



HEALTHY SOIL  
HEALTHY FOOD  
HEALTHY PEOPLE

## H3 News October 2022

Welcome to the third edition of the H3 Programme newsletter. We're excited to share updates from our recent Annual Programme Meeting in Sheffield, where over 120 participants engaged in vibrant discussions, networking events, and field visits. This edition highlights the progress of our interdisciplinary research projects, from innovative hydroponic systems to the benefits of regenerative agriculture, and celebrates the achievements of our team members in shaping food system policies and strategies. Join us as we continue to drive transformative change in the UK's food systems.

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### EVENTS

#### Annual programme meeting fosters collaboration in sheffield



H3 and the [UK SPF Transforming Food Systems](#) team were delighted to host the **Annual Programme Meeting in Sheffield 12th and 13th September**. Around 100 participants came and a further 20 people joined online, from the first 4 funded projects, the Centre for Doctoral Training, the 11 recently awarded Call 2

projects, project funders, partners and stakeholders. The programme included plenary and cross cutting discussions, networking events (including at the Weston Park Museum, below left) and a field visit (to the Regather Moss Valley Farm, below right). The programme was designed to encourage and facilitate longer term cross programme collaboration.





**Urban Agriculture Special Interest Group** – a one day meeting of researchers and partners across the UKSPF Transforming Food Systems programme with a shared interest in Urban Agriculture visited Sheffield on Friday 4th March to understand the scope of respective projects, identify potential synergies, and opportunities for future collaboration. Participants are pictured visiting Our Cow Molly.



**H3 PI Peter Jackson** was in conversation with **George Monbiot** on 23rd June, as part of the Festival of Debate in Sheffield to discuss Monbiot's new book *Regenesiis*. An audience of more than 700 people demonstrated strong public interest in this area of work.



## PROGRESS

**WP1 (Novel Growing Technologies)** has continued to conduct lab scale experiments into the effects of synthetic microbial communities on plants grown in hydroponic systems, using both conventional rockwool and novel foam-based media. These experiments will be taken to scale in the coming months, both at Stockbridge Technology Centre and later within WP2.

**WP2 (Hybrid Hydroponic Horticulture)** experiments seek to determine whether hydroponic systems with minimal inputs (light and heating) are feasible to grow leafy greens at a scale to supply local peri urban markets. Sites have been selected, prepared and poly tunnels successfully erected within the grounds of Wentworth Castle, and on farm at Our Cow Molly. The team have also been working to establish the optimal configuration of hydroponic systems at the University of Sheffield AWEC (Arthur Willis Controlled Environment Facility).

**WP3 (Landscape Scale Regenerative Agriculture)** aims to understand the beneficial effects of regenerative agriculture through the scientific study of soil, wider environmental outcomes and food quality in two UK landscapes. Farmers have been recruited to the study, protocols developed and baseline sampling to monitor soils, winter birds, natural enemies and pests completed. A first round of qualitative interviews with farmers have also been conducted. An Innovative Farmers field lab related to microbial inoculants is being designed in collaboration with the Soil Association. See also this [web article](#).

**WP5 (Increasing Fibre Consumption)** Louise Dye participated in a webinar alongside industry partners, hosted by the Food and Drink Federation as part of the Fibre February, Action on Fibre initiative. Sam Caton and Louise Dye were hosted by the Whole EU Grain project and Danish Wholegrain Partnership, on a knowledge exchange visit to Copenhagen on 9th and 10th June. The visit focussed on public private partnership development and included visits to Danish companies and organisations involved in product development and reformulation.

Subsequently a University of Sheffield Global Engagement fund supported a three-day visit by researchers from the University of Copenhagen, Danish Cancer Society, and the Danish Ministry of Food Agriculture and Fisheries to Sheffield. Discussions included the H3 research staff from WP4 and 5, representatives from the Food and Drink Federation, and UKSPF team.

## SOCIALLY



H3 spent an enjoyable and successful day discussing and baking at the School of Artisan Food on 7th June. Pictured to the left with our loaves.

## PUBLICATIONS

Peter Jackson co-authored a letter published in Nature Food on 19th July which says that the Government Food Strategy has failed to deliver the system wide change that is so urgently needed. [UK government food strategy lacks ambition to achieve transformative food system change | Nature Food](#)

## CONGRATULATIONS

Lynn Dicks, appointed by Defra as a member of their “Ecology and Ecosystem Services” expert panel, to provide scrutiny, feedback and advice on analysis being done to inform the design and development of the [Environmental Land Management schemes](#), and for her Ecological Engagement Award ‘Bridging the gap between ecology and other groups from the British Ecological Society. See also: [British Ecological Society announces 2022 award winners - British Ecological Society](#)

Louise Dye, invited to co-chair the Health and Wellbeing working group within Leeds City Council who are tasked with developing the Leeds food strategy.

Bhavani Shankar appointed as the leader of the team responsible for the next Committee of Food Security, High Level Panel of Experts report on “Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition”, to be launched in July 2023.

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