

25 AUGUST 2026

DAY 1: MICROBIOME & HEALTH

AGENDA



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

OPENING REMARKS & PROJECT INTRODUCTION **9:00**

Dr Christophe Courtin, Professor, Project Coordinator, KU Leuven

SESSION 1: MICROBIAL DIVERSITY & FUNCTIONAL DESIGN FOR NEXT-GENERATION FERMENTATIONS **9:25**

- **Food Fermentation Microbiomes: A Blueprint for Designing Foods of the Future** - Dr Nicholas Bokulich, Assistant Professor, ETH Zurich
- **From Microbial Diversity to Function: Starter Cultures for Plant-Based Fermentations** - Dr Rossana Coda, Researcher, University of Helsinki
- **How Genomics can Support Improved Starter Culture Selection** - Dr Stefan Weckx, Associate Professor, Vrije Universiteit Brussels

COFFEE BREAK & POSTER SESSION **10:30**

SESSION 1: MICROBIAL DIVERSITY & FUNCTIONAL DESIGN FOR NEXT-GENERATION FERMENTATIONS **11:10**

- **Research Highlight Session with 3 PhD Pitches**
 - **From SNVs to Function: Integrating Genomic Variation and Regulation for the Selection of Optimal Starter Cultures in Food Fermentations** - Gabriela Samaniego Vinachi, Vrije Universiteit Brussel
 - **The Chemical Diversity of Cereal-Based Fermented Foods Through Untargeted LC-MS Metabolomics** - Jan Patrick Tan, ETH Zurich
 - **Substrate-Driven Phenotype switching of Leuconostoc Mesenteroids GSL1 from Optimum to Pulses-Based Food-Like Conditions** - Chiara Viretto, University of Bolzano
- **Should we be Eating More Microbes** - Dr Maria Marco, Professor, UC Davis

LUNCH & NETWORKING BREAK, POSTER SESSION **12:00**

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SESSION 2: FERMENTED FOODS, GUT MICROBIOTA & HUMAN HEALTH

13:30

- **Health Benefits of Fermentation-Driven Changes in Plant Fibre Structure** - Dr Kristin Verbeke, Professor, KU Leuven
- **The Human Gut Microbiome: Variation, Diagnostics and Modulation** - Dr Jeroen Raes, Professor, KU Leuven
- **Learnings on the Health Impact of Plant-Based Fermented Foods in Humans - can protein-fibre interaction in plant foods contribute to the health impact?** - Dr Marjukka Kolehmainen, Professor, University of Eastern Finland
- **Fermented Plant-Based Foods and Cardiometabolic Health: Does Fermentation Matter?** - Dr Rikard Landberg, Professor & Head of Division, Food and Nutrition Science, Chalmers University of Technology
- **Metabolomics in Fermentation Research** - Dr Kati Hanhineva, Professor, University of Turku

COFFEE & NETWORKING BREAK

15:15

SESSION 2: FERMENTED FOODS, GUT MICROBIOTA & HUMAN HEALTH

15:45

- **Research Highlight Session with 3 PhD Pitches**
 - **Short-Chain Fatty Acids: the Site of Administration Matters** - Riet Rosseel, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
 - **Gut-related Health Effects of Oat-based Yogurt Alternative in Individuals with Increased Cardiometabolic Risk** - Vilma Liikonen, Doctoral Researcher, University of Eastern Finland
 - **Investigating the Effects of Plant-Based Fermented Foods on the Gut Microbiota by Making use of an In Vitro Colon Model** - Emma Lemmens, VIB

SESSION 3: FERMENTATION RESEARCH IN EUROPE

16:00

- **Harnessing Milk- and Water-Kefirs as Representative Fermented Beverage-Associated Communities** - Dr Paul Cotter, Head of Food Biosciences, Teagasc

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DAY 1: MICROBIOME & HEALTH

- **Design of Microbial Solutions for Sustainable and Healthy Fermented Food in Europe: perspectives & challenges illustrated by the DOMINO project** - Dr Stéphane Chaillou, Research Director at MICALIS Institute, INRAE
- **Pathways for Post-Project Valorization and Mid-Term Impact in Horizon Europe** - Guido Guidetti, Programme Officer, Research Executive Agency
- **Building on Success: The next Chapter of the HealthFerm Community** - Léna Prochnow, Senior Research and Impact Manager, EURICE

CLOSING FIRST DAY

17:25

Dr Christophe Courtin, Professor, Project Coordinator, KU Leuven

NETWORKING ACTIVITY - HAPPY HOUR

17:30

until 19:30

AGENDA





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

AGENDA



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

OPENING REMARKS SECOND DAY **9:00**

Dr Christophe Courtin, Professor, Project Coordinator, KU Leuven

SESSION 4: INNOVATIVE FERMENTATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR PLANT-BASED FOODS **9:05**

- **Fermentation Induced Changes in Plant-Based Raw Materials-Possibilities and Challenges** - Dr Kati Katina, Professor Food & Nutrition, University of Helsinki
- **Unlocking the Potential of Pulses Through Tailored Fermentation and Criteria-Driven Starter Selection** - Dr Raffaella Di Cagno, University of Bolzano
- **Utilising the Potential of Oats Through Fermentation Technology** - Dr Arno Wouters, Assistant Professor, KU Leuven
- **Hybrid Processing Approaches for Meat Biomimetics** - Dr Nesli Sözer, Professor, VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland

COFFEE BREAK & POSTER SESSION **10:30**

SESSION 4: INNOVATIVE FERMENTATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR PLANT-BASED FOODS **11:00**

- **Expanding from Dairy to Alternatives - An Industrial Research Perspective** - Dr Riitta Partanen, Research Manager, Valio
- **Tempeh: Solid-State Fermentation for Healthier Foods** - Dr. Maud Langton, Professor, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
- **Research Highlight Session with 3 PhD Pitches**
 - **Designed Fermentation Processes for Healthy and Appealing Oat Products** - Silvia Cera, Doctoral Researcher, University of Helsinki
 - **Innovative Faba Bean Sourdough Fermentation for the Production of Nutritious Whole Wheat Bread** - Eline Lambrechts, PhD Student, Katholieke Univeriteit Leuven
 - **From Soaking to Fermentation: Soluble Fiber and β -Glucan Changes in Oat and Faba Bean Foods** - Olivia Zehnder-Wyss, PhD Student, ETH Zurich

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

- **Non-Sour Fermentations in Plant-Based Foods** - Dr Dennis Sandris Nielsen, Professor, University of Copenhagen

LUNCH & NETWORKING BREAK, POSTER SESSION

12:20

SESSION 5: CONSUMER INSIGHTS, BEHAVIOUR & POLICY PATHWAYS FOR FERMENTED FOODS

13:30

- **Comprehensive Lessons from Consumer Studies on Plant-Based Fermented Foods** - Dr Armando Perez-Cueto, Professor, Umeå University
- **From Expectations to Experience - How tasting fermented plant-based foods shapes consumption intentions** - Dr Michael Bom Frøst, Associate Professor, University of Copenhagen
- **Understanding Fermentation Behaviour and Acceptance: outputs from a socio-anthropological approach and its complementary nature with behavioural and economical approaches** - Dr Maxime Michaud, Researcher, Institute Lyfe/ Umeå University
- **Research Highlight Session with 3 PhD Pitches**
 - **Beyond the Prototype: How Meal Design Shapes Acceptance of Plant-Based Fermented Foods** - Jean-Paul Garin, PhD Student, Umeå University
 - **Fermenting as a Social Practice** - Maxence Blanchet, PhD Student, Lyfe Institute
 - **Public perceptions of Policy Strategies Supporting a Plant-Based Transition in Europe** - Arturo Turillazzi, PhD Candidate
- **Panel: Consumer Acceptance of Plant-Based (Fermented) Foods** - Moderated by Dr Armando Perez-Cueto, Professor, Umeå University; Dr. Hans de Steur, Professor, Ghent University; Betty Chang, Research Area Lead, EUFIC & final speaker to be announced

COFFEE BREAK & POSTER SESSION

15:15

AGENDA





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

SESSION 6: RESEARCH, INDUSTRY & POLICY PATHWAYS FOR FERMENTED FOODS

15:35

- **Shaping the Future of Food Fermentation Research: Challenges, Opportunities and Priorities** - Dr Christophe Courtin, Professor, Project Coordinator, KU Leuven
- **Boosters and Hurdles towards Innovation in Fermented Foods** - Antonio del Casale, Co-founder & CEO, MICROBION - Microbiology Open Innovation
- **Food 2040 and the Future of Microbiome and Fermented Foods Research** - Pierre-Mathieu Pelissier, European Commission
- **Closing Panel: From Research on Traditional Fermentation to Market-Ready Innovations: Needs & Bottlenecks** - Stefan Capelle, Group Fermentation Director, Puratos; Dr Christophe Courtin, Professor, Project Coordinator, KU Leuven; Ruth Roldan Torres, Scientific Officer, EFSA & Dr Paul Cotter, Teagasc

Closing Remarks - Dr Christophe Courtin, Project Leader, KU Leuven

17:00

CLOSING COFFEE & NETWORKING until 18:00

17:10

AGENDA

