

Dear SIRN community,

We are sending you this update of recent activities. We hope you find the content of interest.

We encourage you to join the network by completing the [online form](#). If you haven't register yet, please do as this will help us build an expertise database that will be used for future reference. Registration with SIRN will only take few minutes and it is free.

To receive future news follow us on [@SIRN Tweets](#) or subscribe to our newsletter [here](#).

Adélia de Paula (on behalf of [SIRN Leadership Team](#))

SIRN recent activities:

Final report on BBSRC-Led workshop on the Sustainable Intensification of agricultural systems in sub-Saharan Africa is now available.

SIRN supported BBSRC in this workshop. The event focused on defining opportunities and participants identified 8 broad challenges as priority research areas. BBSRC have secured funding for a research programme which will include some of the challenges highlighted in the report. This will be a BBSRC programme, funded through the Global Challenges Research Fund. They are currently working on the development of the call for proposals. The call is expected to open in early autumn. Proposals must be led by a UK PI, but partnerships with eligible Co-Investigators based in SSA will be strongly encouraged. Further information about the call will be made available in a pre-announcement at the end of July.

Read more [here](#).

SIRN workshop exploring contribution of social sciences in future SI projects/programme and how the area can contribute to new research questions

Led by Dr Carol Morris (University of Nottingham) and Dr David Rose (currently at UCL due to start a Lectureship in Human Geography at UEA in September 2017) the purpose of the workshop was to explore the ways in which the social sciences might contribute to research into SI, including on matters relating to food production, environmental stewardship, and agricultural society. David produced a blog with his impressions from the event and we are now discussing on expanding the discussions with the **role of economics in SI**. This will be a separate workshop to be held in Edinburgh (date TBC) led by Andrew Barnes (SRUC). If you wish more information, [get in touch](#).

SIRN participation at Competing demands and perceptions of sustainability for the food industry at University of Birmingham – 04th July 2017

As part of the REACH (Research Engagement and Collaboration Hub) programme, the Department of Entrepreneurship and Local Economy at the University of Birmingham held a workshop exploring the competing demands and perceptions of sustainability for the food industry and Adelia de Paula discussed UK major SI projects and introduced SIRN. The workshop is part of a wider project to engage cross community debates on sustainability to include economic (sustainable livelihoods), social (minimises negative impact on wellbeing) and environmental (minimises negative impact on the natural environment) led by Jane Glover. SIRN will be working with Jane to share findings of the project in future.

Soil Coordination Group

BBSRC and NERC are connecting soil researchers across SSP, SARIC, and SIRN to explore collaboration opportunities. We are planning an online conference for soil researchers in November 2017, where the community can exchange ideas and updates on ongoing projects. The conference will include a session on career development and grant writing skills, and keynote presentations on challenges for soil research.

News from the Sustainable Intensification Research Platform - SIP

SIP Platform (funded by Defra and Welsh Government) is a multi-partner research programme comprising farmers, industry experts, academia, environmental organisations, policymakers and other stakeholders. The project will be ending this year and we are exploring ways for SIRN to help in keeping the partnership together through facilitation of meetings and future collaboration.

For the moment, we are sending you the link to [the sixth edition of SIPScene](#) the project newsletter with valuable information on projects and viewpoints.

SAVE THE DAY for SIP Webinar - 2nd November - 13.00-14.30

SUSTAINABLE INTENSIFICATION AT THE LANDSCAPE SCALE: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LANDSCAPE TYPOLOGY TOOL

Managing farmland to increase farm output and competitiveness, whilst protecting the countryside and enhancing environmental and social benefits defines the work of the Sustainable Intensification Research Platform. The Platform has produced a tool to assist in planning and decision making for Sustainable Intensification at the landscape-scale. In this Webinar, which is launching the Tool nationally, researchers at CEH and ADAS provide an introduction to the tool and its varied capabilities and applications. The tool will be freely available for decision makers in the Autumn.

The webinar will be presented by Professor Jack Cosby (CEH) and Chaired by Siobhan Sherry (Defra). **MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW.**

Information on other past events:

Science for Defra: excellence in the application of evidence

The conference held at the Royal Society in March brought together nearly three-hundred academics, government scientists and policymakers for an open and collaborative discussion about how science and technology can best inform environmental, food and rural policy. Following the conference a series of blogs have been produced covering different topics such as data, emerging technologies, food and farming policies and environmental quality.

You can access the blogs and more information on the event at the [Royal Society website](#).

Launch of Science Technology Facilities Council Food Network+

Food Network+ (SFN) was launched in June. The network aims to bring together STFC researchers and facilities with research and industry in the agri-food sector and will build an interdisciplinary community to make a meaningful contribution to the food system - from sustainable intensification, through building resilience in supply chains to novel technologies to engage consumers and help change behaviour and improve nutrition. The network will fund proof of concept studies, visits between researchers, small focussed meetings, and annual network meetings. The project is led by Prof Sarah Bridle (University of Manchester) with Alison Fletcher, as Project Manager. SFN and SIRN will be exploring ways to connect both communities.

For more information, visit their website <http://www.stfcfoodnetwork.org/>

Policy:

New Parliamentary POST Notes:

[Security of UK Food Supply](#) - Published 4th July 2017

This note outlines current UK trade in food and animal feed, examines the challenges raised to the security of UK food supply by withdrawal from the EU and analyses the policy options available for improving UK food security

[Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture](#) – Published 4th July 2017

Agricultural practices can reduce water quality, degrade soils and cause biodiversity loss. This in turn can disrupt natural processes that support food production. Environmentally sustainable agriculture seeks to reduce environmental damage and restore such processes. This POSTnote summarises associated land management options, agricultural policies and the constraints imposed by a new trading environment.

Global Policy Lab group funded

Policy Labs bring together early career researchers from different disciplines to scope a policy-relevant issue, with teams forming at the workshop and then competing to write a report for

the GFS programme. The Global Food Security programme has led Policy Labs on sustainable nutrition (2016) and multi-functional landscapes (2017).

A team from the GFS Policy Lab workshop were awarded a prize of £5,000 to produce a report examining how we can provide food alongside other ecosystem services, incorporating examples of best practice from other countries. The successful group are: Dr Ruth Wade (The University of Sheffield), Dr Alison Scott-Brown (Kew Gardens), Dr Sofia Cota-Franco (Newcastle University), Dr Rory O'Connor (University of Reading), and Dr Ben Keane (University of York).

Read more [here](#).

New Blogs:

[The global avocado crisis and resilience in the UK's fresh fruit and vegetable supply system](#)

Global Food Security Blog published on 19th June 2017

The UK's fresh fruit and vegetable supply system is vulnerable to water-related risk. Cranfield University's Chloe Sutcliffe and Tim Hess introduce a new project as part of the "Resilience of the UK Food System in a Global Context" (GFS-FSR) programme investigating this issue

[What we talk about when we talk about sustainable intensification](#)

SIRN Blog published on 5th July 2017

Niamh Mahon, a postgraduate researcher in the School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences at Nottingham Trent University explores the concept of SI. Currently she is undertaking a project developing a suite of consensus-based indicators of sustainable intensification for the UK, via a participatory, bottom-up approach.

Future events:

[N8 AgriFood 2017 International Conference](#)

Food Production for the Future - Generating nutritious food from resilient & sustainable agricultural systems

11 - 13 Jul 2017 - Durham

Sue Hartley will be speaking on the 12th July on discussions on Sustainability: Working out the optimal methods, metrics and examples for assessing sustainability in agri-food systems - Moderated by Mariana Rufino. Look out for it.

[6th International Symposium on Soil Organic Matter](#)

Healthy soils for sustainable agriculture: the role of SOM

3-7 September 2017 - Rothamsted Research, Harpenden

SIRN will have a joint display with colleagues from SSP, SARIC and BBSRC.

Early Bird Registration until 16 July 2017

[Valuing Nature Annual Conference 2017](#)

18-19 October 2017, John McIntyre Centre, Edinburgh

This conference brings together people from diverse research areas and from business, policy and practice – all with the common goal of tackling Valuing Nature challenges. You can apply for a place and submit abstract by 30th July.

[AAB and SIP Sustainable Intensification Conference](#)

28-29 November 2017, Rothamsted Research, Harpenden

SIRN will host an informal discussion at the end of the 29th November and we will have our Annual Meeting on the 30th November from 2 to 4pm. We ask colleagues to save these days and join our discussions.

AAB have negotiated a special rate at Luton Hoo at £120 per person/night. However, these places are limited, so it is advisable to book early if you want to take advantage of this offer.

News from the wider community:

- [Professor Sir Mark Walport outlines the vision for UK Research and Innovation](#)
- [£100 million Rutherford Fund to attract best researchers to the UK](#)

BBSRC:

[New flexible training opportunities for agri-food professionals from the AgriFood Training Partnership](#)

[Call for Pool of Experts, Strategy Panels and Committees](#)

[Call for Bioscience Skills and Careers Postdoctoral Researcher Subgroup members](#)

Training:

[UK Multiscale Biology Summer School - 11-14 September 2017 - University of Nottingham](#)

The aims of the UK Multiscale Biology Summer School are to introduce:

- concepts of multiscale biology, data and modelling to a diverse audience;
- the main classes of mathematical frameworks used to model biological systems at several scales;
- important mathematical techniques used to tackle the intricacies of truly multi-scale phenomena;
- key computational tools for the simulation and analysis of multi-scale biological systems;
- successful case studies described by leading experts.

Places are limited to 40. The first 20 registrations for scientists based at UK universities and non-profit research institutes will be free of charge. Normal registration will be £100, and £500 for participants from Industry.

Highlight report:

In June, the Institute of Food Science & Technology (IFST), launched a [‘Sustainable Food System Framework: A Focus on Food Sustainability’](#) . The report outlines 6 key themes that provide a framework to develop guidance, new knowledge, policy, and other initiatives to support the vision of sustainable food systems, while keeping a focus on food, technology and evidence. Recommendations for broad activity areas are made under each of these themes:

1. Resource risks and pressures
2. Healthy sustainable diets
3. Circular economy and sustainable manufacturing
4. Novel production systems and ingredients
5. Decent work and equitable trade
6. Transparency, traceability and trust

The SI Network is funded by the Biological and Biotechnology Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and the Natural Environmental Research Council (NERC).



Copyright ©SIRN 2017 - All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

Sustainable Intensification Research Network (SIRN)
Rothamsted Research
Harpenden, Hertfordshire
UK - AL5 2JQ