

# *November 2024*



*President: Prof. Mike Gooding, PhD*

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### *Our Mission*

**“to further the application of biology to the production of food, materials, and energy, and for the maintenance and improvement of the earth’s environment”**

# **AAB Quick Links**

**[AAB Council](#)**

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**AAB Early Career Professional members (AAB ECP) eligible for FREE Online registration to *ANY* AAB-organised hybrid event, AAB ECP non-members pay a nominal fee (£5) for access and also gain free membership!**





# Abstract deadlines approaching! Schedules announced! Registrations closing soon!



Hosted online and at  
The Linnean Society, London

## Advances in Nematology 2024 December 5<sup>th</sup> 2024

### Confirmed Speakers:

- **Matthew Back**; *Harper Adams University, UK*
- **Alena Pance**; *University of Herts, UK*

**Online registration still open**

BIOCONTROL and IPM GROUP



In-person event hosted at  
Syngenta UK, Jealott's Hill  
21st January 2025

## Challenges for Effective Application of Biopesticides

This event aligns application technology and IPM to help extract the maximum from biopesticides. Sustainability and regulatory pressures are driving increased use of biopesticides. This day-long conference seeks to bring together interested parties from researchers to end-users.

### Confirmed speakers:

- Clare Butler Ellis** (Silsoe Spray Applications): Overview on the current state of the art and the AMBER project
- Ant Surrage** (Ecospray Ltd): Beyond One-Size-Fits-All: Tailored approaches to biopesticide Application

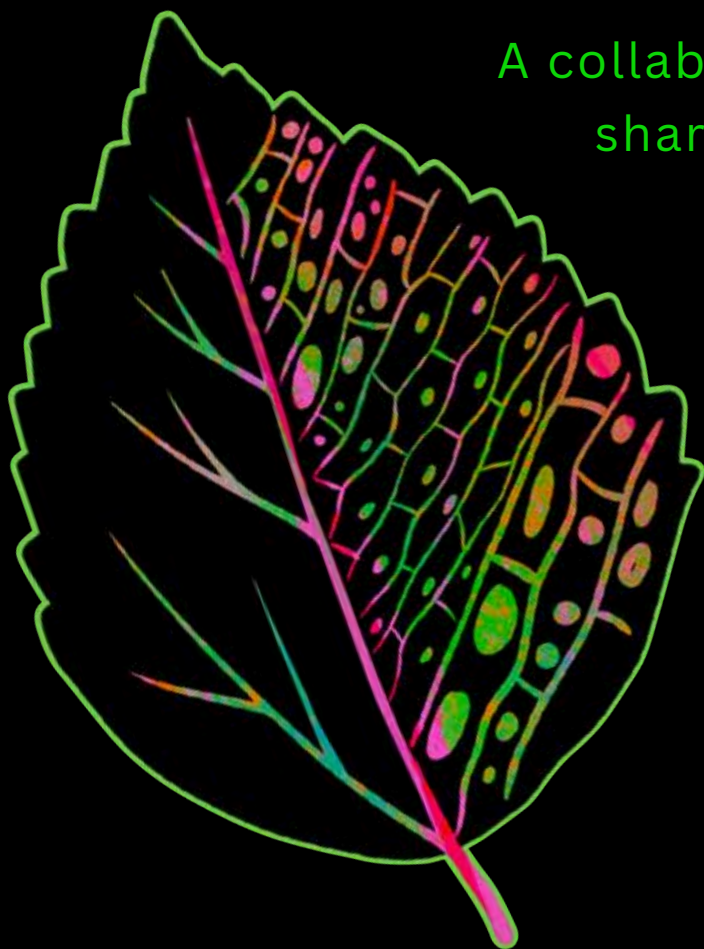
**Abstract Submission now open!**

In-person registration closes  
**December 12th 2024**

**7 - 8 JANUARY 2025**  
Lancaster, UK

# **PLANT BIOLOGY** **EDUCATION**

## **Creating a Vision for the Future**



A collaborative meeting to  
share best practices in  
**higher education**  
for preparing  
future plant  
biologists.

**REGISTER NOW**

Before 12 Dec 2024 if you  
want to attend in person.



**Full Schedule published.**  
**In-person registration closes December 12th**





Hosted online and at  
Murcia, Spain 

# International Advances in Plant Virology 2025

## April 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> 2025

Confirmed Speakers:

- **Svetlana Folymonova**, University of Florida, USA
- **Jun-min Li**, Ningbo University, China
- **Santiago Elena**, Instituto de Biología Integrativa de Sistemas, Spain
- **Emanuela Noris**, Istituto per la Protezione Sostenibile delle Piante, Italy
- **Hadrien Peyret**, John Innes Centre/ Nottingham University, UK
- **Sebastian Massart**, University of Liege
- **David Baulcombe**, University of Cambridge



Organised with the VIRTIGATION and  
Eupresco VIRNET2 projects



**Abstract Submission open!**

**aab**

ASSOCIATION OF APPLIED BIOLOGISTS  
CROPPING AND THE ENVIRONMENT  
SOIL AND ROOT BIOLOGY

Hosted online and at  
**University of Reading, UK**

**Save the Date!**

**Legumes Science and Practice 3**

**June 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> 2025**

**Abstract Submission open!**



**Abstract Submission open!**



## The AAB are delighted to support the Royal Society of Biology organised Plant Health Undergraduate Studentships

<https://www.rsb.org.uk/get-involved/grants/plant-health-ug-studentships>

Below is a report from the summer project undertaken by **Mitchelle Akpofure** that was supported by the AAB.

Thanks to Mitchelle for preparing this report about her experiences and for sharing her poster.

In the summer of 2024, I was opportune to conduct research at the James Hutton Institute in Scotland as part of the Royal Society of Biology's PHUGS programme. My research focused on investigating possible antagonism phenotypes between isolates from the microbiome present on the phyllosphere of spring barley and the fungus *Rhynchosporium commune* (causal agent of barley scald). We successfully cultured bacteria, yeast, and fungi from our *R. commune*-infected barley plots, extracted DNA, performed PCR and undertook 16S and ITS Sanger sequencing for taxonomy identification.



### The Spring Barley Phyllosphere Microbiome and *Rhynchosporium commune*

By: Mitchelle Akpofure



#### Abstract

One economically important disease of barley is leaf scald, caused by the fungi *Rhynchosporium commune*. Control of this disease is multi-faceted but, an area yet to be explored is that of biocontrol agents. Our research questions whether the spring barley phyllosphere microbiome impose antagonistic effects on *R. commune*. We sought to test this hypothesis via antagonism assays, so far, we have begun isolation and taxonomical identification of microbes. This research was funded to address Defra's priority areas of management of pests and diseases.

This project marked my first experience with laboratory work outside of a school environment. Initially, it was a bit daunting but under great supervision of skilled researchers, I was able to grow as a scientist. I have improved greatly in areas such as teamwork, critical thinking, organisation, self-directed learning and time management. Most importantly, by facing experimental setbacks, I refined my resilience and developed my re-strategisation process. A key lesson I learnt was that not everything may work as planned, and sometimes unexpected drawbacks arise but what's important is that you take these moments as learning opportunities and keep moving forward.

Overall, participating in the PHUGS programme has truly set the foundation for my career as an independent plant research scientist through providing an excellent learning environment with expert researchers. I would like to thank the Royal Society of Biology and the AAB for making this possible.

#### Introduction

*R. commune* is the causal agent of leaf scald in barley (*Hordeum vulgare*). This disease causes up to 40% yield loss in susceptible cultivars and contributes to the millions of pounds spent on fungicides in the UK. Over time, the fungi has developed resistance to resistant cultivars and chemical fungicides.



#### Research Question

Can microbes present in the phyllosphere of spring barley have antagonistic effects of the growth of *R. commune*?

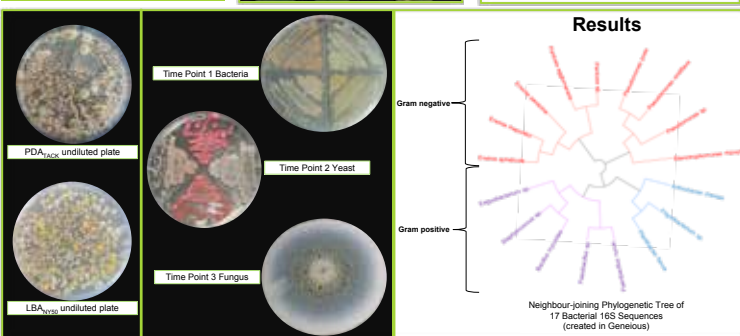
#### Objective

Discovery-based research for more sustainable and environmentally-friendly biofungicides against barley leaf scald.

#### Method

On randomly sampled Laureate Spring barley from three sampling time points we:

- Obtained pellets from leaf wash.
- Cultured on LB<sub>16S</sub> (bacteria) or PDA<sub>ITS</sub> (yeast/fungi) then stored in glycerol stocks or PDA slopes, respectively.
- Performed sandwich plate assays, starting with bacterial isolates.
- 16s rDNA gene Sanger Sequencing to identify bacterial taxonomy.



#### Conclusion

- Currently, our experiments have confirmed:
- Great diversity of culturable microbes present in the foliage of spring barley.
  - Microbial succession – culturable microbial populations of barley lessen as *R. commune* enveloped host.

Future experiments in fall 2024 will complete dual and sandwich plate assays to identify possible *R. commune* antagonists amongst barley phyllosphere isolates.

# Cultivating Wisdom: Agroecology Innovation from Experts in their Field



A collaborative conference between AAB, Organic Research Centre and the Landworkers Alliance

Birch Community Centre, Manchester  
October 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>th</sup> 2024

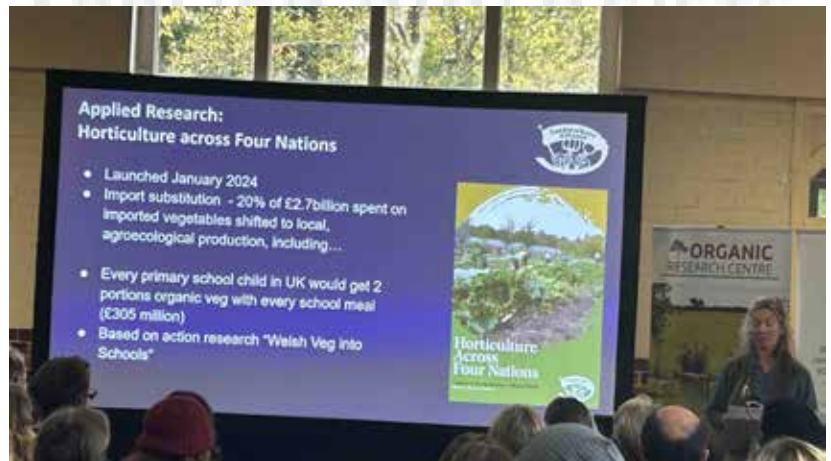
**Name of Travel Grant Recipient:** Caroline Aitken, PhD Scholar for John Oldacre Foundation at the Centre for Rural Policy Research at Exeter University

**Contact details:** caroline.aitken@mail.com

## Meeting Highlights:

It was great to hear from Rebecca Laughton on the work of the Agroecology Research Collaboration, which is providing valuable guidance to researchers in terms of identifying current research gaps, and fostering connections between researchers and practitioners to capture what is happening in the field. Presentations throughout the conference highlighted the potential for important and useful data to be generated from these kinds of collaborations. Chris Maughan's study on farmer-led soil assessment stood out as an example of this.

Sebastian Prost's research on 'appropriate technology' for agroecology was very interesting. It got to the heart of the underlying values of agroecology by considering tech in terms of the resilience of the individual farmer, rather than the perpetuation of an industry which tends to cause unsustainable dependency for farmers. This highlights one way in which 'Agroecology' is distinct from 'Regenerative Agriculture', which tends to draw upon the use of large machinery and glyphosate.



Rebecca Laughton introduces the ARC

Rachael Durrant's presentation of her study of women in agroecology was also very interesting. Not only did it indicate that typical gender dynamics in traditional family farming are being reproduced on agroecological farms, but highlighted that this is happening despite the much higher ratio of female farmers in the agroecology movement. This raises concerns for the sustainability of this marginal sector given the concerns of the women studied regarding low pay and long hours.

## Please provide a personal perspective on the meeting:

This was a great opportunity for me to get a sense of the agroecology research community in Britain, as I am now entering that community with my PhD Research. The conference provided a good breadth of research, from entomology to gender and class issues, and given the



multidisciplinary nature of agroecology, this was fitting and much appreciated. I was particularly interested to find that there is still no consistency in how the term agroecology is used and understood in Britain. This will form a key part of my own study, and it was acknowledged by several presenters as an issue which requires attention. I had many fruitful conversations during the two days, and have already made some very valuable connections in follow-up meetings.

**Acknowledgements:** Thank you to the AAB for offering travel grants. This allowed me to travel all the way from Newton Abbot to Manchester for this brilliant event.

**Name of Travel Grant Recipient:** Imogen Hockenull, University of Reading

**Contact details:** i.hockenull@pgr.reading.ac.uk

### **Meeting Highlights:**

The Cultivating Wisdom: Agroecology Innovation from Experts in the Field conference was an exceptional opportunity for networking, connecting me with a wide range of professionals and experts whose work directly aligns with my interests in agroecology. Meeting so many relevant contacts allowed for in-depth discussions and potential collaborations, which I believe will be invaluable to my future work. Beyond networking, the conference broadened my understanding of agroecological research and left all delegates inspired, instilling a sense of hope and a forward-thinking outlook for advancing sustainable agriculture.

### **Please provide a personal perspective on the meeting:**

This was an excellent opportunity for me to connect with professionals dedicated to sustainable agriculture, especially those working in alternative systems like community-based market gardens. I met numerous experts whose work aligns well with my research goal of creating a sustainability framework designed for—and with—such innovative models, and I'm optimistic about potential collaborations with them. The visit to a local market garden was particularly insightful, giving me firsthand exposure to sustainable practices within a community-driven environment.

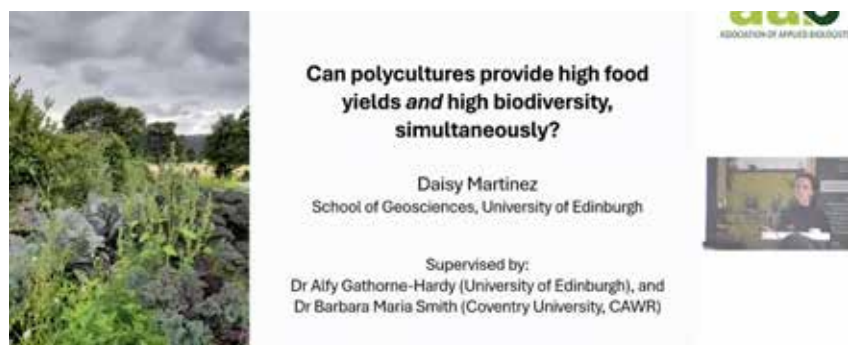
**Acknowledgements:** I would like to express my gratitude to the University of Reading, FoodSEqual, and the Association of Applied Biologists (AAB) for providing both the support and the purpose for attending the “Cultivating Wisdom: Agroecology Innovation from Experts in the Field” conference. Their assistance made this invaluable experience possible, and I am appreciative of the opportunities it has opened for my research and professional growth.

**Name of Travel Grant Recipient:** Daisy Martinez, PhD Student, University of Edinburgh

**Contact details:** daisy.martinez@ed.ac.uk

### **Meeting Highlights:**

Three highlights of the meeting for me were: 1) the opportunity to meet other researchers working in related fields, with whom I had previously communicated or collaborated online, 2) the focus of the meeting on participatory and farmer-led research, and 3) the opportunity to present my PhD research and receive helpful feedback and reflections from others.



Daisy Martinez introduces her research

The catering (provided by Platts Field Market Garden) was also amazing!

### Provide a personal perspective on the meeting:

The focus on participatory/ farmer-led research was really pertinent for me. I learned a lot from listening to others' reflections on best practices and challenges related to on-farm data gathering. The meeting also had a friendly and supportive atmosphere; I was able to make connections with others working on closely related topics, and I'm looking forward to continuing conversations that began at the meeting.

**Acknowledgements:** thank you to Isobel and Bee (Landworkers' Alliance) for inviting me to attend and present at the meeting. Thank you also to Geraint and the AAB for providing grant support for accommodation and travel - this made a huge difference and is much appreciated!



Discussion panel for the session on 'Diverse Cropping Systems'.. (L-R) Paul Allison, Charlotte Bickler, Dominic Amos, Julia Cooper, Jake Freestone. Image from Philippa Hall, Organic Research Centre

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# Biocontrol and IPM in Uncertain Climatic and Economic Environments

An AAB event at Leicester University 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> November

## Report from Professor Graham Matthews, edits by Geraint Parry

The annual AAB IPM meeting moved to a new venue for the 2024 meeting, the outstanding College Court, an independent venue linked to the University of Leicester. AAB benefited from an association with Dr James Higgins, a wheat geneticist in the Department of Genetics. Huge thanks to James for allowing us to charge more reasonable prices for this event.

The event began with an ice-breaker session led by Dr Elysia Bartel from ADAS. Each of the 40+ delegates was provided with a label for someone with a vested interest in IPM research and regulations. Delegates were encouraged to circulate the room 'bumping' into fellow delegates and discussing their interactions. This fun event was 20 minutes well spent to breakdown any early-meeting uncertainty. Look for this to be repeated in future meetings!



The IPM Ice-breaker was a big success!

Jude Bennison, an ADAS entomologist involved in IPM research since 1984 kicked off the meeting with an engaging walk-through her career. Initially biocontrol was limited to the use of *Phytoseiulus persimilis* and *Encarsia formosa*, and subsequently helped others in developing biocontrol and IPM strategies and by working with growers was able to get them to commercially adopt systems that were effective.

The next speaker was Robert Finger from UZH Zurich who was concerned with the economic and political prospects for IPM in the shift towards pesticide free crop production systems. Concerns about the effect of certain chemical pesticides that can harm the environment by adversely affecting beneficial insects and the health of spray operators. In Europe there is considerable interest in eliminating synthetic pesticides and developing organic control systems, although there are some pesticides that are not so toxic.

### IPM in LMICs

Chapwa Kasoma at CABI in Zambia is concerned with using sustainable and nature-positive pest solutions in sub-Saharan African smallholder-farming referred to invasive species including the fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*), which is now in 44 countries across Africa. Papaya mealy bug (*Paracoccus mariginatus*) and tomato leaf miner (*Phthorimaea absoluta*) that are a major problem with increasing adverse effects due to climate changes. Instead of using chemical pesticides, CABI is following a participatory farmer approach to optimize the performance of biological agents as key components inclusive IPM schemes to get smallholder farmers to adopt safer pest management solutions.



Chapwa Kasomi travelled from CABI in Zambia to introduce her work on the Fall Armyworm

In Kenya, where the horticultural industry is renowned for producing high-value crops, there is significant pressure to reduce reliance on conventional chemical pesticides. In Anthony Surrage's presentation, the practical challenges faced by growers needed education on biopesticide use and the importance of monitoring and adapting strategies to fit different size farms growing a range of crops.

From Morocco Ilham Barakat was concerned about the resistance of tomato rootstocks to the fungal wilt disease caused by *Fusarium oxysporum* f sp. *Lycopersici*. The most widely adopted method was soil disinfection with fumigants, but with emergence of resistant strains (race 3) has prompted adoption of resistant rootstocks. In one of the studies the aim was to evaluate the susceptibility of six rootstocks to Fol under greenhouse conditions with a susceptible variety as the control plant. Three varieties had infection rates no higher than 30% compared with the control with a rate of 72.5%.

Toby Bruce returned to the problem of Fall Armyworm in Kenya by examining whether the bioactive volatiles from push-pull companion crops can repel FAW and attract its parasitoids. The trials indicated that the volatiles from companion crops repel FAW, while attracting its parasitoid natural enemies. This explained why Push-Pull field plots had lower FAW larvae and lower crop damage than monocropped maize.

El Mehdi Bouchtaoui in Morocco then presented the next section on Phosphate sludge-derived composts alleviate *Meloidogyne javanica* infestation and support *Solanum lycopersicum* growth. Although chemical nematicides are effective, many have been restricted or banned owing to environmental and health concerns, so a study investigated the nematicidal potential of phosphate sludge-based composts in the control of *M. javanica* on tomato plants. (*Solanum lycopersicum*). Three composts CP2, CP3 and CP4 (Phosphate sludge mixed with food waste plus sugar beet waste, green waste or olive Mill waste) were tested at 1-10% concentrations to assess morphological and physiological variations. Phosphate sludge-based composts effectively improved tomato growth and suppressed *M.javanica* growth, with CP3 and SP4 showing particular promise.



## IPM and Climate Change

Catherine Bradshaw from the Met-Office assessed potential IPM strategies for cabbage stem flea beetle and the implications from climate change in the UK, as this pest is *Psylliodes chrysocephala* is ranked as the major pest of winter oilseed rape in Europe. Studies showed that IPM strategies are likely to be crucial especially after the neonicotinoid ban.

Rachel Wells then discussed whether warm winters drive insect pest-associated yield declines in rapeseed. Then Aimee Tonks, using a checkerboard approach to identify synergies for physically acting bioinsecticides to avoid using synthetic chemical pesticides

There was then a Discussion on “How Climate Change impacts IPM strategies’ led by Dick Shaw and Toby Bruce. There weren’t any surprises with the takehome messages: We need more research and more agile regulation...

On the second day, the first presentation by Tom-Allen-Stevens reported on the British On-Farm Innovation Network (BOFIN) established in 2020 to represent farmers who carry out on-farm trials by helping farmers to bring a more scientific approach to their trial and provide a platform to share results and co-create new ideas. BOFIN has four major collaboratives Defra funded projects. Although early days, BOFIN trials have already proven the worth of on-farm trials and farmer-led dissemination as a route to adoption of new ideas and will foster much needed growth in UK agricultural productivity.

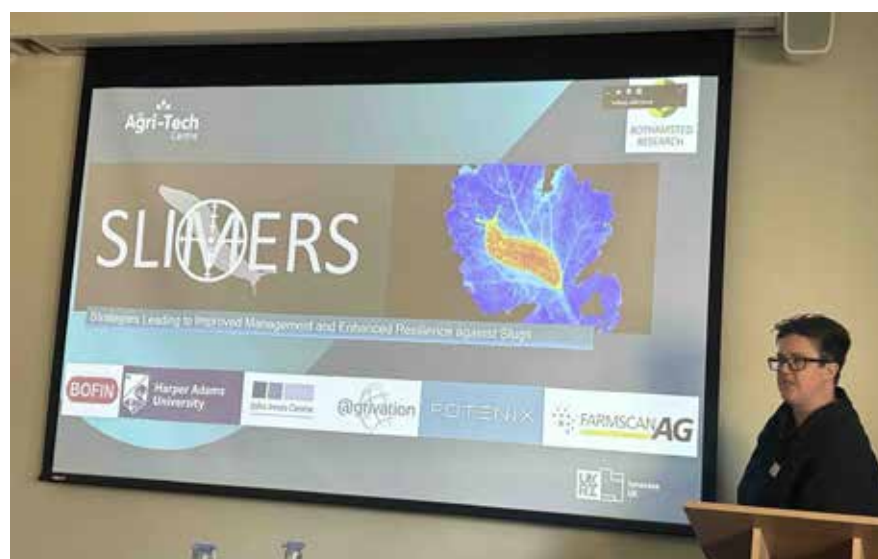
Richard Glass introduced the UK Agri-Tech Centre established in April 2024 by merging CHAP, Agri-EPI and CIEL It remains a not-for-profit public private partnership, receiving core funding from Innovate, UK, through The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology. (DSIT). As a truly transdisciplinary organisation, spanning areas such as crops, livestock, aquaculture, technology and engineering, To date it has delivered over 437 collaborative R&D projects. Such projects include

- \*New microbe-Derived Fungicides,
- \*Screening fungal isolates for fungicide and insecticide activity,
- \* SprayBot (Early disease detection and precision fungicide application).
- \* PotatoLITE (reducing cultivation intensity in potato).
- \* DeCyst (developing trap crops for nematode management)

## The SLIMERS session

Two talks introduced different aspects of the SLIMERS project that looked at strategies to reduce the impact of grey slugs on. Some of the research is captured in a recent paper by Clare Price et al <https://www.mdpi.com/2075-4450/15/10/819>

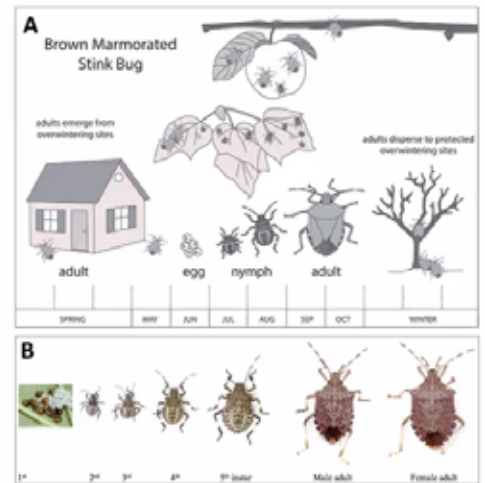
The remainder of the meeting was left to introduce individual projects including a timely uptake from Michelle Fountain on the status of the brown marmorated stink bug, which unfortunately now seems to be well established within the UK.



Kerry Mcdonald-Howard from the Agritech Centre introduces the SLIMERS project

# Summary

- BMSB present and establishing in UK
- Continued future monitoring is vital and should target urban areas to track establishment and spread
- BMSB causes significant crop damage, researchers in affected countries continue to develop and refine effective management strategies especially around biological control
- Exotic species of parasitoid (*T. japonicus*) has been effectively deployed in Italy & Switzerland for the control of BMSB
- More research needed on UK generalist predators



**BMSB lifecycle and phenology.** Images adapted from Utah State University Extension service and the Jentsch lab  
<https://extension.usu.edu/pests/research/brown-marmorated-stink-bug>  
<https://blogs.cornell.edu/jentsch/agresearch.montana.edu>

The current situation regarding the brown marmorated stink bug.

Other talks introduced novel IPM strategies to tackle the challenges posed by a variety of pests; the codling moth, woodlice, green spruce aphids, maize late wilt and how dispersal of ladybeetles from wheat or maize fields can promote aphid control in cotton.

Once again the AAB IPM meeting had a wide array of topics that allowed early career professionals to present their research. The new venue in Leicester was a big success and might be a new home for this popular meeting.



Elysia Bartel introduces her research project on the green spruce aphid.



# Annals of Applied Biology

Biosciences for Sustainability

## Update from Annals of Applied Biology

Annals is owned by the Association of Applied Biologists and as such all the journal revenue returns to the scientific community through organisation of events in relevant topic areas.

The November 2024 edition of Annals is now available.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/17447348/2024/185/3>

### DESCRIPTIONS OF PLANT VIRUSES

#### **Citrus tristeza virus: A century-long challenge for the world's citrus industries**

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/aab.12939>

**Annals of Applied Biology**  
Biosciences for Sustainability



***Citrus tristeza virus: A century-long challenge for the world's citrus industries***  
**Yongduo Sun et al, San Joaquin Valley Agricultural Sciences Center, California, USA**

Citrus tristeza virus (CTV) is a causal agent of diseases that have challenged the global citrus production for more than a century. The disease named 'tristeza', which means 'sadness' in Portuguese and Spanish, has spread by aphids and vegetative propagation, resulting in costly pandemics that reshaped the world citrus production by forcing the adaptation of disease-tolerant rootstocks.

Furthermore, management of the second major CTV-induced disease, stem pitting, became a unique example of the use of cross-protection on a large nationwide scale, allowing many citrus growing regions to control the disease that could not be managed through horticultural practices. The information gathered in this review commemorates a hundred years of research on the virus and the respective diseases, which began with classical horticultural approaches and advanced toward the cutting-edge molecular biology studies.



## Annals of Applied Biology introduces a new strapline!

#Openaccess Editorial

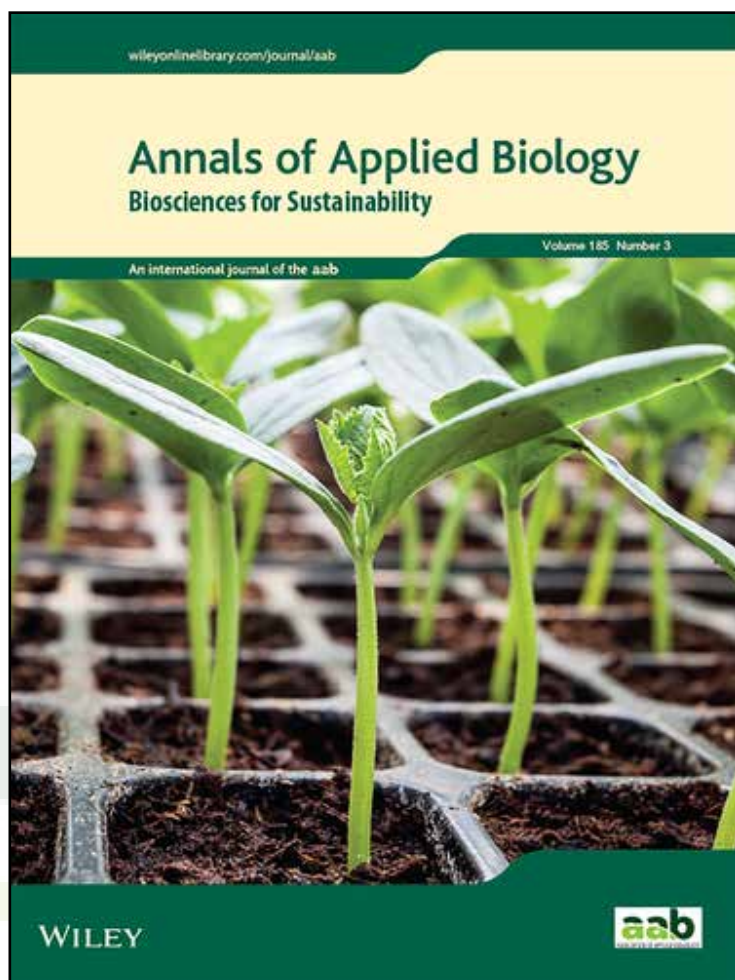
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/aab.12952>

Annals of Applied Biology will soon be rebranded with a new strapline of 'Biosciences for Sustainability'. This launch of the Annals Strapline aims to better represent the Aims and Scope of the journal and to also align it better with the owning society, the Association of Applied Biologists (AAB).

Annals has published high-quality research since 1914 across a wide range of subject areas. The term 'Applied Biology' may have a different meaning depending on the reader, so with this rebrand, we aim to clarify its meaning in the context of this journal.

Annals of Applied Biology is solely owned by the AAB, a learned society that was founded in 1904. AAB has a membership of 1000 people who have a wide spread of interests across 12 specialist groups that focus on Applied Plant Pathology, Applied Tree and Forest Biology, Biocontrol and Integrated Pest Management, Cropping and the Environment, Food Systems, Horticultural Quality and Food Loss, Nematology, Pesticide Application, Plant Gene Editing, Plant Physiology and Crop Improvement, Soil and Root Biology and Plant Virology. The main activity of the AAB is to organise conferences and workshops that are financially supported by its ownership of Annals.

The AAB wish to ensure that the content of Annals continues to closely reflect the wide breadth of interests that are represented across its membership and activities. In the context of the AAB, 'Applied Biology' broadly refers to the exploration of advances in plant biology and improving agricultural production. Our aim is to publish research that describes how an organism grows and/or interacts with the natural environment, biotic or abiotic factors and responds to man-made growth modifications.



We aim to develop closer links between Annals of Applied Biology and the Association by arranging journal special issues/sections with specific society activities. This ensures that topics chosen for special issues are actively relevant to our community as evidenced through the organisation of scientific meetings.

One aspect of Annals that will remain unchanged is the statistical rigour with which articles are reviewed. Annals engages a team of statistical editors who examine the methods used in all submitted papers. Notably, the use of multiple comparison adjustments such as Duncan's or Tukey's is not acceptable for publication in Annals. Any manuscript submitted that uses these statistical tests will be offered advice by our statistical editors and asked to use a different technique prior to final acceptance. Overall, this ensures that research published in Annals has been analysed with high statistical rigour.

We look forward to receiving manuscripts over the coming years that will enhance the quality of the journal and develop closer links with the Association of Applied Biologists.

## Upcoming deadlines for Special issues associated with recent AAB events

Annals of Applied Biology  
An international journal of the AAB

Announcing a Special Issue on:  
**Biomass and Energy Crops**  
in association with the  
Biomass and Energy Crops VI

**Paper Submission Deadline: 31 December 2024**

[Find Out More](#)

WILEY

Annals of Applied Biology  
An international journal of the AAB

Announcing a Special Issue on:  
**Potato Cyst Nematode Management**  
in association with the  
6th Symposium of Potato Cyst Nematode Management

**Paper Submission Deadline: 31 December 2024**

[Find Out More](#)

WILEY



# Creating a marketplace for new varieties of UK registered beans

**Wednesday, 4th December, 4-5pm GMT - on Microsoft Teams.**

Three new varieties of UK Registered Beans (URBeans) have been bred for British farming – selected as a crop for planting in May and harvesting in September using standard equipment. They are now set as versatile ingredients to connect British farming with impact on public health as tasty options alongside homegrown vegetables to increase soluble fibre in the British diet. Professor Eric Holub and Dr Rosanne Maguire have been advancing ‘fork-to-farm’ thinking for a social enterprise called [NurturalFood](#) that can ensure UK consumers with affordable access to URBeans and equitable income for cooperating farmers.

In this webinar, Dr Maguire will introduce the research behind URBeans from the Warwick Crop Centre, and highlight recent insights from a transdisciplinary project called [BeanMeals](#). She will be joined by two colleagues including Andrew Ward, who is leading URBean production trials at his Lincolnshire farm and is recognised as a farming innovation lead via bi-weekly episodes on his YouTube channel Wardys Waffle. And also, Ben Thomas from the Warwick Food Group, whose team is scratch-cooking food in the Eatwise Test Kitchen for the University campus, with plans to feature British ingredients including URBeans on the menu.



To register for the webinar please use this link:

[Webinar 'Creating a marketplace for new varieties of UK registered beans'](#)

A Teams link will be forwarded prior to the event.

BASIS points have been applied for.

=

# Request to participate in plant science survey

Dear Colleagues,

We are Dr. Joanna Kacprzyk and Dr. Rainer Melzer from University College Dublin, Ireland. We are conducting a study that explores the motivations behind choosing plant-related education and career pathways. We would love to learn more about the factors that influenced your decision to pursue a degree or career in this field.



If you choose to participate, you will be asked about your personal experiences with plants, plant memories, and the reasons that led you to pursue education or a career in plant science. Your participation will contribute to a data-driven approach aimed at reversing the decline of botanical education and increasing interest in plant-related careers.

We would greatly appreciate it if you could share this invitation with your colleagues, collaborators, as well as undergraduate and postgraduate students in your network who may be interested. Any help in spreading the word would be fantastic! We want to capture diversity of views from around the world!

Assess survey here ->

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScZw1xbMRtKizrZrSRP57DETEXX1iNEB5hUtxRLU3cMIo2j7Q/viewform>

Thank you for your time and support.

Best regards,

Joanna Kacprzyk & Rainer Melzer  
University College Dublin



16 - 20 JUNE 2025

# Food & Farming SUMMER SCHOOL

Have you ever considered pursuing  
a PhD in food & farming?

Apply for a **FREE** exclusive  
place on our groundbreaking  
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innovation in agriculture!

**Masters & late-stage undergraduates  
from ALL academic subjects eligible!**

**Find out more  
and apply.**



*Deadline: 17th February 2025, 5pm*



Part of AUC's  
*Future Agricultural Researchers*  
series

Funded by  
**SYLVIA WADDILOVE  
FOUNDATION UK**





# The AAB News Hub

A dedicated section for generic news content which may be of interest to our members and associates. These articles may range from current events, blogs, or discussion topics right the way through to some professionally published content. We are more than happy to receive additional content from our readers. If you come across an article or a newspaper column which you think would be of interest to our members please feel free to send it to

John ([john@aab.org.uk](mailto:john@aab.org.uk))

**[Global plastic talks collapse as oil states rebel](#)** (BBC)

**[Alarm call as world's trees slide towards extinction](#)** (BBC)

**[New study on moons of Uranus raises chance of life](#)** (BBC)

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**[China's giant sinkholes are a tourist hit - but ancient forests inside are at risk](#)** (BBC)

**[Heatwaves are surpassing the extremes predicted by climate models](#)** (New Scientist)

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## We are writing to encourage you to join AAB in 2024

Join a community of 1000+ like-minded professionals that also has significant financial benefits, especially for early career professionals (ECPs).

### 2024 Membership fees:

**Regular members: £65**

**Early Career Professional members: £22**

(anyone within 5 years of finishing full-time education; bachelor or graduate study including career breaks)

**Retired members: £33.50**

### Membership benefits:

- **Reduced fees for ALL AAB events.** Regular members pay £100 and ECP members pay £50 **LESS** than equivalent non-members to attend AAB in-person events. ECP members can join events as an online delegate for free.
- **20% discount on Article Publishing Charges** when publishing to *Plant Biotechnology Journal*
- **ECPs are eligible for travel grants to any AAB event (up to £300)**
- **All members are eligible for Carer grants (up to £500)**
- **Eligibility to apply for Federation of European Society of Plant Biology short term mobility grants (up to €3000)**
- **Consideration for Fellowship of AAB (F Appl. Biol.)** after seven years of continuous membership
- **30% discount for online purchase of 'Aspects of Applied Biology'**
- **Reciprocal 50% reduction in membership fees with the Royal Society of Biology**
- **Invitation to contribute events and job opportunities to the monthly AAB newsletter** circulated to 3500+ scientists
- **Opportunity to join an AAB Specialist Group, which determine AAB activities.**
  - Applied Plant Pathology
  - Biocontrol and IPM
  - Food Systems
  - Nematology
  - PlantEd Gene Editing
  - Soil and Root Biology
  - Applied Tree and Forest Biology
  - Cropping and the Environment
  - Horticultural Quality and Food Loss
  - Pesticide Application
  - Plant Physiology and Crop Improvement
  - Virology

Professor Mike Gooding, AAB President

Dr Geraint Parry, AAB Executive Officer

[www.aab.org.uk/membership](http://www.aab.org.uk/membership)

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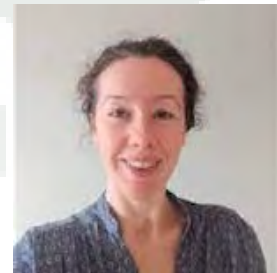
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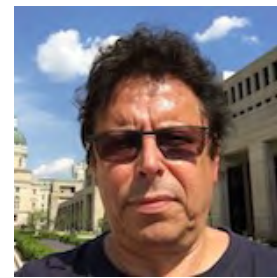
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