

Science Policy Newsletter – a weekly round-up of policy headlines and stories

1 March 2018

News

Top stories

[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.

[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.

[Gyimah: UK wants to be in EU research 'but not at any price'](#)

Minister says he will 'fight' to ensure scientists can move freely post-Brexit.

Royal Society of Biology news

[RSB responds to recommendation to allocate funds to improving animal health and welfare](#)

The Royal Society of Biology has today responded to recommendations that future farming policy should include allocated funding dedicated to ensuring the improved health and welfare of animals.

[Higher Education Bioscience Teacher of the Year 2018 shortlist announced](#)

Three educators have been selected for the final round of this year's HE Bioscience Teacher of the Year award.

[The Royal Society of Biology responded to the Environmental Audit Committee inquiry into the Government's 25-Year Plan for the Environment.](#)

Health and biomedicine

[Government publishes key vaccine report](#)

[Disease Detectives: keeping track of new and emerging infectious diseases](#)

This blog is part of Disease Detectives, a series which showcases PHE science. This piece comes from our Emerging Infections and Zoonoses team and was written by PHE epidemiologist Jennifer Lloyd.

[Doping at the Winter Olympics](#)

[The drugs do work: antidepressants are effective, study shows](#)

Doctors hope study will put to rest doubts about the medicine, and help to address global under-treatment of depression.

[Millennials set to be the fattest generation of Britons, research shows](#)

Cancer Research UK says people born between early 80s and mid-90s set to overtake baby boomers.

[Simple arsenic sensor could save lives](#)

A low-cost, easy-to-use arsenic sensor to test drinking water has been developed by researchers at University College London (UCL) and Imperial College London, with BBSRC funding through the government's modern and ambitious Industrial Strategy.

[Bioethics briefing note: The search for a treatment for ageing](#)

Food and drink

[Scotland to set 50p minimum unit price for alcohol](#)

Agriculture and fishery

[Total ban on bee-harming pesticides likely after major new EU analysis](#)

Analysis from EU's scientific risk assessors finds neonicotinoids pose a serious danger to all bees, making total field ban highly likely.

[World's fishing fleets mapped from orbit](#)

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

[Finding the Common Ground](#)

Brexit is going to influence many aspects of life in the UK, few more so than farming and the environment.

[Fear of meat scandal as data shows hygiene breaches at over half UK plants](#)

Environment and ecology

[King penguins face warming challenge](#)

[Hunting is changing forests, but not as expected](#)

[Trunk show: Elephant genome study offers surprises](#)

[North Atlantic right whales may face extinction after no new births recorded](#)

Declining fertility and rising mortality, exacerbated by fishing industry, prompts experts to warn whales could be extinct by 2040.

Water and air

[Air pollution: UK government loses third court case as plans ruled 'unlawful'](#)

High court says approach to tackling pollution in 45 local authority areas is 'not sufficient' and orders urgent changes.

[Wednesday 21 February: \[Defra's\] response to the air quality court case, more on the NFU conference](#)

[Sea swimming 'increases illness risk'](#)

Climate and energy

[CO2 emissions from average UK new car rise for first time since 2000](#)

Climate change targets may be missed as consumers buy bigger cars and turn away from diesel

[Energy storage leap could slash electric car charging times](#)

Development of new material for supercapacitors has potential to raise range to that of petrol cars

Waste

[Plastic straws could be banned, suggests Michael Gove](#)

[Government 'dragging its feet' over plastic bottle scheme, say MPs](#)

A deposit return scheme to tackle the billions of bottles not recycled every year is being kicked into the long grass, say MPs

[Starbucks trials 5p takeaway cup charge in attempt to cut waste](#)

People buying hot drinks in cardboard cups in 35 London branches will pay 'latte levy'

[Urban mining to reduce environmental footprint of consumer goods](#)

Government and parliament

[Report on appointments to the board of the Office for Students](#)

Peter Riddell, the Commissioner for Public Appointments, has completed his investigation into the recent appointments to the Board of the Office for Students and published his report.

Exiting the EU

[Research power shifting to Germany after Brexit vote, says report](#)

European universities, despite public dismay about Brexit, also privately see it as an opportunity to poach UK-based academics.

[EU 'should forge wider research community after Brexit'](#)

Wellcome Trust says that UK should be prepared to pay more to ensure continued participation in framework programmes.

[Charity launches European grants programmes after Brexit vote](#)

British Heart Foundation aims to follow up German partnership with other continental collaborations.

[UK scientist says Britons in Europe 'utterly ignored' by government](#)

Leading astrophysicist Mark McCaughrean, based in the Netherlands, says many may have to forgo British citizenship.

Research funding and higher education policy

['Very strong' turnout on day one of UK university pensions strike](#)

Staff at 65 universities walk out over changes to Universities Superannuation Scheme.

[£1.8 billion allocated to universities & colleges next year](#)

Indicative allocations to individual institutions published.

Open access and publication policy

[Open-access charges 'create new inequalities' in publishing](#)

Researchers at well-resourced, highly ranked universities are more likely to publish in open-access journals.

[Career advice: how to peer review a paper](#)

Detail, clarity and a constructive approach: all these are key to a helpful review, writes Sophie Inge.

[Researchers have finally created a tool to spot duplicated images across thousands of papers](#)

Publishers would need to join forces to apply image-checking software across the literature.

Equality and diversity

[Women in gender-equal countries less likely to gain STEM degrees](#)

More liberal environments may encourage women to follow their interests, psychologists suggest.

International news

[Norway to spend \\$13 million to upgrade 'doomsday' Arctic seed vault](#)

[Debt for dolphins: Seychelles creates huge marine parks in world-first finance scheme](#)

An innovative exchange of sovereign debt for marine conservation, backed by the likes of Leonardo DiCaprio, could pave the way to saving large swaths of the world's oceans.

[Seychelles protects swathe of Indian Ocean, shielding marine ecosystems from unsustainable development and climate change while safeguarding its economy](#)

[Canada puts £500 million into 'innovation superclusters'](#)

Government initiative funds five collaborations involving 60 academic institutions and more than 450 businesses.

[China spends \\$279 bln on R&D in 2017: science minister](#)

[Researchers model ways to control deadly maize disease](#)

[China's lust for jaguar fangs imperils big cats](#)

Wildlife traffickers in South America seek body parts from protected species to satisfy demand in Asia.

[Toxic toad invasion puts ecology of Madagascar at risk](#)

The Asian amphibians arrived just 10 years ago. Now in their millions, they threaten the island's unique wildlife.

People

[Prize awarded to women scientists from developing world](#)

Opportunities

[The Royal Society of Biology is recruiting for a Membership Manager](#)

Apply online with a CV & covering letter by 5 March 2018

[Open Meeting of Welsh Food Advisory Committee](#)

The Welsh Food Advisory Committee of the Food Standards Agency is holding its next open meeting in Bangor University on Thursday, 08 March 2018.

[Opportunity to shadow policymakers in Westminster](#)

Applications are now open for scientists wishing to join The Royal Society pairing scheme this year.

Consultations

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

Closes 8 March 2018.

[Your chance to influence policy on geological disposal](#)

A world-class solution for the UK's radioactive waste.

Closes 19 April 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.

[Parliamentary Committee to scrutinise the farmed salmon industry in Scotland](#)

The future of Scotland's farmed salmon industry will come under the scrutiny of the Scottish Parliament's Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee as it encourages individuals and organisations to share their views as part of its upcoming inquiry.

Closes 27 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

[Become a Gene-ious](#)

RSB is supporting and taking part in a public engagement event in the market place on Saturday 3 March 10:00-15:30, Ramsgate Kent.

[Athena SWAN Biosciences Best Practice Workshop](#)

Top tips for those wanting to submit an Athena SWAN application. A free workshop discussing best practice for bioscience departments in higher education institutions to achieve an Athena SWAN award.

7 March 2018.

[PULSE: Programme for Up and coming Life Sciences Entrepreneurs](#)

6 – 8 March 2018.

[Policy Lunchbox: Enough of experts? Reflections on academic-policy engagement](#)

Register to join us at the latest Policy Lunchbox with Sarah Chaytor, Director of Research Strategy and Policy at UCL.

Monday 12 March 12:00-13:30, London

[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.

[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.

[Negative greenhouse gas emission technologies: Potential, limitations and risks](#)

The Paris Agreement aims to limit global warming to below 2 °C. However, carbon emissions are unlikely to drop fast enough, so that most climate scenarios assume that CO₂ will be actively removed from the air with approaches such as forests, soil, direct air capture, minerals and ocean fertilisation. [EASAC] will present our new report on these negative emission technologies, whose recommendations feed into the development of net-zero emissions strategies.
Thursday 8 March

[Night at the Vet College: Feline fitness](#)

Visit the RVC in Camden for [their] Night at the Vet College event; this time, it's all about Cats and how vets, vet nurses and bioscientists work together to keep domestic and wild species healthy.
Wednesday 14 March

And finally...

[Sex and drugs and self-control: how the teen brain navigates risk](#)

It's not just about rebellion. Neuroscience is revealing adolescents' rich and nuanced relationship with risky behaviour.

Royal Society of Biology

Science Policy Team
Charles Darwin House
12 Roger Street
London
WC1N 2JU
policy@rsb.org.uk

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.

Manage your subscription to this and to other RSB publications [here](#)

