

UK Plant Sciences Federation



www.plantsci.org.uk

- Special interest group of the Society of Biology
- One voice for UK plant science



UKPSF Member Organisations

Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board
Association of Applied Biologists
BASIS Registration Ltd
Bayer
Biochemical Society
Biosciences KTN
British Crop Production Council
British Ecological Society
British Society for Plant Pathology
British Society of Plant Breeders
Food and Environment Research Agency
Forest Products Research Institute
GARNet – Arabidopsis Research Community
Gatsby Plant Science Summer School Project
Genetics Society
The Linnean Society of London

Monogram – Cereal and Grasses Research Community
Oxford University Press
Plant Bioscience Limited
The Rosaceae Network
Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew
Royal Microscopical Society
Science and Plants for Schools
SCI Horticulture Group
Society for Experimental Biology
Society for General Microbiology
Syngenta
UK-BRC – Brassica Research Community
UK-SOL – Solanaceae Research Community
Unilever
VeGIN – Vegetable Genetic Improvement Network
Wiley-Blackwell

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UK PlantSci 2015

14-15 April
Harper Adams University



Keynotes:

- Guy Smith, Vice President of the NFU: Crop production – agronomics, economics or politics?
- Caroline Dean, John Innes Centre: Epigenetic switches underlying seasonal timing

Session topics:

- Plants and agriculture
- Trees and forests
- Panel and open floor discussion
- Cells
- Roots and soil
- Future generations
- Ecology, environment and biodiversity

Future meetings?

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Status of UK plant science report



- Royal Society launch event: 80 guests
- Parliamentary launch hosted by All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Science & Technology in Agriculture

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Conclusions & recommendations



Increased investment in plant science is urgently needed



Stability of funding is essential in the long term



Effective translation of plant science research into applications is vital



We must inspire a new generation of plant scientists



Education and training must meet the needs of employers



Regulatory frameworks must be more evidence- and risk-based, transparent, and enabling of innovation



Working groups



Aim: Develop implementation plans to take forward the report's recommendations.

Training & skills

Funding

Translation

Regulation

Call for experts:

- Launched at PlantSci 2014
- Interest from 79 people

Meetings:

- July and September 2014

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Possible activities???



- Annual UK PlantSci conference.
- Fascination of Plants Day.
- Review the UK's plant science training and skills capabilities/requirements.
- Interactive online education and training resource.
- Promote appropriate representation of plant science in biology degree courses and recognition of courses with suitable threads of plant science.
- Enhance communication between plant science experts and exam boards, publishers and resource developers.
- Plant science outreach toolkit.
- Plant sciences training and skills symposium.
- Develop a roadmap for UK plant sciences for the next 25 years.
- Encourage a broader re-submission policy for top non-funded BBSRC grants.
- Seek funding opportunities from agencies that have not traditionally supported plant science and encourage plant scientists to apply.
- Integrate the new Centres for Agri-Tech Innovation with a wide base of academic institutes, by making the case for specific Research Council calls for related basic and early stage applied research.
- Increase cross-sector science by encouraging more funding collaboration between Research Councils and other agencies.
- Encourage international collaborative funding opportunities (e.g. BBSRC and NIH joint calls).
- Continue to make the case to Government and funders for the value of investment in UK plant science.
- Map the technical and commercial capabilities for translation.
- Scope the feasibility of a UKPSF-based 'pathfinder' service to help identify funding opportunities and broker interactions specific to plant sciences.
- Convene a forum to bring together plant scientists, social scientists and farmers/growers to help understand the barriers and drivers to uptake of plant science innovations from a social sciences perspective.
- Event to forge multidisciplinary collaborations.
- Access and benefit sharing of plant genetic resources (campaigning).
- GM and novel breeding techniques (campaigning).
- Plant protection products (campaigning).
- Invasive species (scoping exercise).

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Priority activities



Develop a roadmap for UK plant sciences

Convene a forum to bring together plant scientists, social scientists & farmers/growers

Stakeholder engagement re: access and benefit sharing of plant genetic resources

Dissemination of education, training and outreach resources

.....Establish sustainable funding for the UKPSF

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Policy engagement



- Meetings with representatives of BBSRC, BIS, Innovate UK and Defra.
- Informing policy consultations:
 - House of Commons Science & Technology Committee inquiry into GM foods and application of the precautionary principle in Europe.



- NCUB Food Economy Taskforce Work Stream 2: Science and Translation.
- BBSRC / MRC Vulnerable Skills Survey.
- House of Commons Science & Technology Committee inquiry into the Future of Kew Gardens.

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Public engagement and media work



- Sense About Science plant science panel
- Outreach toolkit
- Fascination of plants day 2015



- Press statements:
 - Redundancies at The James Hutton Institute
 - Funding cuts to RGB Kew
 - Genetic modification and novel breeding techniques

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Websites, social media and newsletters



PlantSci website: www.plantsci.org.uk

PlantSci eNews

Find a scientist database

LinkedIn group

Twitter

Google+

Blog

Email group: plantsciuk@jiscmail.ac.uk

Ash dieback website and newsletter: treehealth.plantsci.org.uk

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