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| REGISTRATION, COFFEE & NETWORKING | 8:00 |
| OPENING REMARKS & PROJECT INTRODUCTION Dr Christophe Courtin, Professor, Project Coordinator, KU Leuven | 9:00 |
| SESSION 1: MICROBIAL DIVERSITY & FUNCTIONAL DESIGN FOR NEXT-GENERATION FERMENTATIONS | 9:25 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Highlight Session with 3 PhD Pitches • Transitioning from Dairy to Plant-Based - Speaker to be announced • Live Microbes - Title to be announced - Dr Maria Marco, Professor, UC Davis | |
| LUNCH & NETWORKING BREAK, POSTER SESSION | 12:10 |
| SESSION 2: FERMENTED FOODS, GUT MICROBIOTA & HUMAN HEALTH | 13:45 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 | |

25 AUGUST 2026

DAY 1: MICROBIOME & HEALTH

- **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 **15:30**

SESSION 2: FERMENTED FOODS, GUT MICROBIOTA & HUMAN HEALTH **15:55**

- **Research Highlight Session with 3 PhD Pitches**
 - Title to be announced - Vilma Liikonen, Doctoral Researcher, University of Eastern Finland
 - Other pitches to be announced

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
- **Pathways for Post-Project Valorization and Mid-Term Impact in Horizon Europe** - Guido Guidette, Programme Officer, Research Executive Agency

CLOSING FIRST DAY **18:00**

Dr Christophe Courtin, Professor, Project Coordinator, KU Leuven

NETWORKING ACTIVITY - HAPPY HOUR **18:05**

until 19:30





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

AGENDA



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| REGISTRATION, COFFEE & NETWORKING | 8:00 |
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| OPENING REMARKS SECOND DAY | 9:00 |
| Dr Christophe Courtin, Professor, Project Coordinator, KU Leuven | |
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| SESSION 4: INNOVATIVE FERMENTATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR PLANT-BASED FOODS | 9:05 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• From Microbiology to Fermented Food Systems - Speaker to be announced• 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 - Dr Nesli Sözer, Professor, VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland | |
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| COFFEE BREAK & POSTER SESSION | 10:35 |
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| SESSION 4: INNOVATIVE FERMENTATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR PLANT-BASED FOODS | 11:00 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expanding from Dairy to Alternatives - An Industrial Research Perspective - Dr Riitta Partanen, Research Manager, Valio• Research Highlight Session with 3 PhD Pitches<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Designed Fermentation Processes for Healthy and Appealing Oat Products - Silvia Cera, Doctoral Researcher, University of Helsinki◦ Other pitches to be announced• Non-Sour Fermentations in Plant-Based Foods - Dr Dennis Sandris Nielsen, Professor, University of Copenhagen | |
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| LUNCH & NETWORKING BREAK, POSTER SESSION | 12:00 |
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26 AUGUST 2026 DAY2: FOOD FERMENTATION: CONSUMER ATTITUDES & POLICY DIRECTIONS

AGENDA



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**
 - **Public perceptions of Policy Strategies Supporting a Plant-Based Transition in Europe** - Arturo Turillazzi, PhD Candidate
 - Other pitches to be announced
- **Panel: Consumer Acceptance of Plant-Based (Fermented) Foods** - to be announced

COFFEE BREAK & POSTER SESSION

15:15

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** - to be announced
- **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

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

17:00

CLOSING COFFEE & NETWORKING until 18:00

17:10