News

The following news items illustrate some of our activities during the last quarter of 2013. To keep up to date with our activities, please take a look at our news pages at:
http://www.reading.ac.uk/foodbiosciences/about/foodbio-news.asp

Follow us on www.facebook.com/FoodatReading

Content:

| Staff news | 1 |
| Prof Rowland’s retirement | 2 |
| Royal Berks Show | 3 |
| NADFC visit | 5 |
| Graduation 2013 | 6 |
| Researcher highlights | 7 |
| UCAS day | 10 |
| Research grants | 11 |
| Student news | 15 |
| Placement & Careers event | 17 |
| Food ATP | 19 |
| Press release | 20 |
| Other News | 22 |
| Prof Christmas Lunch | 23 |
| Recent publications | 25 |

New Lecturer in the Department of Food and Nutritional Sciences

Dr Vimal Karani was appointed as a lecturer in Nutrigenetics in September 2013. He has joined the University of Reading after his post-doctoral training at the MRC Epidemiology unit (Cambridge, UK) and University College London (London, UK). He also holds appointment as an Honorary Lecturer in Genetic Epidemiology at the University College London.

Dr Vimal Karani has an interdisciplinary academic background, with qualifications from Medical Genetics, Bioinformatics, Molecular Biology and Genetic Epidemiology. His primary research interests focus on the investigation of gene-nutrient interactions on metabolic- and cardiovascular disease-related outcomes using combined approaches from genetic epidemiology, statistical genetics and molecular biology.

His long term goal is to use the findings from observational studies to carry out human intervention studies with a view towards developing industrial collaborations to facilitate 'Personalised Nutrition'. He is also a lead study co-ordinator of a large international collaboration (D-CarDia Collaboration), where he focuses on establishing the causal relationship between 25-hydroxyvitamin D and cardiovascular disease-related outcomes using Mendelian Randomization analysis.

Awards

Professor Julie Lovegrove was presented with the prestigious award of Fellowship of the Association for Nutrition at a ceremony in Portland Place, London in December 2013. This award acknowledges significant and sustained contribution to the advancement of nutrition at an international level and recognizes those committed to the advancement of nutrition research and education.
Retirement of Professor Ian Rowland

Professor Ian Rowland is well known to us all as the Head of the Hugh Sinclair Unit of Human Nutrition since 2007. He is internationally renowned for his expertise in diet and cancer and has numerous awards and accolades, including an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Gent in 2005. Ian graduated with a BSc and PhD in microbiology from University College London and began his career in the British Industrial Biological Research Association (BIBRA). He was head of Microbiology and Nutrition at BIBRA for 16 years, and Professor of Human Nutrition at the University of Ulster for 10 years before moving to Reading in 2007. In his long and eminent career he has published over 250 papers, been awarded millions in research funding, and served as an expert on government panels, as a consultant to a number of charities and companies, and as an editor of many prestigious journals. During all of this, he still found time to teach undergraduate and postgraduate students, and present his research findings to an international audience.

Ian’s research and teaching has advanced nutritional science, influenced policy and practice, and inspired many scientists of the future. Affectionately known as the ‘gentleman of science’, his retirement will be a great loss to the Hugh Sinclair Unit of Human Nutrition, the School and University. We all wish Ian many thanks and best wishes for a long and enjoyable retirement with Liz and their family.

From December 2013 Professor Ian Rowland has been appointed president of the Alpro Foundation. The Foundation is an independent, non-profit organization founded in 1996 with the objective of promoting plant-based eating habits (http://www.alprofoundation.org).

Alpro Foundation aims increase the awareness and knowledge amongst health professionals and the general public about the impact of plant based diets on human health and on sustainable food production. It establishes numerous activities to help achieve these objectives e.g. organising conferences, dissemination of an educational newsletter, awards for BSc and MSc students, and research grants.
Royal Berkshire Show 2013

The University of Reading participated at the Royal County of Berkshire show of this year (21st & 22nd September) where delicious free samples of single apple juice, a bee hotel, the famous smoothie bike, an exciting experiment to prepare a yummy sparkling fruit juice with jelly beads and interactive fun for visitors from all ages helped the University of Reading to win two top prizes at the Royal Berkshire Show 2013.

The University's display won 1st prize for Best Large Trade Stand Frontage of 15m or over and 1st prize for Best Local Trade Stand within a 25 mile radius of the corn exchange.

This year the display focused on Reading's work with fruit. More than 3000 visitors to the stand learnt about the University's cutting-edge research, which is examining the wider health benefits of eating fruit, including the positive impact of blueberries on cognitive function. The stand also showcased the crucial research being undertaken by Reading experts to secure the future of fruit. This stand was organised by Prof Bob Rastall (Head of Food and Nutritional Sciences Department), Dr John Scholar (Co-Director, National Centre for Biotechnology Education), Prof Jeremy Spencer (Professor of Biochemistry) and Museum of English Rural Life (MERL). UOR stand was planned by an excellent team that included, Fiona Jane Blair (Director of Corporate Relations and Events), Ellie Gotay (Corporate Relations and Events Officer) and Jenny Beelders.

There was a group of PhD students, BSc students, Postdocs, research assistants from the Food and Nutritional Sciences Department and also volunteers from the MERL that helped with all activities (Noura Eid, Sophie Castle, Helen Palmer, Oonagh Markey, Chelsea Snell, Christos Derdemezes, Afroditi Chatzifragkou and Isidro Gonzalez-Salvador).

At the end of each day, Saturday and Sunday, apple trees were given to winners by Dr Matthew Ordidge (Agriculture Policy and Development).
Sir David Bell, the University's Vice-Chancellor, who attended the show on Sunday, said: "The University of Reading's tremendous display at the Royal Berkshire Show was an excellent opportunity for us to showcase our research".

We were able to communicate, in a simple and straightforward manner, the cognitive benefits of consuming fruit. We also talked to an audience of all ages on the work being done to tackle the threat posed to crops by climate and environmental change.

"The University continues to be an international leader in high-quality teaching and research in agriculture, food science and health. By linking together the many facets of our work, we help to ensure the security of the food chain and the wider health of our society well into the future"

What a fantastic achievement and what a fantastic day!!!!!!
The Indonesian National Agency for Drug and Food Control (NADFC) visits FNS

The Department was pleased to welcome senior staff from the Indonesian National Agency for Drug and Food Control (NADFC) on a visit on the 13th November.

The delegation was on a fact-finding tour of the UK as part of their work to develop their Agency’s human resources. The NADFC has recently started funding some of its staff to attend Masters programmes and one such student has joined our MSc Food Technology – Quality Assurance programme this year.

Leading the delegation was their current head, Permanent Secretary Dr Hayatie Amal, who gave a short presentation on the role of the NADFC and the importance of increasing their overall level of academic qualifications. Discussions continued over lunch with staff from the School of Pharmacy and the Reading International Office also in attendance. Dr Jukes, who as our Post-Graduate Director of Teaching and Learning hosted the visit, then showed the visitors around the Department where they were able to meet with other staff and get a good idea of the range and depth of our expertise.

Commenting on their visit, Dr Amal has stated: “The visit has been very useful in assisting us to formulate a plan on human resource development of NADFC Republic of Indonesia. In the meantime, we are discussing next steps to follow-up the outcome of the visit. It is my hope that the visit will lead us to the mutual beneficial cooperation in the near future.”

Pictured here are delegates from NADFC including Dr Amal (2nd left) and Dr Owens and Dr Jukes from FNS.
12th December 2013- Student’s Graduation day

Graduation Day for our MSc students this year was on Thursday 12th December. Unusually our ceremony was held at 4.00pm meaning that by the time it was finished it was already dark outside making group photographs difficult. However it was still a happy occasion for our new graduates and we would like to congratulate them all on their achievement. As usual, our 2012-13 Master’s students had come from many parts of the globe including Colombia, Japan, Vietnam, Nigeria, Peru, China and Greece. There were 21 nationalities in total in the group of 55 students. We wish them all well in the future and trust that they will be able to put their learning and new skills to good use in their future careers.

PhD News

The following students successfully defended their PhD theses and we pass our congratulations to all of them:

Michelle Weech “The substitution of dietary saturated fatty acids with monounsaturated and n-6 polyunsaturated fatty acids on measures of vascular function and risk factors of cardiovascular disease” supervised by Prof Julie Lovegrove and Prof Parveen Yaqoob

Charlotte Mills “The colonic and vascular effects of coffee: The effects of processing” supervised by Prof Jeremy Spencer, Prof Don Mottram and Prof Glenn Gibson.

Piyawan Sitthiphong “Impact of flavonoid-rich and flavonoid-poor fruit and vegetables on biomarkers of cancer risk in a human randomized controlled trial” supervised by Prof. Ian Rowland.

Martin Chadwick “Development of molecular markers linked to quantitative and qualitative assessment of bitterness in lettuce” supervised by Dr Carol Wagstaff and Dr Lisa Methven.

Noura Eid “The impact of consuming date fruits on the colon health and reducing colorectal cancer risk factors” supervised by Prof Jeremy Spencer and Prof Ian Rowland. Noura was also awarded with the Yakult PhD Award (Best Student in Food and Nutritional Sciences).

Visit our website: [http://www.reading.ac.uk/food/](http://www.reading.ac.uk/food/)

Food and Nutritional Sciences

Follow us/ like us on [www.facebook.com/FoodatReading](http://www.facebook.com/FoodatReading)

Find out about our research seminars: [http://www.reading.ac.uk/food/](http://www.reading.ac.uk/food/) (Seminars)
Dr Sandrine Claus gave an invited lecture at the 36th International Congress of the Society for Microbial Ecology and Disease last September in Kosice (Slovakia) (24-26/09/2013).

Staff and students from FNS were well represented at the Society for Applied Microbiology (SfAM) annual summer conference held in the Hilton Hotel, Cardiff on 3 July 2013.

Dr Alistair Grandison, Dr Jane Parker and Dr Lisa Methven appeared on the Channel 4 show Food Unwrapped talking about dairy and non-dairy ice cream, protein in beef stock cubes and Christmas dinner, respectively. If you would like to watch the Christmas dinner event please tune in to Channel 4 on Monday 23rd December at 08.00pm.

Several staff attended the VI International Conference on Polyphenols and health that took place in Buenos Aires (Argentina) in October 2013. The aim of this conference is to bring together scientists from a range of disciplines such as medicine, biology, chemistry, nutrition or pharmacology to create a common platform from which novel and exciting research in the area of polyphenols can be disseminated and discussed. The conference lasted a total of 4 days and included work on a wide variety of topics from absorption and metabolism and molecular mechanisms of polyphenols to cardiovascular benefits and colon cancer prevention from polyphenols.

Prof Jeremy Spencer, Dr Gunter Kunhle and Dr Catarina Rendeiro were all invited speakers. In addition, the Reading presence was swelled with several poster presentations – Charlotte Mills, Anna Amini and Tania Cifuentes.

Professor Ian Rowland was an invited speaker at Nutrition & Health event in London, 2nd November 2013 presenting ‘The problems of interpreting diet and health studies’.

ALPRO FOUNDATION He also talked about "Fruit and vegetables and cancer risk – is it quantity or quality?" at the Student Symposium on Plant Based Eating and cancer risk organized by the Alpro Foundation, Brussels 5th Dec 2013

Professor Julie Lovegrove was an invited speaker at the following events:

- SCI Food Network. Reading, UK (Oct 2013) presenting ‘Is a healthy diet a challenge too far?’
- Mega Evento Nutrição. Sao Paulo, Brazil. (Oct 2013) presenting ‘The Impact of plant bioactive compounds on vascular health.’
- Food and Drink Federation. London, UK (Sept 2013) talking about ‘Saturated fats – Friend or Foe?’
Dr Carol Wagstaff organised a Rank Nutrition meeting in the Lake District in October (also attended by Prof Jeremy Spencer, Emma Bennett and Sophie Castle from Reading) on Fruit and Health in the 21st Century.

Carol and four members of her research group attended the 6th European Senescence Workshop in Versailles in October. Carol was chairing sessions and gave a talk, the other group members all gave posters.

Time for a bit of Parisian sight-seeing was found before the conference started!

Dr Carol Wagstaff also spent half of November in Malaysia - attending the International Palm Oil Conference, and then as a plenary speaker and chair of the 1st International Conference on Crop Improvement (ICCI). During the visit she also ran a hands-on functional genomics workshop on translational crop science at the University of Putra Malaysia with colleagues from the University of Nottingham.

Lab safety has a different interpretation in Malaysia - the following notice was seen on all molecular and tissue culture lab doors:

Dr Carol Wagstaff pictured here (centre, back row) with some of the participants at the ICCI workshop
Nutrition Society Winter Meeting

The Department was well represented at the Nutrition Society Winter meeting 2013 that took place at the Royal College of Surgeons, London, 11th-12th Dec

The meeting titled ‘Diet, gut microbiology and human health’ drew together leading experts in the field to present and debate the latest research around the topic of gut microbiology and its role in health.

Four main symposia focused on:
- The gut microbiome: forming the microbiome and modern approaches to its study
- Changes in the microbiome in disease and life course
- Diet and gut metabolism: linking microbiota to beneficial products of fermentation

Dr Giulia Corona presented the work entitled “Digested and fermented seaweed phlorotannins reduce DNA damage and inhibit the growth of HT-29 colon cancer cells”.

Later in November Dr Jauregi was an invited speaker in the Latino American Symposium of Food Science, ‘10 SLACA’ held in Campinas University, Brazil, 3-6 November, where she delivered a talk on ‘Enzymatic production of ACE-inhibitory peptides from whey: an integrative approach’.

Flavour SenseNation where Dr Lisa Methven is currently one of their scientific advisors won a Welcome Trust Society Award.

Later in November Dr Jauregi was an invited speaker in the Latino American Symposium of Food Science, ‘10 SLACA’ held in Campinas University, Brazil, 3-6 November, where she delivered a talk on ‘Enzymatic production of ACE-inhibitory peptides from whey: an integrative approach’.

Flavour SenseNation, run by a company called “Action Dog”, is a touring interactive exhibition that explores how our senses inform and influence our appreciation of food and flavour. Building on the success of the exhibition to date, and the continued demand from teachers who have visited the exhibition, the society award will enable Action Dog to take the event into schools by developing education resources to support the changes in primary curriculum for 2014.

Flavour SenseNation will build on the learning shared with our science graduates who have acted as our facilitators, training them up to become junior researchers, assisting with the implementation of FSN within the new primary science curriculum. We will create a network of learning between PSQM schools, primary science teaching staff, our junior researchers, school children in years 4, 5 and 6 and Flavour SenseNation, using examples of learning and work produced in schools to feed back into the touring exhibition.

The grant was for £209k… awarded to Action Dog, we are just advising.
Dr Vimal Karani was invited to give a talk at the Department of Biotechnology, Loyola College, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India (http://www.loyolacollege.edu/)

The title of his talk was ‘Genetic Epidemiology of Obesity and Type 2 diabetes - Principles and pitfalls’.

The main purpose of this meeting was to educate the Indian students doing their master’s degree in Biotechnology to create awareness on choosing their career in various fields of research besides Biotechnology.

Some of the students were keen in applying for the Felix scholarship for doing PhD at the University of Reading.

Pictured here Dr Vimal Karani (left) presented with an award from by Dr. Shirley George Panicker (Faculty of the Department of Biotechnology) during his visit to Loyola College

UCAS Day

It has been a very busy term for admissions. We have already had three UCAS visit days, which were a great success and we received great feedback from the applicants. These days give applicants an opportunity to get a closer insight into the Department of Food and Nutritional Sciences.

There were many activities during the day including a talk about the Department by Professor Bob Rastall, a talk about the Industrial placement year by Samantha Warner and Gemma Sanderson (two of our final year students), a laboratory session with John Schollar and finally all the applicants had an interview with an academic member of staff. In addition our current students were around to answer questions and give their perspective on the department.

We wish the applicants well in their forthcoming examinations and hope to see them again in October.

We look forward to another busy term and welcoming more applicants to the Department after Christmas.

STAFF TRAINING MOBILITY (STT)

As part of the Internationalisation of the University of Reading staff mobility at all levels is encouraged. Therefore colleagues can use the ERASMUS programme as a method of professional development by bolstering your skills, enhancing your knowledge, increasing your international networks and potentially even enhancing your language skills at the same time.

The 2013/14 ERASMUS programme is open and can fund members of staff (academic and non-academic) to undertake short periods of training at another European HEI or a European organisation / enterprise.

You can find more information about the programme on the following website: http://www.reading.ac.uk/studyabroad/staff/staffmobility/stafftraining.aspx

The Erasmus Mundus (Action 2) Call for Proposals has been announced. More information and application details are now available on the EACEA Erasmus Mundus website: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/funding/2014/call_eacea_18_13_en.php. The Call for Proposals aims to select 30 new Action 2 partnerships.

The external deadline for applications to be submitted is early March 2014, however any proposals needs to have internal scrutiny and gain approval beforehand.

Therefore if anyone is considering participating in this please can you ensure that you inform our Office at the earliest opportunity (studyabroad@reading.ac.uk) so that we can inform the relevant colleagues working in Reading International and the Research & Development Offices, who can offer advice and guidance with any such proposals.
**DEPARTMENTAL SUCCESS IN OBTAINING RESEARCH GRANTS**

**Dr Sandrine Claus** was recently awarded an EU FP7 grant of £268,904 as part of the MyNewGut consortium that will investigate “the role of the gut microbiota on the development of obesity and related cognitive impairments later in life”. The project is starting on 01/12/2013.

**Dr Lisa Methven** (FNS) and **Dr Vitaliy Khutoryanskiy** (Chemistry Dept) have been awarded a 4-year BBSRC Industrial CASE studentship to start within the academic year 2014/15. The project is entitled: “The role of protein structure on the sensory characteristics and consumer acceptability of whey protein fortified foods”.

**Dr Jonathan Swann** was recently awarded a grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the US for £30,000. The project is entitled: ‘Mapping and predicting metabolic fluxes between the ileal microbiome and host’.

**Prof Ian Rowland** was recently awarded additional funds from Herbalife Europe Ltd for £90,000 for the project entitled “Fibre mix modifies the human gut microbiota”.

**Dr Carol Wagstaff** and **Emma Bennett** have been awarded a BBSRC Sparking Impact Award which they will use to engage with industry and provide a route for their BBSRC-funded research to have more impact for the industrial partners they work with.

---

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

The latest funding newsletters (December 2013) for the four faculties (Science, Life Science, Arts and Humanities and Social Science, including Henley Business School) can be accessed on the Research and Enterprise website at: [http://www.reading.ac.uk/closed/res/ResearchSupportClosed/FindingFunding/reas_redFindingfunding.aspx](http://www.reading.ac.uk/closed/res/ResearchSupportClosed/FindingFunding/reas_redFindingfunding.aspx)

Research and Enterprise has recently upgraded its Research Professional subscription to enable us to provide more comprehensive funding information to Schools and Departments across the University. The new functionality will allow us to compile bespoke funding newsletters for Schools, Departments and/or research centres as well as allowing researchers to set up personalised searches and alerts for funding opportunities and research news. These new bespoke newsletters will replace the four broad faculty newsletters currently produced. We will be visiting Schools and Departments in the autumn to explain our plans and to give a demonstration of the new functionality of Research Professional.

Further information about the Research Professional demos will be sent out in due course. If you have any queries about the funding newsletters please contact Sharon Clark at: s.e.clark@reading.ac.uk

---

**Link to Studentship Deadlines:** [https://www.reading.ac.uk/closed/res/ResearchSupportClosed/FindingFunding/reas-RSfundingnewsStudentships.aspx](https://www.reading.ac.uk/closed/res/ResearchSupportClosed/FindingFunding/reas-RSfundingnewsStudentships.aspx)

**Link to Information on Research Professional:** [https://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/reas/Research_Professional_quickstart_March10.pdf](https://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/reas/Research_Professional_quickstart_March10.pdf)

**EURAXESS-UK** ([www.euraxess.org.uk](http://www.euraxess.org.uk)). This website provides information and advice for research staff, international researchers wishing to come to the UK or for those looking for jobs in research abroad.

---

**Change of name for Doctoral Training Grants (DTG)**

As you are aware the Research Councils are working towards being more harmonised, it has therefore been decided to re-name all future DTAs and DTGs to Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTP) and to reflect this change in terminology on our website (please see below) with immediate effect. There is no change to the process or the remit of the DTPs. ([http://www.reading.ac.uk/graduateschool/dtcsandgrants/gs-dtcs.aspx](http://www.reading.ac.uk/graduateschool/dtcsandgrants/gs-dtcs.aspx))
TRAVEL FUNDS FOR STUDENTS

All the information regarding travel funds for students can be found at: (http://www.reading.ac.uk/life/life-travel-fund.aspx)

Horizon 2020 – ERC 2014 indicative call deadlines

The ERC’s Scientific Council has published a statement which contains some indicative deadline dates for ERC calls during 2014 http://erc.europa.eu/september-update-erc-calls-proposals-2014

The ERC calls are expected to be published in December 2013, and the foreseen deadline dates are:
• Starting Grants: end of March 2014
• Consolidator Grants: end of May 2014
• Advanced Grants: end of October 2014
• Proof of Concept (for current ERC grant holders): early April 2014 and early October 2014
• Synergy Grants: no call in 2014

Please note that these dates could still change, and that no further information is yet available on the calendar or budget of these next calls.

Prior to the ERC call deadlines, an internal selection process will take place to ensure appropriate Reading candidates and proposals are put forward for the ERC schemes. I will update you with further information when available.

For more details on ERC or any other EU funding schemes, please contact Dr Mischa Phillips (m.phillips@reading.ac.uk)

Felix Scholarship competition 2014

The competition is open to candidates from India or other developing countries for either postgraduate research degrees or taught Masters who meet the criteria set out by the Felix Trustees.

The Felix scholarship competition is funded and administered (including the setting of criteria) by an external Trust and involves Reading and two other participating UK Universities.

It has now been confirmed that Reading will have a total of 6 Felix Scholarships to allocate in this year.

Details and the relevant forms for applicants are on the University website at http://www.reading.ac.uk/gs-felix.aspx.

The deadline for students to submit applications for this studentship is 31st January 2014. Applications should be submitted directly to the Graduate School; contact details are included on the attached sheet.

For further information, please contact: Chris Robson (c.robson@reading.ac.uk)

RETF Best Research Output competition 2014

The annual RETF Best Research Output competition has been launched again; this is the opportunity for Early Career Researchers (ECRs) to put forward their best paper from 2013 for consideration for a Faculty prize.

1. The output should be published between 1 January 2012 and 31 December 2013.
2. The output should be worthy of a minimum of 3* in REF terms.
3. Each paper should be accompanied by a short (150 word limit) lay description of the research, detailing why it is important.
4. Nominated authors should be ECRs (i.e. became independent researchers after 1 August 2009). Where outputs are co-authored, you will need to show that the nominee has made a major contribution that demonstrates their status as an independent researcher.
5. Prize money is £1000 for 1st prize and £250 for 2nd prize.
6. Applicant must be available to collect the prize at Court on 24th March 2014.
7. Deadline for submissions is Friday 17th January 2014.

For more information please contact Prof Parveen Yaqoob (p.yaqoob@reading.ac.uk)
Young Microbiologist Competition 2014

The first Young Microbiologist competition organised by the Society of Microbial Ecology and Disease (SOMED society) has been launched. This competition aims at rewarding the best undergraduates or master students undergoing a research project in any microbiology-related field and encourage them to pursue an academic career.

For this purpose, the SOMED society will select 3 outstanding young scientists based on the quality of their work as described in an abstract of 250 words. The society will then invite the 3 finalists to submit a full-length article and the winner will be published free of charge into the journal of the society Microbial Ecology in Health and Disease. In addition, all 3 finalists will be invited to attend the next Annual Congress of the SOMED society in 2015 and will receive one year free membership. The deadline for abstract submission is **30th Apr 2014**.

This is a fantastic opportunity for our best students to get recognised for their hard work. I hope you will strongly encourage any potential candidate to participate.

For more information, please contact Dr Sandrine Claus (s.p.claus@reading.ac.uk)

---

Scaling Up Nutrition Workshop: Call for Participants

Under the British Council and CNRST Researcher Links scheme we will be holding a workshop on Scaling Up Nutrition in Morocco in Rabat, **Morocco on 4 - 7 February 2014**. The workshop is being coordinated by the University of Southampton, UK and Ibn Tofail University, Morocco, and will have contributions from other leading researchers in UK and Morocco.

Scaling Up Nutrition nationally and globally requires translational research in nutrition. The scientific findings from research should become translated to the development of nutrition standards and tools needed for reliable nutritional diagnoses, to help better identify and address malnutrition, manage disease risk and improve nutritional care. It also requires capacity building in health professionals to improve care, and community education to promote health.

The population of Morocco faces significant nutritional challenges, including childhood malnutrition, under-nutrition, and lack of capacity within the higher education institutions and health professions to make significant progress. The workshop will provide an opportunity to review the nutritional landscape in Morocco, outlining the nutritional status of the population, capacity of health professionals and current nutrition research and progress. UK delegates will share their experience of how the UK and other countries have progressed and how current and future research can contribute to the situation in Morocco.

The workshop is targeting **early career researchers** and is intended to be a career development opportunity with focus on promoting UK-Moroccan collaboration. Bringing nutrition scientists, educationalists and health practitioners from the UK and Morocco and looking at how the key nutritional challenges in Morocco can be addressed, it will offer an opportunity to link researchers/practitioners in each area from two countries, but more importantly researchers/practitioners working in different areas. The workshop will include keynote lectures, round table, research and networking sessions. Successful applicants will have the opportunity to present their research in the form of an ePoster/short oral presentation.

They are now inviting **Early Career Researchers** from the UK to apply to attend this workshop. **All travel and accommodation expenses will be covered by the Researcher Links programme**.

More details about the workshop. Applications should be sent to s.choi@soton.ac.uk before the deadline of **6th December 2013, at noon**.
Short-term opportunities by the Fulbright Commission

Please find below some short-term opportunities that the Fulbright Commission is currently promoting which are open to secondary educators and scholars as well as to postgraduate students to travel to the U.S.

**Study of the US Institutes for Secondary Educators and Scholars**
UK university faculty, secondary educators and scholars have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of US society, culture and institutions through a 6-week intensive course with immersive study programmes themed around topics including American literature, journalism and media, culture, foreign policy, religion and political thought. Applications are now open until 18 December 2013.

**American Studies Grants**
UK PhD students or early career scholars in the field of American Studies can now apply for a Fulbright grant to carry out research at any accredited higher education or cultural institution in the US for a period of 1-3 months. Applications from a wide range of academic disciplines will be welcome and the deadline to submit applications is 21 February 2014.

Further information can be found at the Fulbright Commission’s website at [www.fulbright.org.uk](http://www.fulbright.org.uk)

---

**Royal Society Leverhulme Trust Senior Research Fellowship**
(closes 8 January 2014)
This scheme is for scientists who would benefit from a period of full-time research without teaching and administrative duties.

**Royal Society-DFID Africa Capacity Building Initiative**
(closes 9 April 2014)
For scientists who want to develop collaborative research consortia between sub-Saharan Africa and a research institution in the UK.

**Dorothy Hodgkin Fellowship**
(closes 13 January 2014)
This scheme is for outstanding scientists in the UK at an early stage of their research career who require a flexible working pattern due to personal circumstances such as parenting or caring responsibilities or health issues. Female candidates are particularly invited to apply.

**Leverhulme-Royal Society Africa Award**
(closes 15 January 2014)
This scheme is for scientists who want to develop a collaborative research project between the UK and research institutions in either Ghana or Tanzania.

**South Africa-UK Scientific Seminars**
(closes 18 February 2014)
This scheme is for mid-career scientists who want to organise a small three-day scientific seminar between groups of scientists from South Africa and the UK.

**Royal Society Research Professorship**
(closes 13 March 2014)
This scheme is for world-class scientists who would benefit from a period of long-term support to allow them to focus on research and collaboration based at an institution in the UK.

**Brian Mercer Feasibility Award**
(Rolling round)
This scheme is for scientists who wish to investigate the feasibility of commercialising an aspect of their research.
Abstracts are now invited for poster submissions as part of IFST’s 50th Jubilee Conference 14-15th May 2014.

Next year IFST will be celebrating its 50th Jubilee. The overall theme of the Jubilee Conference is: “The Fantastic Future of Food: celebrating the past, looking to the future”. Sessions will span across food engineering, food law, sensory science, nutrition and food safety as well as the very latest in agri-food and processing. Posters are invited from conference attendees working on food science or nutrition related research. In addition, there will be a poster competition open to postgraduate student attendees. Abstracts are now being accepted for consideration (deadline 14th March 2014).

For more information, please visit the following website: http://www.ifst.org/upcoming_events/ifstjubileeconferencefantasticfutureoffood/

ALPRO FOUNDATION AWARD (deadline 31st Dec 2013)  www.alprofoundation.org

The Alpro Foundation continues with the yearly award for Master students (in Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany and UK).

The award of 2500€ is given in recognition of an outstanding thesis related to Plant-based and/or sustainable eating.

The submission deadline is 31 December 2013

Keywords of MSc project: plant-based eating, vegetables, fruits, pulses, beans, lupine, soya, nuts, seeds, grains, meat replacers, bioactive plant compounds (polyphenols, isoflavones, phytosterols, lignans, ...), fibres, plant protein, vegetable fats, vitamins, minerals, macronutrients, micronutrients, sustainability, eco-nutrition, environmental impact of food, food security, climate change, land and water use, food waste, obesity, cardiovascular health, cancer, nutrition behaviour, food recommendations, taste perception, satiety, ... 

STUDENT NEWS

PhD students Fei Xu and Bola Oloyede have been awarded a bursary of EUR 3000 by GIRACT as part of its 2013/14 PhD Flavor Research Programme. Many congratulations!

GIRACT is the leading transnational business research & consultancy organization specializing in food ingredients, additives and related fine chemicals and technologies. Giract’s unique and innovative programme to promote flavour research amongst PhD students in Europe across various universities and institutes has the support of 8 industrial sponsors including: DSM FOOD SPECIALTIES, GIVAUDAN, INTERNATIONAL FLAVORS & FRAGRANCES INC., KERRY INGREDIENTS & FLAVOURS, KIKKOMAN, LESAFFRE INTERNATIONAL, MARS and NESTLE. This consortium of 8 premier companies aims to raise awareness of their industry and the career opportunities in order to increase the flavour research talent pool in Europe.
PhD student **Caroline LeRoy** has been very active lately. She gave 3 talks at national and international conferences over the last 2 months:

- **‘Impact of Tiamulin on B. pilosicoli metabolism’** presented at the 6th International Conference on Colonic Spirochaetal Infections in Animals and Humans in Surrey (UK) where she received the best young scientist award. (5-6/09/2013)

- **‘Brachyspira pilosicoli infection affects the metabolic profile of chicken faeces’** presented at the 36th International Congress of the Society for Microbial Ecology and Disease last September in Kosice (Slovakia), where she was also awarded the best young scientist (see picture) (24-26/09/2013)

- **‘Brachyspira pilosicoli-induced Avian Intestinal Spirochetosis’** presented as invited speaker at the 2013 Pig Veterinary Society meeting in Birmingham (UK)

She also participated in the Biotechnology YES competition in October (BBSRC, Oxford, UK)

Tania picture here by her poster presentation

PhD students **Tania Cifuentes-Gomez** and **Charlotte Mills** attended the VI International Conference on Polyphenols and health that took place in Buenos Aires (Argentina) in October 2013.

Tania was awarded the Arthur Hosier/Meyer Sassoon Travel Award that enabled her to attend this event. She presented a poster entitled: “Initial assessment of the intra- and inter-subject variability of the absorption, metabolism and excretion of cocoa flavanols”.

Charlotte gave a presentation on “The impact of date fruit consumption on colon health and reducing the risk of colorectal cancer” and presented a poster entitled: “The beneficial vascular effects of high and low polyphenol coffees”.

Charlotte picture here by her poster presentation.
PLACEMENT & CAREERS EVENTS 2013 by Lilly Mae Liddicott (Head of Industrial Training)

“Organised well, excellent opportunity to interact with the university.” (Glaxo SmithKline)

The Department’s first Placement & Careers Event took place on Thursday 10 October. This event replaced the round of company presentations which traditionally took place during the Autumn term, and provided a platform for individual companies to inform students about industrial placement opportunities. It was felt that the former structure had outlived its usefulness and was therefore no longer effective or efficient. In introducing this radical change as part of the preparation process for industrial placement, the scope was widened to include final year students seeking graduate roles.

Company representatives from twenty companies attended the event. Stands were set up in the Pilot Plant, where representatives from a broad spectrum of the Food Industry were able to engage with students on an individual basis. Short presentations, mainly by members of the Department’s Industrial Advisory Board, were also made to students in classrooms on the second floor.

“The students are asking more questions and showing more interest compared to the usual presentation format. Good to talk one to one with students.” (Nestlé Cereal Partners)
It was a great occasion as the students’ enthusiasm was clearly evident and they were very appreciative of the opportunity to speak to the wide range of company representatives. What was also exciting was to see our students currently on placement who had returned as part of the team from their respective employing companies, fully engaging with second and third year students.

“Last week’s careers and placements event was informative, fun and interesting. It was a brilliant place to talk to past students and other industry market leaders about placements they offer within a great range of departments. It was fantastic to see my peers getting really excited and passionate about food science and what they can achieve in there industrial year. I personally found Charlie Bigham’s a really great upcoming business that I will definitely be applying to. Thanks go to Lilly Mae for organising the event and managing to get a great range of companies to attend.” (Sahadev Joshi – Food Science)

There were also Alumni present, some of whom were recent graduates. This helped to add to the air of excitement and anticipation, further motivating those students who are now applying for placements.

“…..The careers event gave a perfect opportunity to see some of these companies that might be otherwise unknown to us students as well as some names we’re all familiar with, and to get some answers to all those burning questions- what actual work might I do on placement? Will I just be a glorified tea maker or a bona fide member of the team? How do you choose a candidate from the thousands of applications you receive? And perhaps most important…. how much do you pay?!?

Putting all these companies together is like going speed dating, lots of flirting with people, get a few numbers, and then call the cutest to try and arrange a second date…. The talks were very informative, it’s so useful to hear from students currently on placement as to what the day to day work really entails, and whether or not they were actually pleased with where they were…..” (Ben Smith – Food Science with Industrial Training).

This new system will continue for the foreseeable future, for not only was it welcomed by the students, but was also well received by all the companies which participated.

“Thanks again for the opportunity to present at last week’s Student Placement Day- the level of interest and enthusiasm was great.” (Allied Technical Centre)
The Food ATP was delighted to join forces with CQSD – Teaching and Learning department to host a successful and well attended Sharing Best Practise event which was held on campus the week before the Christmas break in the Henley Business School.

Over mulled wine and mince pies the Food ATP had the opportunity to share, reflect and discuss lessons learnt from an initiative that has put flexible delivery and blended-learning at its core, to provide continuing education for industry through collaboration with another university partner.

It was an insight on just how the Food ATP have been addressing the continuing learning and education, collaborations with other HEIs, providing a mix of programmes taking advantage of the latest technology.

The event which was well received included presentations from Richard Frazier and Carol Wagstaff who both spoke of their experiences with delivering the blended learning programme and shared lessons learnt and good practice from working with industrial and affiliate partners to deliver CPD. In addition they were both joined by programme participant Chris Wells who shared his student experience of the Food ATP programme.

(From left to right) Dr Carol Wagstaff, Prof Richard Frazier and Maria Papaefthimiou (TLD) during the discussion that followed the event.

Let the success of the Food ATP continue working towards the 2026 vision for Reading!!

http://www.foodatp.co.uk/
PRESS RELEASE

Can eating watercress help fight breast cancer?

The University of Reading is playing a leading role in a new study which will examine the effects of eating watercress on breast cancer patients.

Two hundred breast cancer patients in Lisbon are taking part in an eight week dietary trial, funded by watercress producers in Portugal and the UK*, in conjunction with the University of Lisbon and the University of Santa Maria.

The women volunteers will be in the early stages of breast cancer. 100 will be in a control group, and the other 100 being asked to eat a 100g bag of fresh watercress a day over eight weeks of radiotherapy treatment. Blood samples will be taken from the volunteers and sent to the University of Reading for expert analysis after eight weeks, three months, one year and three years.

The trial, which begins during Breast Cancer Awareness Month (October), is part of an international study aimed at demonstrating the importance of a healthy diet during radiotherapy treatment. It hopes to build on previous research which has identified several compounds within watercress that may have significant cancer fighting properties.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in the UK, with about 50,000 women diagnosed each year. It is the second biggest cause of death from cancer in women, with about 12,000 losing their lives from the disease.

Ian Rowland, Professor of Human Nutrition at the University of Reading, commented: "Examining the relationship between diet and the risk of chronic disease is crucial in fighting killers such as breast cancer. This particular study will focus on the role of watercress in enhancing the body’s response to radiotherapy as well as protecting against skin damage, sometimes an unfortunate side effect of radiotherapy. If the diet is shown to be effective, the results will be shared with other health professionals to highlight the importance of maintaining a healthy diet when undergoing radiotherapy."

While at the University of Ulster, Coleraine, Professor Rowland led a 2007 study which showed that eating watercress daily can play a role in cancer prevention. The study showed watercress can significantly reduce DNA damage to blood cells and increase the ability of those cells to resist further DNA damage.

Watercress is grown in mineral rich spring water, drawn from deep under the Chalk Downs of Hampshire, Dorset and Wiltshire. Gram for gram it contains more iron than spinach, more vitamin C than oranges, more calcium than milk, more vitamin E than broccoli and more folate than bananas.

The curative properties of watercress have been revered down the centuries; Hippocrates, the father of medicine, is said to have located his first hospital close to a spring to ensure a supply of fresh watercress to help treat his patients, Greek soldiers were given it as a tonic before going into battle and the 16th Century herbalist Culpepper claimed it could cleanse the blood.
Baking blueberries changes their polyphenol content — and possibly their health benefits (ACS News Service Weekly PressPac: October 30, 2013)

Blueberries are called a “superfood” for their high polyphenol content, but when served as warm, gooey pie filling or when lending bursts of sweet flavor to a muffin, their “super” health benefits change. Scientists studied how cooking and baking affect the increasingly popular fruit’s polyphenols and reported their mixed findings — levels of some of these substances rose while others fell — in ACS’ Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry.

Dr Ana Rodriguez-Mateos and colleagues note that eating blueberries is associated with several health perks including improved thinking, reduced risk for heart disease and reduced inflammation. Research suggests that a set of natural plant compounds called polyphenols lend the fresh fruit these benefits. But consumers don’t always enjoy blueberries raw. Some methods of processing, such as juicing and canning, lower polyphenol levels by 22 to 81 percent. However, no studies have tested whether using blueberries in breads, muffins or pies affects their polyphenol content. Rodriguez-Mateos’ team sought to test the stability of these health-promoting compounds during cooking, proofing (when the dough rises before cooking) and baking.

They found that all three processes had mixed effects on blueberries’ polyphenols including anthocyanin, procyanidin, quercetin and phenolic acids. Anthocyanin levels dropped by 10 to 21 percent. The levels of smaller procyanidin oligomers got a boost while those of the larger ones dipped. Phenolic acid levels increased. Other compounds such as quercetin remained constant. They say that the good retention of polyphenols observed in their study might be due to the use of yeast, which may act as a stabilizing agent during baking. “Due to their possible health benefits, a better understanding of the impact of processing is important to maximize the retention of these phytochemicals in berry-containing-products,” the researchers state.

The authors cite funding from the Alpro Foundation

Impact of Cooking, Proving, and Baking on the (Poly)phenol Content of Wild Blueberry (Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry)
OTHER NEWS

FUNDRAISING EVENT

On the 18th of October the Department of Food and Nutritional Sciences hold a “COFFEE and CAKE” fundraising event to help HEART UK to raise funds during National Cholesterol Week (14-20th October), hoping to improve the Childrens Audiology Unit waiting room at the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

You will be happy to know that we managed to raise £116.45

A special thank you to Kim for organising such a successful event and to Julie, Rada, Zoe, Maria, Yichuan, Karen, Tanya, Adele, Amanda and Kate for making some lovely cakes and biscuits.
PROFESSOR’S CHRISTMAS LUNCH

And once again we couldn’t finish the year without our traditional Professor’s Christmas Lunch held on the 18th Dec in the Pilot Plant where all our well renowned Professors put their science to the “taste”.

The celebration started with the “famous punch” full of secret ingredients!!! We were advised to leave the cars at home!!

We then moved on to the traditional turkey lunch with roast potatoes, sausages, sprouts, carrots, parsnips, stuffing & gravy…followed by desserts (Christmas muffins and a surprise) for those who had any room left.

To add to the fun of the festivities this year there was a light hearted quiz during dessert (charged at £1 per head to be given to the Philippines disaster appeal). The quiz included music, science, sports and Christmas themed questions.

Dr Alistair Grandison, “the organiser”
We all teamed up and the winners were ........

“tasty tit-bits”

Merry Christmas to all  !!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The Winners!!!!!
RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Latest peer-reviewed publications from members of the Department of Food and Nutritional Sciences:


SEASON’S GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES FOR 2014