

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** **11:00**

- **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
- **Transitioning from Dairy to Plant-Based** - Speaker to be announced
- **Should we be Eating More Microbes** - Dr Maria Marco, Professor, UC Davis

**LUNCH & NETWORKING BREAK, POSTER SESSION** **12:10**

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## SESSION 2: FERMENTED FOODS, GUT MICROBIOTA & HUMAN HEALTH

13:45

- **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

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## COFFEE & NETWORKING BREAK

15:30

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## SESSION 2: FERMENTED FOODS, GUT MICROBIOTA & HUMAN HEALTH

15:55

- **Research Highlight Session with 3 PhD Pitches**
  - **Short-chain Fatty Acids: the site of Administration Matters** - Riet Rosseel, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
  - Title to be announced - 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

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## SESSION 3: FERMENTATION RESEARCH IN EUROPE

16:15

- **Microbiota, Health, Fermented Foods** - Dr Paul Cotter, Head of Food Biosciences, Teagasc
- **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



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- **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

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#### CLOSING FIRST DAY

**17:40**

Dr Christophe Courtin, Professor, Project Coordinator, KU Leuven

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#### NETWORKING ACTIVITY - HAPPY HOUR

**17:45**

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**

- **Unlocking the Potential of Pulses Through Tailored Fermentation and Criteria-Driven Starter Selection** - Dr Raffaella Di Cagno, University of Bolzano
- **Fermentation Induced Changes in Plant-Based Raw Materials-Possibilities and Challenges** - 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** - Dr Nesli Sözer, Professor, VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland

**COFFEE BREAK & POSTER SESSION** **10:35**

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



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LUNCH & NETWORKING BREAK, POSTER SESSION

12:15

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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**
  - **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
  - Final pitch to be announced
- **Panel: Consumer Acceptance of Plant-Based (Fermented) Foods** - Moderated by Dr Armando Perez-Cueto, Professor, Umeå University; Dr. Hans de Steur, Professor, Ghent University & final speakers to be announced

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COFFEE BREAK & POSTER SESSION

15:15

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

**15:35**

- **Research Hurdles and Prospects** - 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; Dr Damien Paineau, CEO, INRAE & final speakers to be announced

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

**17:00**

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**CLOSING COFFEE & NETWORKING** until 18:00

**17:10**

AGENDA

