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

November 2017

News

Plant health and biosecurity

Saving Cavendish: QUT grows world-first Panama disease-resistant bananas
Queensland University of Technology (QUT) researchers have developed and grown modified Cavendish bananas resistant to the devastating soil-borne fungus *Fusarium* wilt tropical race 4 (TR4), also known as Panama disease.

Agriculture

UK will back total ban on bee-harming pesticides, Michael Gove reveals
Research leads environment secretary to overturn government's previous opposition, making total EU ban much more likely.

EU settles dispute over major weedkiller glyphosate

UK must grow more food sustainably, says government plan
Food and farming is a key focus in the government's new industrial strategy, with a clear commitment to invest heavily in sustainable agriculture.

Translation, translation, translation
Rothamsted Research has set out agriculture's role in winning success for the government's strategy to make the UK the best place in the world to invest in life sciences.

Business and industry

Genetically modified apple reaches US stores, but will consumers bite?
Success for the 'Arctic apple' could herald a new wave of lab-grown foods.

Forestry

New £5 million fund to create and restore woodlands
£5 million will be invested in woodlands through the spine of England, from London to the West Midlands, following today's launch of the HS2 Woodland Fund.

Bright future for Forestry Commission in England
The Environment Minister has announced new arrangements for the Forestry Commission in England.

European forests might not be realizing their full potential
European forest managers can have their cake and eat it, because according to a new study maximizing timber production in a forest does not necessarily have to come at a cost of reduced species diversity or the capacity to regulate climate change by the same forest.

Food security

FAO boss: Half of world's population will be malnourished by 2030
More than a half of the global population will suffer some form of malnutrition by 2030 unless urgent action is taken to improve access to high-quality food, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has told G7 health ministers.

Small group scoops international effort to sequence huge wheat genome
Just six scientists conquer one of the most complicated genomes ever read.

Seeds hold hidden treasures for future food

Swapping where crops are grown could feed an extra 825 million people
Redrawing the global map of crop distribution on existing farmland could help meet growing demand for food and biofuels in coming decades, while significantly reducing water stress in agricultural areas, according to a new study.

Biodiversity and Conservation

Brexit: Environment watchdog planned says Gove

Farmland bird decline prompts renewed calls for agriculture overhaul
Official figures show a 9% decline between 2010-15 in birds living and breeding on the UK's farmland.

Sustainability

[Sustainable Bioenergy: managing and understanding the environmental risks and benefits](#)
Dr Jeanette Whitaker, Knowledge Exchange Fellow, discusses some of the issues raised in a new GCB Bioenergy paper on bioenergy and land-use change.

Other news

[Unlocking the Microbiome – Microbiology Society Report Published](#)
The Microbiology Society has published its latest science policy report, Unlocking the Microbiome, which explores opportunities and challenges of the rapidly developing field of microbiome science for health, agriculture and food, environment and biotechnology.

People

[World-class science recognised as four TSL scientists make prestigious "highly-cited" list](#)
Four of the "World's Most Influential Scientific Minds" are scientists from The Sainsbury Laboratory, Norwich, who have recently been recognized for the impact of their work.

[Distinguished role model for women in science receives global award](#)
A world-leading Norfolk plant scientist is today named as a 2018 L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science laureate.

Opinion

[Forget rice, dish up Aztec pigweed to help feed the world](#)
Prince Charles has founded an organisation to find lost crops that could allow for a sustainable future.

Opportunities

[One Health Conference](#)
Call for Abstracts: deadline 15 February

[Science Podcasting Workshop](#)
26 February: Award-winning science broadcaster Richard Hollingham presents this introductory hands-on course on how to podcast - from getting good quality sound and content - to getting your podcast online and heard.

Consultations

Public consultation on pharmaceuticals in the environment
The consultation seeks views on possible actions to address the risks from pharmaceuticals in the environment.
Closes: 21 February 2018

Events

BBSRC/Defra/NERC Workshop on sustainable intensification – Building on our research foundations
BBSRC, Defra and NERC, in partnership with the Sustainable Intensification Research Network (SIRN), are holding a workshop for researchers with interests in or expertise relevant to the sustainable intensification (SI) of agriculture. This workshop aims to build on the legacy of Defra's Sustainable Intensification Platform (SIP) and provide opportunities to link with other current sustainable intensification activities.
28 February and 1 March 2018, Leamington Spa

For the full events list, please see the **UKPSF website.**

And finally...

Pants reveal hidden world of soil
Morayshire monitor farmers Iain, Laura and Jemma Green revealed the results of their #soilmyundies experiment at a meeting for local farmers recently.

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