

## NETWORK NEWS

I am sure we can all agree that this year has been challenging. Besides feeling anxious for our own health and that of our loved ones, travel and field trips have been disrupted, funding has been redirected to address more pressing problems, and many of us have faced increased work pressures with all the adaptations needed to successfully work online. However with challenges also came opportunities, and we highlight some of the silver linings that our community found this year.

We have had to re-strategize our working processes, sometimes on a daily basis, in order to accommodate the changes brought about by COVID-19. We are profiling some of these stories on our website: Joanna Wolstenholme and Dr Richard Sidebottom [describe](#) how the MillNET\_i programme adapted and innovated in order to accommodate the changes needed for research to continue, and Dr Richard Harrison [speaks](#) on the importance of adjusting working processes at NIAB in order to accommodate COVID-19 related changes. These are stories of resilience, innovation and creativity in the face of enormous challenge, and we are grateful that we can share them with you.

Our [Food for Thought Coffee Break Series](#) continues to be an amazing asset for us. It provides academics, students, and the general public with a platform to gather and discuss ideas, it encourages interdisciplinary thinking and collaborations, and it exposes us to international research and practice. We have been fortunate to easily host researchers from various countries, including Morocco and Ethiopia. This would have been much more challenging for us in pre-covid times, and has allowed us to reduce our carbon footprint as well. It has also allowed our community to feel connected: [Professor Cristiane Derani](#) found that, as someone living far away from the UK, the Coffee Break talks were really helpful for communicating and networking with GFS researchers, and they helped to minimize the distance and the isolation produced by COVID-19. As Cristiane says: *"I had the opportunity to learn from researchers and enlarge my network. It seems that the restrictions are going to be kept until the vaccine, which makes us wonder about new forms of work together and achieve impacts with our research. GFS found a good way to put researchers together, in such a manner that we can think of new possibilities of research and improvement of our work."* Our Coffee Break talks continue from

22 January, with Dr Payam Mehrshahi discussing how algae can become an integral ingredient for a more nutritious and sustainable diet. We remind our early career researchers in particular to let us know if they feel ready to present at the Coffee Break talks.

Our [#AnnualFoodAgenda](#) programme has produced a series of interesting and informative events over the course of the year, and a synopsis will soon be published on our website.

We would like to congratulate veterinarian and PhD student Chioma Achi, who [won](#) Student of the Year at the Antibiotic Guardian Awards 2020 for her work in antimicrobial resistance, as well as the University of Cambridge Vice Chancellor's [Early Career Researcher Award](#) for organising an engagement programme across Nigeria to strengthen the participation of poultry farmers in the fight against antimicrobial resistance. More on Chioma's work can be found [here](#).

We remain committed to supporting our exceptional group of early career researchers (ECRs), something which is particularly important at this time due to reductions in research travel and conference attendance. We held our first [ECR event](#) on 30 November, with discussions from mid- to senior career researchers on their professional journeys. These were followed by flash talk presentations from ECRs. The flash talks presented were of exceptional quality, and we are pleased to announce that PhD student Adam Muhammad Adam won the prize for best presentation. We are already planning the next set of ECR events, which will include a Grant Writing workshop on 28 January, and Connecting with Industry workshops on 11 and 18 March.

[Zhiqi Wang](#), the Co-Chair of Cambridge Food Security Forum, shares that most of the Forum members have graduated, and he encourages more students to consider joining. Secretary, Treasurer, and General Committee member are some of the roles available. Please contact Zhiqi or Co-Chair [George Crane](#) with the role you are interested in, your motivation for joining, and your CV. The Forum will be coordinating and participating in a Venture Creation Weekend (VCW) for Food Security. The VCW is an annual 3-day business building competition bringing together the best talents (i.e. MBAs, researchers, PhDs and students) to tackle food insecurity with their brightest ideas. It will be held

in the first weekend of February, and will be a great learning opportunity for new members.

We remember Professor Chris Abell, PVC for Research at the University of Cambridge, and Dr Amit Bhasin, Programme Manager of Cambridge Africa, who left us this year – our thoughts are with the families of all who have lost loved ones this year.

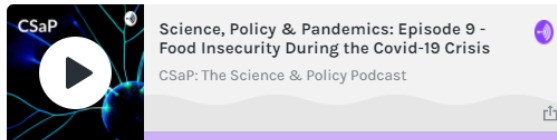


Our AFA20 webinar of 29 June, '[How can we build resilient food systems for the future?](#)', was by hosted Corriere della Sera and FoodUnfolded journalist Silvia Lazzaris, together with Dr Nazia Mintz-Habib, Director of the Resilience and Sustainable Development Programme (RSDP) and Senior Research Associate at the Centre for Industrial Sustainability, and Gemma Birley of Cambridge Sustainable Food. They discussed how communities can contribute to strengthen the food system, and how small businesses found innovative ways to overcome the difficulties that COVID-19 created in the supply chain.

## Episode 9 - Food Insecurity During the Covid-19 Crisis

22 May 2020

This week, Dr Rob Doubleday is joined by Dr Jean Adams, NIHR Research Fellow at the Centre for Diet and Activity Research, and Dr Jag Srai, Head of the Centre for International Manufacturing, Institute for Manufacturing for a discussion about food security and supply chains during the Covid-19 pandemic.



Likewise a series of [podcasts](#) organised with the Centre for Science and Policy (CSaP) brought together experts in various aspects of food security and the impact of the pandemic. In episode 9 Dr Rob Doubleday, Dr Jean Adams and Dr Jag Srai discussed food insecurity and supply chain resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. In episode 15 Dr Rob Doubleday and guests explored the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security, the economy and health systems in India.



Our panel talk of 14 July, co-organised with the Conservation Research Institute, Cambridge Public Health, and Cambridge Infectious Diseases was titled '[Can healthy-eco systems prevent future pandemics](#)'. The talk integrated the themes of human and animal health, ecosystem resilience, biodiversity conservation, and food security. It brought experts together to share their perspectives on how the risk of future pandemics can be reduced through a

better understanding of the complex interactions between health and natural systems. PhD student Charlotte Milbank has also published an [article](#) related to this event.



On 12 November we joined Cambridge Zero in its Climate Change Festival where a [panel](#) of experts discussed how to fix the food system to make it resilient and sustainable. Small-holder farmers, consumers, and societal groups all play a role in strengthening the system and reducing waste thanks to technology. Governments and regulators can empower their citizens and correct imbalances that markets alone cannot resolve.

**Celebrating the International Year of Plant Health:**  
A forward-looking perspective on tackling the grand challenges in  
plant health to transform agriculture sustainably.



*part of the Plants@Cambridge Annual Seminar Series*

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Held on 3 December, the well-attended '[A forward-looking perspective on tackling the grand challenges in plant health to transform agriculture sustainably](#)' panel talk was the first in a series hosted by the CambPlants Hub to celebrate the FAO's [International Year of Plant Health](#). It was supported by GFS, #Annual Food Agenda, NIAB and the Crop Science Centre, and was a dynamic panel discussion followed by a question and answer session featuring expert representatives from farming, industry and research.



Francesca and Karen wish all of you a peaceful holiday season, and hope that you return rested and ready for 2021.

## LISTINGS

### INTERNAL EVENTS

**18 February.** [Independent Research Fellowship Open Day 2020-21.](#)

**26 February.** [Early Career Researcher: Grant Writing Workshop.](#)

**11, 18 March.** [Connecting with Industry Workshops.](#)

Please keep an eye on the [Plants@Cambridge Annual Seminar Series](#) for future CambPlants Hub events.

### EXTERNAL EVENTS

**7 January.** [Oxford Real Farming Conference Global 2021.](#)

**15 January.** [Agri-TechE: Agri-Tech Express with ADAS – YEN Benchmarking and Analytics.](#)

**19 January.** [Agri-Tech Explore: Keeping It Clean with Agri-Tech Innovation.](#)

**28 - 29 April.** [New Food Conference.](#)

### PUBLICATIONS AND MEDIA

*\*[Contact us](#) if you are an IRC member and would like support in promoting your new publication.*

[Talking Antimicrobial Resistance with Dr Chioma Achi.](#) Involving IRC member **Chioma Achi.**

[What's the best way of farming for nature?](#) Involving IRC member **Harriet Bartlett.**

[Is the African yam bean Nigeria's answer to reducing food insecurity?](#) Involving IRC member **Nadia Radzman.**

Book: [What is food? Researching a topic with many meanings.](#)

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

*\*If you are a University of Cambridge researcher interested in putting together an interdisciplinary application and would like assistance in finding suitable collaborators/coordinating a group meeting, please [contact us](#).\**

[AHDB: Request for Quotation. Rapid Evidence Assessments - Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Carbon Storage in the Pork, Potato and Protected Edibles, Fruit and Ornamentals Sectors.](#) **Deadline: 4 Jan 2021.**

[BBSRC standard research grant.](#) **Deadline: 13 Jan 2021.**

[Nutritional analyses of foods.](#) **Deadline: 18 Jan 2021.**

[African agriculture knowledge transfer partnerships: 2020 to 2021, round five.](#) **Deadline: 27 January.**

[Smart Farming Innovations for Small-Scale Producers.](#) **Deadline: 25 February.**

[Algae-UK. Second call: Industrial Biotechnology Applications of Algae in Food and Novel Food Ingredients.](#) **Deadline: 26 Feb 2021.**

[UKRI: Super follow-on funding.](#) **Deadline: 17 Mar 2021.**

[Future Food Fellowships.](#) **Deadline: 31 Mar 2021.**

[US Military Academy Broad Agency Announcement.](#) **Deadline: 31 Mar 2021.**

[Zayed Sustainability Prize.](#) **Deadline: 6 May 2021.**