

## **PlantSci Newsletter – a monthly round-up of plant science policy headlines and stories**

December 2017

### **News**

#### **Plant health and biosecurity**

##### **[‘Saving our Oak’ highlights the challenge of Acute Oak Decline](#)**

The plight of our most iconic native tree, the oak, is the subject of a new film released by the charity, Woodland Heritage, today.

##### **[Pioneering tree health partnership to continue thanks to funding boost](#)**

An award-winning partnership which has identified 1,046 cases of tree pest and disease across the UK is set to continue.

#### **Agriculture**

##### **[Neonicotinoids at 'chronic levels' in UK rivers, study finds](#)**

##### **[Transforming food production from farm to fork](#)**

To put the UK at the forefront of a global revolution in farming is the bold ambition stated in the UK's recent Industrial Strategy White Paper.

#### **Forestry**

##### **[EU must not burn the world's forests for 'renewable' energy](#)**

A flaw in Europe's clean energy plan allows fuel from felled trees to qualify as renewable energy when in fact this would accelerate climate change and devastate forests

## Food security

### [Can a GM banana solve Uganda's hunger crisis?](#)

A law paving the way for GM crops is aimed at tackling the acute food shortages faced by almost 11 million Ugandans, despite experts' fears over the technology

### [Moving beyond the green revolution in Africa's new era of hunger](#)

A quarter of the world's hungry people are in sub-Saharan Africa and the numbers are growing.

## Biodiversity and Conservation

### [It's not asking the earth for independent watchdog to fill EU gap](#)

Michael Gove must deliver on his promise to give 'the environment a voice' to ensure short-term politics do not interfere with the natural world

### [IUCN Red List: Wild crops listed as threatened](#)

### [Probably the world's heaviest living organism described in 2017?](#)

Kew scientist Gwilym Lewis describes his involvement in and the process of discovering a new tree species in Brazil, as tall as a 12 storey building and as heavy as a sperm whale!

### [Researchers shine a spotlight on illegal wild orchid trade](#)

Large-scale commercial trade of wild orchids is a pressing, but little-recognized conservation problem, according to researchers.

## Sustainability

### [Turning sunlight to sustainable fuel: Commission launches EIC Horizon Prize for Artificial Photosynthesis](#)

The European Commission has launched the second of six European Innovation Council (EIC) Horizon Prizes, on Artificial Photosynthesis, run under Horizon 2020, the EU's research and innovation programme.

### [Hutton soil scientists help develop first Global Soil Organic Carbon Map](#)

Soil scientists from the the James Hutton Institute, along with colleagues at Cranfield University, Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, have contributed to the development of the first Global Soil Organic Matter map.

## Other news

### [EU and Gates Foundation pledge €500 million for innovations in agriculture](#)

The European Union together with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation pledged on Tuesday (12 December) more than €500 million over the next three years for research and innovation in agriculture.

### [Botanical exploits: How British plant hunters served science](#)

## People

### [Major award recognises UK and global impact of wheat scientist](#)

World-leading wheat scientist, Dr Cristobal Uauy, has been awarded the prestigious Research Medal by The Royal Agricultural Society of England (RASE).

### [From lab bench to back bench – TSL scientist visits the seat of power](#)

The Sainsbury Laboratory researcher Dr Marina Pais is spending a week in Westminster in a scheme to bring together the worlds of policymakers and scientists.

## Opportunities

### [BBSRC's Innovator of the Year 2018 competition accepting applications](#)

Now celebrating its 10th year, BBSRC's Innovator of the Year annually recognises and rewards individuals and small teams who have harnessed the potential of their excellent research.

### [BBSRC NIBB Phase II](#)

Registration deadline for the community meeting: 5 January 2018, 17:00

### [RSB travel grants](#)

Student and early-career members of the Royal Society of Biology can now apply for a travel grant of £500 to support future overseas travel in connection with biological study, teaching or research. Further details on eligibility can be found the Society's website. Applications close on 1st March 2018.

## Consultations

### [Evaluation of the EU's Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change](#)

Closes 1 March 2018

## Events

### [Rethinking British Agricultural Systems - Linking agri-science to post Brexit UK agricultural policy](#)

The meeting will bring together leading authorities on farming systems, agricultural economics, agriculture policy, agroecology, food chains and political science to explore how Brexit may be used as an opportunity to (metaphorically) pause and consider how UK agriculture might be shaped to better fulfil the needs of the British community.

30 January 2018, London

### [Seminar on policy priorities for the UK food and farming industry](#)

This seminar will bring together key policymakers and stakeholders to discuss policy priorities for the food and farming sectors, as the government negotiates the UK's future relationship with the EU.

1 February 2018, London

### [New to Teaching Bioscience in Higher Education](#)

A workshop event from the Heads of University Biosciences (HUBS) and the Royal Society of Biology for newcomers and relative newcomers to university teaching. This one-day workshop event is designed to cater for the specific needs of bioscience colleagues who have reached a career stage in which they are called on to provide lectures and other university teaching but who are yet to (or have only recently been) appointed to substantive academic posts. It will also be of interest to researchers, postgraduates, hourly paid staff and visiting lecturers.

21 February 2018, Reading

For the full events list, please see the [UKPSF website](#).

## And finally...

### [Anesthetics have the same effects on plants as they have on animals and humans](#)

A new study published in Annals of Botany shows that plants react to anesthetics similarly to the way animals and humans do, suggesting plants are ideal objects for testing anesthetics actions in future.

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Please note that any views or opinions presented in this email are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Royal Society of Biology.

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