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

January 2018

### News

#### Plant health and biosecurity

[Global register lists alien species](#)

#### Agriculture

[Farming for the next generation](#)

Secretary of State Michael Gove sets out his vision on the future of our farming industry at the Oxford Farming Conference 2018.

[Farmland could turn into meadows after Brexit, says Michael Gove](#)

Gove will tell farmers that the current subsidy regime, which rewards land ownership, will be replaced by a scheme focused on supporting the environment.

[‘Productivity revolution’ needed to feed the nation and protect environment, says AHDB](#)

A revolution in agricultural productivity will be needed – and fast – if we are to capitalise on Brexit, continue to feed ourselves as a nation and protect the environment.

[Commission expects clarity on GM scope from court ruling on plant breeding techniques](#)

The European Commission expects “important” clarity on the scope of GMO legislation ahead of a Court ruling on new plant breeding techniques, an EU spokesperson told EURACTIV.com following the release of an Advocate General’s first opinion.

### [UK honey: Study finds one in five samples contain neonicotinoids](#)

One in five samples of UK honey were found to contain neonicotinoid pesticide residues following the introduction of the EU-wide ban on the use of neonicotinoid pesticide seed dressings on flowering crops.

### [EU renews toxic pesticide amid safety uncertainty](#)

The European Commission and the member states have extended once again the authorisation for copper sulphate, a controversial pesticide used in organic farming, which is on the EU's "substitution" list and its effects on consumers are still unknown.

### [The latest cutting-edge technology changing our landscapes? Trees](#)

The UK has been slow to embrace agroforestry, fearing trees compete for valuable space and water. In fact they can increase crop diversity as well as profits, as two pioneering Cambridgeshire farmers have found.

## **Forestry**

### [New Northern Forest gets Government backing](#)

The Prime Minister has announced plans for a new Northern Forest as part of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan.

## **Biodiversity and Conservation**

### [Plantwatch: from snowdrops to rare orchids – plant theft is a crime](#)

Some of our favourite wildflowers are threatened by thieves digging up the bulbs, and thieves have made at least one orchid extinct in Britain.

### [Insect declines: new alarm over mayfly is 'tip of iceberg', warn experts](#)

Modest pollution in many English rivers is enough to kill 80% of eggs, increasing concerns over insects which are vital to all ecosystems.

## **Sustainability**

### [Government's vision for a greener future launched](#)

Today the government has published its 25 Year Environment Plan.

### [EU Parliament ends palm oil and caps crop-based biofuels at 2017 levels](#)

The European Parliament decided today (17 January) to phase-out palm oil by 2021 and cap crop-based biofuels at the member states' 2017 consumption levels and no more than 7% of all transport fuels until 2030.

## Other news

### [The lost art of looking at plants](#)

Advances in genomics and imaging are reviving a fading discipline.

### [Kew Gardens' Temperate House to reopen after £41m restoration](#)

Rare plants among hundreds of specimens being planted in new beds at world's largest surviving Victorian glasshouse.

## People

### [From green bench to lab bench – MP visits TSL](#)

Norman Lamb MP, chair of the Science and Technology Select Committee, swapped the green benches of the House of Commons for the lab benches of The Sainsbury Laboratory on a visit to Norwich Research Park.

### [NIAB chief Tina Barsby awarded OBE in New Year's Honours List](#)

Dr Tina Barsby, CEO of Cambridge-based crop science organisation NIAB, has been awarded an OBE in the 2018 New Year Honours List for services to agricultural science and biotechnology.

## Opinion

### [Our food system is broken. Here are 3 ways to fix it](#)

Productive grain fields mask the fact the food system is unsustainable and in need of transformation.

## Opportunities

### [Breakthrough Technologies to Advance Crop Breeding](#)

This opportunity aims to make high impact changes in the ability to translate basic knowledge of plant genomics to practical outcomes in crops of economic importance to the participating countries.

Outline application deadline: 14 March 2018, 22:00 GMT

### [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: 1 March 2018

### [Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Postdoctoral Fellowships](#)

The Postdoctoral Fellowship for Foreign Researchers (Long Term) provides the opportunity for researchers based outside of Japan to conduct collaborative research activities with leading research groups at Japanese universities and research institutions for visits of between 12 to 24 months.

Application deadline: 13 March 2018

## Consultations

### [Brexit science and innovation Summit inquiry](#)

Closes 5 February 2018

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

Closes 1 March 2018

### [Public consultation on EU funds in the area of migration](#)

Closes 8 March 2018

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

Closes 5 April 2018

### [Public Consultation on the Establishment of the Innovation Fund](#)

Closes 10 April 2018

## Events

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

A one-day workshop event from the Heads of University Biosciences (HUBS) and the Royal Society of Biology for newcomers and relative newcomers to university teaching.

21 February 2018, Reading

### [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.

27 March 2018

### [Advances in plant reproduction – from gametes to seeds](#)

30 June – 1 July 2018, Florence, Italy

### [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...

### [Solving Darwin's 'abominable mystery': How flowering plants conquered the world](#)

Scientists have found an explanation for how flowering plants became dominant so rapidly in ecosystems across the world -- a problem that Charles Darwin called an 'abominable mystery'.

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