

News

The following news items illustrate some of our activities during the last 3 months. 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>

19 December 2007: Postgraduate award presented at the Departmental Christmas Lunch

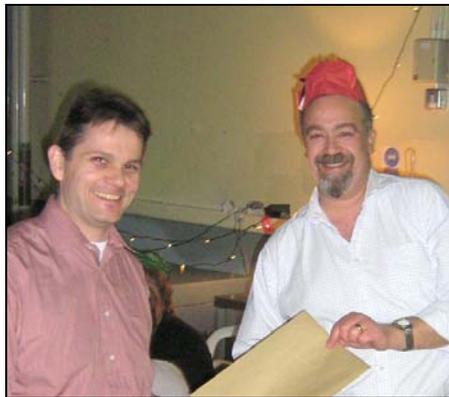
It has become an annual feature of the Department – a time when the professors show their thanks to the Departmental staff and to the researchers who work here.

Today the Professors' Christmas Lunch has once again be held in the food processing hall of the Food Biosciences Building. About 100 staff and researchers were treated to an excellent spread of hot and cold food cooked and served by the professors. A great time was had by all!

Professor Bob Rastall, on the occasion of his first Christmas lunch as Head of Department, was able to present a new award. Yakult have provided a £200 prize for the student, judged by the Department, to be the outstanding post-graduate student of the year. Selected for the award this year was Trevor George who has been undertaking his PhD research supervised by Dr Julie Lovegrove.

It has been a busy year for Trevor. The following are some of the highlights:

- Oral presentations at the Department's Research Day, at the Nutrition Society Summer Meeting in Coleraine and at the Oxford Nutrition Society Meeting (where



he won the prize for best student presentation).

- Active participation in the 2nd International Symposium on Human Health Effects of Fruits and Vegetables (<http://favhealth2007.tamu.edu>), which took place in Texas in October. He gave an oral presentation, co-chaired the session on Isolation and Characterization of Bioactive Compounds and chaired the opponent group at the graduate student luncheon.
- Presented a poster at NuGO Week in Oslo and was named on three abstracts presented (in his absence) at the 3rd International Conference on Polyphenols and Health in Kyoto in November.
- Initiated the formation of the in vivo endothelial assessment group within the Nutrition Group this year.

Congratulations to Trevor from us all!

7 December 2007: Professor Rowland addresses international conferences in France and Italy

Professor Ian Rowland has been having a busy time recently. On the 6th and 7th December he was in Lille, France, where he attended the Societe Francaise de Nutrition (SFN) Congress being held in collaboration with the UK Nutrition Society.

Professor Rowland chaired one of the sessions and also presented a paper entitled "Potential for dietary prevention of colorectal cancer". Also at the meeting was Professor Ian Givens from Reading's Department of Animal Science who presented a paper entitled "Current intakes of EPA and DHA in European populations and the potential of animal derived foods to increase them."

Previously in November, Professor Rowland had been invited to attend the International Yakult Symposium on "The Gut, Immune Modulation and Probiotics" which has held in Verona Italy on the 22nd and 23rd. On this occasion, Professor Rowland's paper was entitled "Probiotics and cancer – from in vitro to human studies".

4 December 2007: Flavour chemistry at Reading features in BBC TV "In Search of Perfection" food programme

The Department's flavour chemistry laboratory was featured in tonight's episode of Heston Blumenthal's new series "In Search of Perfection".

The programme described how to make the perfect chilli con carne. One of the ingredients was Jack Daniel's bourbon.



During the programme Heston was seen using a gas chromatograph and mass spectrometer in the flavour laboratory to examine the aroma components of the bourbon. Professor Don Mottram, Professor of Food Chemistry appeared with Heston and explained how the aromas were analysed and identified.

The book which accompanies the series also has a section in which Don and Heston describe the importance of aroma in determining the characteristic flavour of foods.

Heston Blumenthal was awarded an honorary DSc by the University of Reading in 2006 and has regular contact with the Department of Food Biosciences for discussions on food science and his passion for understanding the science behind food preparation.

Professor Mottram is becoming quite a celebrity! He has also been featured in November's issue of the Waitrose food magazine in which he discusses the work of food scientists in flavour research.

4 December 2007: Presentation of industrial awards to support our undergraduates

Although the introduction of student fees in October 2006 will have increased the financial burden for students, the food industry has recognised that they have a responsibility to help maintain the provision of good quality food science and technology graduates.

As the UK's largest trainer of food science and technology graduates, the University of Reading welcomes such support. We are pleased to report events linked to two such schemes.

On 27 November, 10 of our first year students were presented with

sponsorship cheques of £1000 each from Northern Foods. They will receive a further £1000 for each of the taught years of their course. They were selected by Northern Foods on the basis of an application form. The scheme is expected to run for at least five years in the first instance.

On 4 December, two different first years students, Lilian Lau (BSc Nutrition and Food Science) and Elizabeth Graham (BSc Food Science) were presented with sponsorship cheques of £1100 by Dr Phil Camburn of GSK. They also will receive similar sponsorship for the second and final years of their course.

28 November 2007: Strong presence at polyphenol and health conference in Japan

The Department sent a large delegation to this week's 3rd International Conference on Polyphenols and Health. The conference has been held at Kyoto International Conference Center, Japan.

The delegation was made up of several researchers from Dr Jeremy Spencer's research team who were able to present several aspects of the group's work. These included Xenofon Tzounis, Vanessa Clarke, Susie Pollard, Dr David Vauzour, Dr Ana Rodriguez Mateos and Dr Katerina Vafeiadou. Jeremy presented a paper entitled 'Molecular mechanisms underlying the cognitive effects of polyphenols'.

Also there was Professor Mike Gordon who presented two posters along with his research assistant Paulina Garcia. The posters covered results of a dietary intervention study and the results of a study looking at the role of UV light in increasing polyphenol content in fruits and vegetables.

25 November 2007: Sainsbury's awards scholarships to outstanding students

With the need for food science and technology graduates to help ensure the safety and quality of their foods, Sainsbury's has strong links with our Department. One such link is through sponsorship of students.

At the end of the first year, the three students gaining the highest marks receive an initial award. This year these awards went to Sarah Phang, Nicola Martin and Sonam Nair for their results during 2006-2007. The photograph shows all three students being presented with their awards during a ceremony in October. Representing Sainsbury's was one of their senior technologists - Mr Peter Holland - who is also one of our graduates!

The Sainsbury's scheme can lead to a future career with the company. All three gained an automatic invitation to a Sainsbury's Assessment Centre where they would be considered for a full year's placement between their courses' second and third year.

We are now delighted to report that Sonam Nair, a Food Technology student, has been selected by the company for one of these placements. She will also receive sponsorship of £3000 for her second year. If the placement is successful, placement students get another £3000 in their final year and an offer of a permanent job on graduation, with the additional opportunity of being considered for the Sainsbury's 'Taste the World Scheme'.



22 November 2007: Food Society Winter Formal at the Jazz Café

The Food Society held its main event of the year tonight. This was a Black and White themed Dinner Party at The Jazz Café at the Madejski Stadium.

The evening featured a champagne reception, followed by an excellent three course dinner, roulette, music and dancing, and finally came to an end in the small hours of the next morning.

Pictured are the survivors who made it to the end of the night/morning.



The Food Society is run by undergraduate students in the department and organises social events and visits to industry, trade shows and exhibitions. The society is currently led by a committee of four second year BSc Food Science students (Sam Hyde, Jim Goodson, Scott Burrell, Nicky Martin) and one final year student (Hazel Tang) who were responsible for tonight's event and for raising sponsorship from Rowse Honey and Dairygold Food Ingredients.

15 November 2007: British Council fund research link with Russian University

The Department has been successful in seeking funding under the British Council BRIDGE programme.

The award will enable collaboration between our Department and the Applied Biotechnology Department, North Caucasus State Technical University. The funding will enable research into functional foods based on traditional fermented milks.

The primary goal of the 1 year project is to establish research cooperation between the Applied Biotechnology Department, North Caucasus State Technical University Stavropol, Russia and Reading in the field of biotechnology and to disseminate the sound knowledge on probiotics and prebiotics based on the results of joint investigations. Professor Ian Rowland will be leading the collaboration from our Department.

The scientific aims of the collaborative project are to isolate and identify potentially beneficial bacteria from fermented milk products traditional for Russia such as kefir, ayran and others and to screen isolates for biological

activity including anti-pathogenic activity, short chain fatty acid production, immunomodulating and anti-cancer effects. In addition, it is proposed to investigate prebiotics such as oligosaccharides from chitosan and lactitol for beneficial effects, especially in combination with probiotics.

19 October 2007: Traceability and product recall issues considered at Beijing conference

Dr David Jukes, Senior Lecturer in Food Regulation has today been addressing an international meeting in Beijing, China.

The two-day conference has been organised by the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CASS) and was on the topic of "Certification and Traceability for Food Safety and Quality".

The conference marked the end of a project, jointly funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture, Michigan State University and the CAAS which examined the effects of third-party certification on Chinese food policy.

Dr Jukes had been invited to present a European perspective on the issues being considered by the conference. His paper was entitled "Traceability and Product Recall - the EU Regulatory Framework." He was also asked to chair a session of the programme.



13 October 2007: Postgraduates present research results at international conference in Texas

It has been a busy week for 3 of our postgraduate researchers. Trevor George,

Chutamat Niwat and Saran Waroonphan have been attending the 2nd International Symposium on Human Health Effects of Fruits and Vegetables Conference. The conference has been running all week in Houston, Texas, USA.

Each session of the conference included a graduate student as a co-chair and all three of our representatives were asked to act in this capacity. Sara Waroonphan acted as co-chair for the session on 'Cardiovascular Disease & Diabetes Prevention'. Chutamat Niwat and Trevor George both co-chaired separate sessions on 'Isolation and Characterization of Bioactive Compounds'.

Their work was also presented in both the oral papers and in the poster session. Trevor George presented the paper 'Effects of chronic and acute fruit and vegetable juice consumption on cardiovascular disease risk factors' written by himself with Chutamat Niwat, Saran Waroonphan, Professor Michael Gordon and Dr Julie Lovegrove (all from the Department) and Dr Elaine Paterson (from the University of Bedfordshire). Two posters were displayed:

- 'Effect of an acute flavonoid-rich juice intervention on postprandial plasma antioxidant status' Chutamat Niwat, Trevor W. George, Professor Michael Gordon and Dr Julie Lovegrove
- 'Phytochemical contents and antioxidant activity of red leaf lettuce compared with 3 varieties of soft fruits' Saran Waroonphan, Paulina Garcia-Macias, Professor Michael Gordon, and Dr Julie Lovegrove. Pauline is from the School of Plant Sciences at Reading and has been one of the collaborators in this work

8 October 2007: A new year starts with a further encouraging increase in recruitment

Today we welcome our new students to the first day of their courses with us. During Freshers' Week, last week, we got to know many of them during introductory meetings. But today their real work starts.

It has been another successful year for our admissions with our recruitment efforts showing significant results. Out

undergraduate intake has maintained last years enhanced level with 55 new Part 1 students joining us. These are spread over all our courses with BSc Food Science and BSc Nutrition and Food Science remaining the most popular courses.

In addition, we have also recruited suitably qualified students direct into the Part 2 of our courses. Most of these are the result of our link with Henan University in China from where we have recruited an additional 20 students. These join the 16 students who started last year and who will now be moving into Part 3.

Our MSc courses are also continuing to be popular. At current numbers we have recruited 57 new MSc students to our 3 MSc courses – an increase of about 40% over last year. Most popular is our MSc Food Technology Quality Assurance which has this year risen to 29 students. The majority of our MSc students are once again international and this year we have students from 24 different countries: Austria, British, Brunei, China, Cyprus, Ghana, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Japan, Lebanon, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Tanzania, Thailand and Uganda.

We also welcome back our returning students. We wish all our students the best for the coming year.



On this occasion his visit was more formal and he was accompanied by several officials from the Ministry in Indonesia and from the Embassy in London. The Minister gave a Seminar on Sustainable Palm Oil Production in Indonesia. Subsequent discussions identified a number of possible areas for future research collaboration. In particular, the expertise of the Department will be able to provide opportunities for studies linked to some of the by-products of palm oil manufacture.

The delegation from the Ministry of Agriculture included:

- Dr. Djoko Said Damardjati, DG for Farm Products Marketing,

Department of Agriculture

- Mrs. Yusni Emilia Harahap, Special Advisor to the Minister
- Dr. Abdul Munif, Secretary to the Minister
- Mrs. Rosediana Suharto, Chairwoman to Indonesia Palm Oil Commission

The Embassy was represented by:

- Mr. Dewa Made J. Sastrawan, Charge d'Affaires ad interim
- Mr. Mayuzar Adamy, First Secretary
- Mr. Iman Santosa, Second Secretary/Protocol Officer
- Mrs Rima Cempaka, Third Secretary

It was also not the first visit for Rima Cempaka - she had gained our MSc Food Technology Quality Assurance several years ago.



3 October 2007: The Minister of Agriculture for Indonesia visits the Department

The Department has today been honoured to host a visit from His Excellency Dr Anton Apriyantono, Minister of Agriculture, Republic of Indonesia.

It was however not the Minister's first visit to us – he studied for his PhD with us from 1988 to 1992 and subsequently, in 1998, spent 6 months with us as an Academic Visitor. He was appointed Minister in 2004.

Our Degree Programmes

The Department of Food Biosciences offers the following programmes:

- BSc Food Science;
- BSc Nutrition and Food Science;
- BSc Food Technology;
- BSc Biotechnology;
- BSc Food Science with Business

- MSc Food Science;
- MSc Food Technology Quality Assurance;
- MSc Nutrition and Food Science

- PhD, MPhil - Research degrees

For full details, visit our web site at:
<http://www.reading.ac.uk/foodbiosciences/>