlands meeting with the companies in Egypt (private sector) with the purpose to enhance trade.

And my third hat is my family farm which I am trying to take over. It is a farm with 20 ha and currently I grow rice, maize and wheat. But I am trying to experiment with new crops. I am about to start cultivating potatoes and I am getting seeds from the Netherlands!

And my fourth hat is Go&Grow. That is one of the companies that came on a trade mission I mentioned earlier. They wanted to have an ambassador in Egypt to work for them, to promote their products/solutions here in Egypt. I am happy to work for them in an entrepreneurial way. They don't have an office, I don't work for them as a full-time employee. But I do work for them to promote and market their products in the region.

#### It seems that you are a busy person!

[Smile]. Yes, I am trying to. But my idea is – everything that I do is complementary to each other and enriches my agricultural expertise and knowledge. And on the background there is always this thought about having a role in the technology transfer between the Netherlands and Egypt.

#### If you look back five to six years when you decided to step into agricultural sector, and look at all the things you are doing now – are you happy with your decision back then?

I am very happy. And I was very happy when I took the decision to go to Aeres. It fulfilled what I had in mind: if I learn, then I have to learn from the benchmark, from the best. Being a student at Aeres opened a lot of opportunities/doors for me. If I wasn't a student, those doors would never be open for me. Visiting companies, visiting factories and farms, having an internship at Priva. So yes, I am very happy with my decision and I am happy with what I do. Every day I learn. I might not have a steady job with a steady income, but I am convinced that it will come! I am trying to stand on a solid ground. Whenever I talk to people here in Egypt and tell them that I was studying in the Netherlands, they start to listen to me and hear me.

#### I am still curious, why did you choose to exchange banking for agriculture? It could have been any other sector... But why did you choose agriculture in particular?

My main trigger were actually two things. In the back of my head there was the family farm that I thought



In front of Sahara Expo (the biggest agriculture expo in Egypt) during a trade mission organized by NABC (Netherlands African Business Council). 13 Dutch companies were involved from the private sector in the Netherlands and there was a matchmaking event with private companies from Egypt. My role was as a local consultant to organize this trade mission.

was not utilized. I wanted to have enough experience to make it as efficient as possible. And the second trigger was that there will always be developments in the agricultural sector. People will never stop to eat. We need to produce more but with the same amount of land we have.

#### By the way – are you still in touch with your classmates?

Yes, but not with all of them. Last month (November 2021) Vladimir (from Croatia) came to visit me here in Egypt. Every now and then I am in contact with two other French classmates.

#### Keeping your network active?

Yes! Up until now the main facilitator of my projects/jobs since I came back to Egypt has been networking. Networking is my asset. Last week I attended a reception at the Dutch embassy and the Dutch Agricultural Counsellor introduced me as “a good connector between the Dutch and the Egyptian”.

#### That is a good PR for you! It is amazing to hear this story! As we are almost at the end of our interview. One last question which we usually ask – what would be your wish to the fellow alumni of Aeres for 2022?

I wish them all a successful year ahead! And to try to gain from the opportunities as much as possible. Aeres is a nice place to learn and to have experience in the Netherlands. ■



Ahmed's algae farm (spirulina)

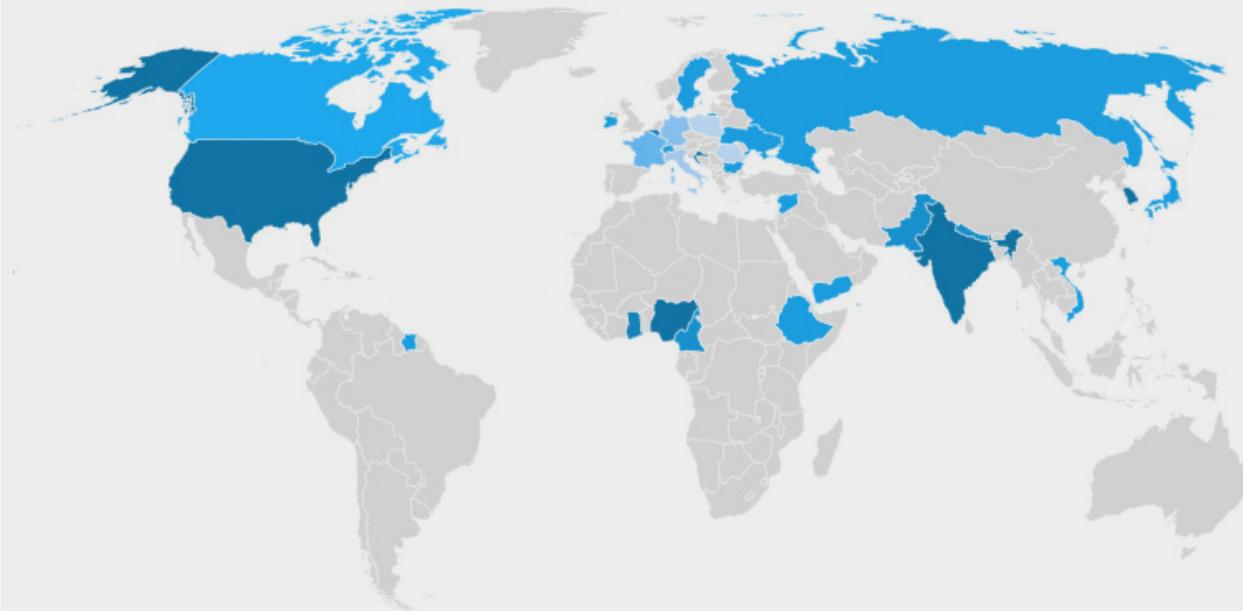


With Jos Leeters (Dutch consultant) during our visit to the trial station of Rijk Zwaan in Egypt



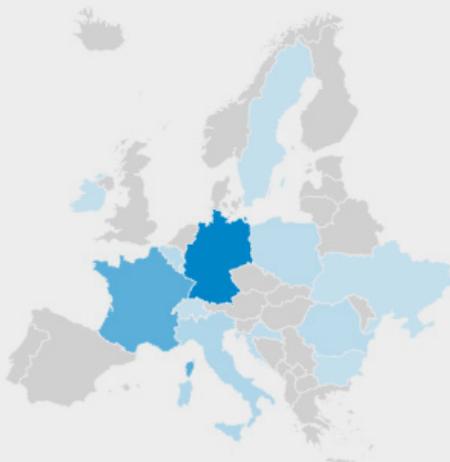
NICE-TO-KNOW

## Overview countries of origin of international students studying at Aeres Almere, Dronten and Wageningen



ZOOM-IN

### Countries of origin of international students in Europe



ZOOM-IN

### Countries of origin of international students in Asia



## Recipe for Christmas All Year Long

Take a heap of child-like wonder  
That opens up our eyes  
To the unexpected gifts in life—  
Each day a sweet surprise.

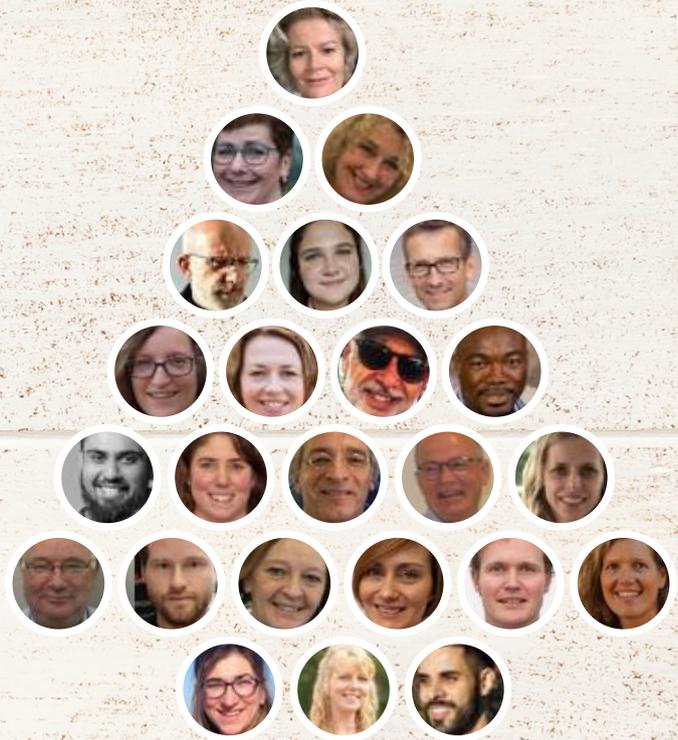
Mix in fond appreciation  
For the people whom we know;  
Like festive Christmas candles,  
Each one has a special glow.

Add some giggles and some laughter,  
A dash of Christmas food,  
(Amazing how a piece of pie  
Improves our attitude!)

Stir it all with human kindness;  
Wrap it up in love and peace,  
Decorate with optimism, and  
Our joy will never cease.

If we use this healthy recipe,  
We know we will remember  
To be in the Christmas spirit,  
Even when it's not December.

| By Joanna Fuchs



*Season's greetings  
from Team DISC!*