

25 AUGUST 2026

DAY 1: MICROBIOME & HEALTH

# AGENDA



<b>REGISTRATION, COFFEE &amp; NETWORKING</b>	<b>8:00</b>
<b>OPENING REMARKS &amp; PROJECT INTRODUCTION</b> Dr. Christophe Courtin, Professor, Project Coordinator, KU Leuven	<b>9:00</b>
<b>EXPERT KEYNOTE: FERMENTED FOODS IN THE TRANSITION TO SUSTAINABLE DIETS</b> Lynette Neufeld, Director, Food and Nutrition Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN	<b>9:20</b>
<b>BLOCK 1: MICROBIAL DIVERSITY &amp; FUNCTIONAL DESIGN FOR NEXT-GENERATION FERMENTATIONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Food Fermentation Microbiomes: A Blueprint for Designing Foods of the Future</b> - Dr. Nicholas Bokulich, Assistant Professor, ETH Zurich</li><li>• <b>From Microbial Diversity to Function: Starter Cultures for Plant-Based Fermentations</b> - Dr. Rossana Coda, Researcher, University of Helsinki</li><li>• <b>How Genomics can Support Improved Starter Culture Selection</b> - Dr. Stefan Weckx, Associate Professor, Vrije Universiteit Brussels</li></ul>	<b>9:45</b>
<b>COFFEE BREAK &amp; POSTER SESSION</b>	<b>11:00</b>
<b>BLOCK 1: MICROBIAL DIVERSITY &amp; FUNCTIONAL DESIGN FOR NEXT-GENERATION FERMENTATIONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Pairing Microbes and Milk for Health: Lessons and Opportunities for Next-Generation Fermented Foods</b> - Dr. Maria Marco, Professor, UC Davis</li><li>• Speaker - to be announced</li></ul>	<b>11:25</b>
<b>RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT SESSION WITH 4 PHD PITCHES</b>	<b>12:30</b>
<b>LUNCH &amp; NETWORKING BREAK, POSTER SESSION</b>	<b>12:50</b>

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<b>BLOCK 2: FERMENTED FOODS, GUT MICROBIOTA &amp; HUMAN HEALTH</b>	<b>14:00</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>In-Vitro Fermentation: How the Consumption of Fermented Foods support Metabolic Biomarkers</b> - Dr. Kristin Verbeke, Professor, KU Leuven</li> <li>• <b>Learnings on the Health Impact of Plant-Based Fermented Foods in Humans - can protein-fibre interaction in plant foods contribute to the health impact?</b> - Dr. Marjukka Kolehmainen, Professor, University of Eastern Finland</li> <li>• <b>The Human Gut Microbiome: Variation, Diagnostics and Modulation</b> - Dr. Jeroen Raes, Professor, KU Leuven</li> </ul>	
<b>RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT SESSION WITH 3 PHD PITCHES</b>	<b>15:10</b>
<b>COFFEE &amp; NETWORKING BREAK</b>	<b>15:35</b>
<b>BLOCK 2: FERMENTED FOODS, GUT MICROBIOTA &amp; HUMAN HEALTH</b>	<b>15:55</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fermented Plant-Based Foods and Cardiometabolic Health: Does Fermentation Matter?</b> - Dr. Rikard Landberg, Professor, Chalmers University of Technology</li> <li>• Speakers - to be announced</li> </ul>	
<b>RESEARCH &amp; OTHER PROJECTS</b>	<b>16:30</b>
<b>CLOSING FIRST DAY</b>	<b>17:50</b>
Dr. Christophe Courtin, Project Leader, KU Leuven	
<b>NETWORKING ACTIVITY - HAPPY HOUR</b>	<b>18:00</b>
until 19:00	



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# FINAL CONFERENCE

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26 AUGUST 2026 DAY2: FOOD FERMENTATION: CONSUMER ATTITUDES & POLICY DIRECTIONS

# AGENDA



**REGISTRATION, COFFEE & NETWORKING** **8:00**

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**OPENING REMARKS DAY 2** **9:00**

Dr. Christophe Courtin, Project Leader, KU Leuven

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**EXPERT KEYNOTE** **9:10**

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**BLOCK 3: INNOVATIVE FERMENTATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR PLANT-BASED FOODS** **9:40**

- **Functionality of Fermented Foods** - Dr. Kati Katina, Professor Food & Nutrition, University of Helsinki
  - **Utilising the Potential of Oats Through Fermentation Technology** - Dr. Arno Wouters, Assistant Professor, KU Leuven
  - **Hybrid Processing Approaches for Meat Biomimetics and the Development of New Fermented Products** - Dr. Nesli Sözer, Professor, VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland
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**RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT SESSION WITH 4 PHD PITCHES** **10:45**

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**COFFEE BREAK & POSTER SESSION** **11:05**

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**BLOCK 3: INNOVATIVE FERMENTATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR PLANT-BASED FOODS** **11:30**

- **Expanding from Dairy to Alternatives - An Industrial Research Perspective** - Dr. Riita Partanen, Research Manager, Valio
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**BLOCK 4: CONSUMER INSIGHTS, BEHAVIOUR & POLICY PATHWAYS FOR FERMENTED FOODS** **11:45**

- Dr. Armando Perez-Cueto, Professor, Umeå University
- Dr. Michael Bom Frøst, Associate Professor, University of Copenhagen



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26 AUGUST 2026 DAY2: FOOD FERMENTATION: CONSUMER ATTITUDES & POLICY DIRECTIONS

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**RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT SESSION WITH 4 PHD PITCHES** **12:30**

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**LUNCH AND NETWORKING BREAK, POSTER SESSION** **12:45**

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**BLOCK 4: CONSUMER INSIGHTS, BEHAVIOUR & POLICY PATHWAYS FOR FERMENTED FOODS** **13:45**

- Dr. Maxime Michaud, Researcher, Institute Lyfe/Umeå University
  - Speaker - to be announced
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**BLOCK 5: RESEARCH, INDUSTRY & POLICY PATHWAYS FOR FERMENTED FOODS** **14:50**

- Research Hurdles and Prospects
  - Industry and Production Hurdles and Prospects
  - Panel discussion: EU Policy, Future Research & Next Steps
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**CLOSING COFFEE & NETWORKING BREAK** **16:50**

AGENDA

