

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

February 2018

### **News**

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

##### **[First report in decades of a forgotten crop pathogen calls for critical close monitoring](#)**

Scientists, breeders, farmers and conservation groups must continue to work in close collaboration to prepare for the potential re-emergence of a forgotten crop pathogen, a new study advises today.

##### **[Biosecurity at Highgrove](#)**

The horticultural and arboricultural world seems have to been beset by one wave of pest and disease after another.

##### **[Battling to save the world's bananas](#)**

#### **Agriculture**

##### **[Post-Brexit farm payments to be used to help the environment](#)**

##### **[Once-in-a-generation opportunity to shape future farming policy](#)**

Reducing direct payments could free up £150 million for the environment and other public goods.

##### **[Stripes of wildflowers across farm fields could cut pesticide spraying](#)**

The stripy fields have been planted across England as part of a trial to boost the natural predators of pests that attack cereal crops.

##### **[Business Secretary calls for new tech revolution in agriculture](#)**

Business Secretary Greg Clark announces £90 million for agri-tech in a keynote speech to the National Farmers' Union Conference.

### [Academics and Environment groups give evidence on Nitrates](#)

The Environmental Audit Committee holds the first evidence session for its nitrates inquiry.

### [A Brighter Future for Farming](#)

Secretary of State Michael Gove sets out the direction of travel for our farming industry at the NFU Farming Conference 2018.

## **Food security**

### [Scientists are breeding super-nutritious crops to help solve global hunger](#)

Scientists are looking at ways to biofortify crops in order to help undernourished children across the world.

## **Forestry**

### [A eureka moment for the planet: we're finally planting trees again](#)

After centuries of bad stewardship, communities are at last starting to see the benefits of forests.

## **Business and industry**

### [Food and Drink Sector Council meets for first time](#)

The new group will work together to boost skills, productivity and make the industry more competitive.

### [Bayer makes new offers to convince Commission about Monsanto deal](#)

Bayer has decided to make new concessions and sell seeds and pesticides businesses in an effort to address EU competition concerns over its €51.1 billion bid for US rival Monsanto.

### [French seed group says GMO protests could force R&D relocation](#)

Limagrain, the world's fourth-largest seed maker, will consider moving its research activities out of France if field trials in its home market continue to be sabotaged by opponents of genetically modified crops.

## **Biodiversity and conservation**

### [Arctic stronghold of world's seeds reaches one million mark](#)

### [Travelling to China to discuss Begonia biodiversity](#)

Thanks to the generous support of the Royal Society of Biology, I was able to attend the 19th International Botanical Congress (IBC) in Shenzhen, China, this July.

## Sustainability

### [Britain and Europe must ban palm oil in biofuel to save forests, EU parliament told](#)

Forest peoples affected by plantations urge EU to enact ban despite diplomatic opposition.

## Opportunities

### [Royal Society of Biology Photography Competition 2018](#)

'Patterns in nature' is the theme of this year's Royal Society of Biology Photography Competition. Life on Earth encompasses a myriad of regular forms, sequences and structures and we invite you to capture these details of biology. Supported by Eppendorf, there are two categories each with a cash prize: 18 (£1000) and under 18s (£500). Entries close on 31st July 2018. Please contact [Raghav Selvam](#) with any enquires.

## Consultations

### [Public consultation on an EU initiative for pollinators](#)

Closes 5 April 2018.

### [The future for food, farming and the environment](#)

The Government is seeking views on its proposals for future agricultural policy in England.

Closes 8 May 2017

## Events

### [Driving Engagement, Innovation and Impact in Plant Science](#)

Through the development of innovative solutions, plant science can help drive productivity and sustainability across the bioeconomy. This interactive workshop will bring together plant scientists, social researchers and innovators to explore novel approaches and learning from other sectors, and thus facilitate more effective co-design, knowledge exchange and public understanding. KTN will also be launching its pre-competitive R&D vision for the agricultural sector at this event.

Sheffield, 27 March 2018

### [The 2018 City Food Policy Symposium – Connecting people with food policy](#)

The 2018 City Food Policy Symposium will explore how gathering evidence of lived experiences of food challenges - how citizens and communities experience, explain and respond to them - can inform more effective, equitable and empowering policy solutions.

London, 25 April 2018

### **Plant Biology Europe 2018**

PBE is jointly organized by FESBP and EPSO, as a result of a merger between the previous individual EPSO and FESBP conferences. With a multidisciplinary approach to plant science in a global context, the conference aims to collect speakers and presentations that cover wide ranging scientific and policy related themes within plant science, thereby showcasing state-of-the-art scientific developments and contributions to policy shaping towards plants science at the European and national levels.  
18-21 June, Copenhagen

### **Advances in plant reproduction – from gametes to seeds**

30 June – 1 July 2018, Florence

### **SEB Florence 2018**

Discover the art of creating extraordinary science at SEB's Annual Meeting in Florence, Italy from 3 – 6 July 2018 at the Firenze Fiera Congress and Exhibition Centre.

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

## **And finally...**

### **Venus flytraps don't eat the insects that pollinate them**

While most people are familiar with Venus flytraps and their snapping jaws, there is still a lot that scientists don't know about the biology of these carnivorous plants.

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