



# Plant Breeding Fit for the Future

## PROGRAMME

Wednesday 12th October 2022

9.30am -4.45pm

Conference Aston,  
Aston Street, Birmingham B4 7ET





**Jo Lewis | Director of Policy and Strategy  
at Soil Association**

As the evidence for climate change impact becomes impossible to ignore, it is clear that the UK will need new plant varieties to achieve a more sustainable and resilient agriculture. This requires revising and reimagining our current system; however, when discussing this topic the focus is often on technologies. In this realm the resulting debate becomes quickly polarised, leaving little space to discuss the big picture around the UK planting breeding system: understanding its current challenges and drivers for the development of new varieties, discussing the current plant breeding system, reimagining how it could be more impactful and exploring the changes required to move forward and make it futureproof.

This conference aims to become that space, providing a unique opportunity to bring together a diverse range of agricultural philosophies and explore current plant breeding frameworks and future needs in agriculture, search for areas of synergy and discuss ways to improve plant breeding to ensure we have the right plants to tackle the UK's challenges. We hope this will be the beginning of a fruitful knowledge exchange which can lead to a comprehensive understanding and a starting point to reimagine the plant breeding system we need in the 21st Century.



**Ruth Bastow | Innovation Director at CHAP**

Plant breeding and the varieties we grow play a crucial role in sustainable agricultural systems. This event provides an excellent and timely opportunity to explore future requirements and explore how to maximise and leverage the impact of plant breeding to meet market needs alongside local and global challenges.

For this to be a success, collaboration is key. Bringing industry stakeholders together will provide an excellent opportunity to identify areas for potential cooperation, foster greater efficiencies and hopefully encourage a more successful transition from breeding programmes to realisation in the market.



## EVENT PROGRAMME AND SPEAKERS

9.00am - 9.30am

**Registration**

9.35am – 9.50am

**Opening words**

**Ruth Bastow (Innovation Director - CHAP) and  
Jo Lewis (Soil Association Policy Director)**

9:50 – 10:20am

**Setting the scene: A tipping point for change.**

In this session, we explore the current agricultural landscape in the UK and the once-in-a-generation changes it is experiencing.

**Presenter - Tim Benton (Chatham House)**

10:20 – 11:00

**The role and potential of plant breeding.**

An invitation to look at current plant breeding practices, what works well and what are the limitations which should be addressed to make sure the industry is ready for a resilient future.

**Chair – Hannah Senior (PBS)**

10:20 – 10:35am

**Making 'the grade'.**

**Paul Gosling (AHDB)**

10:35 – 11:00am

**Panel perspectives.**

**Bruce Pearce (Director of Horticultural Science at Garden Organic),  
Jo Matthews (Germinal), and Jen Bromley (Vertical Future)**

11:00 – 11:30

**Refreshment break**

11:30 -12:30

**Enabling plant breeding for the future.**

An opportunity to reimagine the UK plant breeding system and explore how should it look like to make it futureproof.

**Chair – Liz Bowles (Farm Carbon Toolkit)**

11:30 – 11:45am

**What could the future look like?**

**Tom MacMillan (RAU)**

11:45 – 12:30pm

**Panel perspectives.**

**Charlotte Allender (University of Warwick),  
Kate McEvoy (Real Seeds),  
Katherine Denby (University of York)**

12:30 – 13:30

**Lunch**

13:30 -15:30

**Stakeholder breakout rooms**

Work with us to co-design this new future, particularly from a plant breeding perspective. Bring your ideas and share your perspectives on this challenge as we seek to build potential solutions.

15:30 – 16:00

**Refreshment break**

16:00 – 16:45

**Feedback and action plan**

Pulling the threads together, this final session shares themes from the breakout discussions and brings together the ideas from the day.

**Ruth Bastow and Jo Lewis**

16:45

**Close**



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