



Agrinatura 2026 Conference

Anticipating Change and the Role of Research in Shaping Future Food Systems

Hosted by the University of Reading, United Kingdom

26-27 May 2026

[Agriculture Building](#), Whiteknights Road, Earley, Reading RG6 2BU, England

Venue: Nike Lecture Theatre in the Agriculture building

About the Conference

The conference will explore sequentially:

- What changes are already reshaping food systems;
- What futures are emerging and which transformation pathways are plausible;
- What this means for research, partnerships and action.

In a context marked by climate change, geopolitical tensions, biodiversity loss and shifting global markets, food systems are undergoing profound and uncertain transformations. These dynamics call for renewed approaches to research, collaboration and knowledge production.

At the centre of the discussions will be the evolving and strategic role of Research & Innovation (R&I) and Education in shaping equitable and resilient food systems. Particular attention will be given to the role of Agrinatura in strengthening European and North–South partnerships, while fostering broader international collaboration across science, policy and practice.

The conference will bring together researchers, academics, students, policymakers and development practitioners to foster dialogue across disciplines and sectors. It will combine plenary sessions, panel discussions, thematic tracks and interactive formats such as poster sessions to encourage inclusive and participatory exchanges.

A key feature of the conference is its forward-looking approach, combining foresight and participatory discussions to better understand emerging trends, anticipate future challenges and inform strategic choices for food systems transformation. Participants will collectively reflect on possible futures and translate these into strategic orientations for research and partnerships.

Beyond technical and economic dimensions, the conference will also address the social, cultural and behavioural aspects of food systems transformation, including the role of local knowledge, consumption patterns and societal values, including gender equity.

The conference aims to generate strategic insights and practical orientations to inform future research agendas, strengthen international partnerships and enhance the global impact of research and innovation. Exchanges will also contribute to shaping Agrinatura's strategic direction and to defining priorities for future research and partnerships.

A short synthesis note capturing key insights and strategic orientations will be shared after the conference.

Tuesday 26 th May 2026		
Time	Session	Speaker
13:30 – 14:00	Registration	
14:00 – 14:15	Opening session	Andrew Ainslie, Chair of the Conference Organising Collective Parveen Yacoob OBE, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation, University of Reading Ioannis Dimitriou, President, Agrinatura
14:15 – 14:45	Session 1 - Signals of change <i>Reading the signals: emerging transformations in global food systems</i> This session will examine weak signals, trends and disruptions already reshaping food systems and research agendas. The objective is to identify key uncertainties and drivers that will frame the rest of the conference.	Leonard Mizzi, Adviser Food Systems, European Commission, DG INTPA
14:45 – 16:30	Roundtable/panel discussion Moderated discussion with 4–5 lightning interventions bringing different perspectives and interaction with the audience. Short synthesis of emerging signals and uncertainties to guide Day 2 discussions. <i>Moderator: Ioannis Dimitriou, Agrinatura</i>	Patrick Caron, President of Agropolis, CGIAR Integrated Partnership Board Patrick Okori, Executive Secretary, RUFORUM Petronella Chaminuka, Executive Manager Research Support & Coordination Agricultural Research Council, South Africa Katja Vuori, Chief Executive Officer Agricord
16:30 – 17:30	Coffee break and poster session /interactive sessions	Poster session in Room 1L08
17:30 for 18:00	Buffet supper in the Meadow Suite	

Wednesday 27 th May 2026		
Time	Session 2: Futures in motion <i>Exploring scenarios for food systems transformation</i>	This session moves from signals to plausible futures. It will explore how different trends might interact between 2035 and 2050 and what this implies for research and partnerships.
9:00 – 11:00	Thematic track 1: <i>Multi-actor innovation and private sector engagement</i> <i>Moderator: Jelle Maas, WUR</i>	

	The role of seed-aid in a protracted crisis context: A localization strategy from South Sudan.	Herrington K. et al.
	Rural entrepreneurship and multi-actor innovation in Benin's agri-food systems.	BioViva MJE et al.
	The International Innovation Hub (IIH).	Broin et al.
	Drivers of transformation in Syrian agriculture since 2000 and future pathways towards 2050.	Alhamada et al.
	Woody plant encroachment in southern Africa: implication for livestock production	Tjelele et al.
	Modern arable and diverse ley farming systems can increase soil organic matter faster than global targets	Gantlett, R.
	Makerspace Education for Hybrid Agricultural Energy Systems in Uganda	Rafat Al Afif et al.
	Thematic track 2: Climate change, resilience, and adaptation <i>Moderator: Emelie Zonabend, SLU</i>	
	Shifting agricultural practices and crops can contribute to food security and climate resilience: example of soy-maize research and capacity building in Malawi and Zambia.	Baron J. et al.
	Addressing livelihood precarity, food insecurity and gendered social change through natural farming in dryland India: can Andhra Pradesh Community-managed Natural Farming deliver transformative climate-sensitive agrifood systems?	Osbahr H. et al.
	Farmer Centred Research for Improving the Adoption of Indigenous Grains in Local Production Systems.	Ndegwa H. Maina
	Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on physical and economic access to food in developed countries: What can we learn from the EU countries?	Pawlak K.
	Researchers in Sustainability Transformation.	Rosengren L. and Sell M.
	Cellular Agriculture and Food Futures: Beyond Consumer Acceptance.	Nkobou A.
	Thematic track 3: Research-policy interfaces, and Africa-Europe collaboration <i>Moderator: Sylvain Perret, Agrinatura</i>	
	The International Research Consortium on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (IRC-FNSSA): from consolidation to implementation.	Annor Frempong I. et al.
	The impact of USAID's shutdown in South Sudan and implications for the transformation of fragile agri-food system.	Deng Chol D. et al.
	Bridging Science and Policy for Food System Change.	Rokka S.
	The African Livestock Observatory.	Ainslie A.

	The TSARA initiative	Schill M.
	The DeSIRA LIFT+ Service Facility.	Dang Van C. et al.
	Institutionalising Foresight for Food Systems Change: Experience and Lessons from Foresight4Food.	Woodhill J.
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee break and poster session	
11:30 – 12:30	Plenary session Pitch from thematic tracks discussions. This session will synthesise and prioritise key insights emerging from the thematic tracks. Each track will deliver a short, structured pitch addressing: - One key insight or emerging trend - One critical uncertainty - One implication for research, partnerships or action The session will generate a concise set of strategic insights to inform the final panel discussion and overall conference conclusions.	Facilitator: <i>Jim Woodhill, University of Reading</i>
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 – 15:00	Session 3: Choices that shape tomorrow Panel discussion <i>From scenarios to strategy: the evolving role of research and partnerships</i> Building on previous discussions, this plenary session will translate foresight insights into strategic choices for research institutions, universities and networks such as Agrinatura. Guiding question: How must research evolve to remain relevant, credible and impactful across multiple possible futures? <i>Moderator: Isolina Boto, Agrinatura</i>	Shenggen Fan , Chair Professor, Academy of Global Food Economics and Policy, China Eugenia Saini , Executive Secretary, FONTAGRO, Latin America Paul Lindley OBE , Chancellor of the University of Reading, founder of Ella's Kitchen and children's welfare campaigner Aggrey Agumya , Executive Director, FARA
15:00 – 15:15	Key takeaways and next steps for Agrinatura Closure	Ioannis Dimitriou, President, Agrinatura
15:30 – 17:30	Post-conference CEA-FIRST session	Dimitriou I. et al.



Posters

Title	Authors
Do Experts' Opinions Matter in Resilience Measurement? Evidence from Expert Elicitation and Non-Additive Aggregation	Aminu R, Bardsley N, Balcombe K
Building knowledge systems for regenerative agriculture to achieve agricultural sustainability goals: Lessons from the KIARA project	Cardey S
Advancing Sustainable Agricultural Value Chains through Strengthening Transdisciplinary Skills and Cooperation in East African Doctoral Education.	Chaloupkova P
Farming energy: Assessing the impact of integrating agriculture and renewable energy production on farm management practices	Dickins T
Using Foresight to Inform Climate Resilience Initiatives in Uganda	Galabuzi J
Co-designing effective pollinator friendly food labelling	Kerry B
Barriers to Adoption of Systems of Rice Intensification with reference to the impacts of gender inequality on female rice farmers in Liberia	Khan M
Working in partnership. How can farmers best inform peer-reviewed science, and scientists best inform farmers?	Mauchline, A.
The impacts of Lopholaena coriifolia encroachment on grassland vegetation along a topographical gradient	Maziko Y, Monegi P, Tjelele J
Implication of fire as a post-thinning tool for savanna understorey vegetation and ecosystem structure	Monegi P et al.
Co-Creating Business Cases for Nutrient-Dense Value Chains: A Multi-Actor Innovation Model from Uganda	Nangosha E, Namboze J, Sebatta C, Bukenya R, Sengooba P, Kikomeko PK, Kansabe S, Aguma L, Obot N, Yossa ID
Sustainability Linkages and the Trade Effects of Technical Non-Tariff Measures: Empirical Evidence from Global Palm Oil Sector	Peci J
Scenarios for sustainable livestock futures in Europe	Staton T and Smith L
The effect of deficit irrigation on strawberry propagation	Swann W and Hadley P
Who's milking the system?	Szkolnicka W
From Participation to Co-Leadership: Advancing Youth and Gender Inclusion in Agricultural Research and Innovation through YPAR	Tesdall G