

Future Food Project Gallery present colourful overview of seed funded projects

How can we encourage people to make sustainable food choices? What is the effect of domesticated lettuce on our gut? And why is food allergy labelling so confusing? The project gallery of the Future Food Hub provided a colourful and diverse overview of the results of some of its seed funded research projects.

- Do you have a food allergy and are you frustrated with inconsistent and unclear labelling on food products? Marty Blom (TNO/UMCU) and Bregje Holleman (Humanities) introduced us to the communication of allergen information on product labels. On the basis of their research [they advocate a uniform label with one type of “may contain” statement](#);
- If we know that other people (for example our neighbours, colleagues or friends) are making sustainable food choices, we appear to be more inclined to make similar choices ourselves, Michelle Bal (Social Sciences) informed us;
- Koen Beumer (Geosciences) showed us some thus far hidden implications of genome editing like CRISPR: new jobs may be created (i.e. bioinformaticians), existing jobs may be transformed (i.e. policy makers and regulators) and existing jobs may become obsolete (i.e. agricultural labour). An important question is whether we have taken sufficient measures to deal with these labour effects, for example in terms of reskilling. On 7 December 2021 the researchers involved in the project organise a workshop to discuss the labour implications of genome editing in further detail. Interested participants can send an email to k.beumer@uu.nl.
- We also found out that ‘wild’ or ‘natural’ food is not always healthier. Paul Jochems (Science Faculty) explained about how his [gut on a chip](#) showed how domesticated lettuce benefits the biological efficacy of our intestines. In other words, it is much better for our gut than wild varieties;
- Ronette Gehring (Veterinary Science) showed us around the world of milk and clarified how toxins (i.e. antibiotics, but also ‘natural’ herbs) end up in cow’s milk, thereby potentially affecting human health in both positive and negative ways;
- Denise de Ridder and Marleen Gillebaart introduced participants to the healthy snack they developed, aiming to encourage people to make healthier snack choices. However, the experiment did not turn out the way they had hoped. Colleagues from UU, Leiden University and the City of Utrecht commented on the experiment. It turned out that simply having a healthier option was not enough. You also have to consider people’s habits and grasp their attention, for example;
- To conclude we were taken on a trip to Africa and Southeast Asia to discuss the consequences for food and nutrition security of several major natural (i.e. climate change) and socioeconomic changes. Guus van Westen (Geosciences) illustrated how many well-intended projects and programmes focusing on inclusive business models and alternative employment creation do not always benefit local communities on the long term.

You can still submit a seed money proposal yourself before November 15. Please check the Future Food Utrecht website for more information.