We proudly present our highlights of 2020. We are happy to say that we were able to make progress despite of the difficulties of past year and we would like to share some positive developments and research results from scientists in our community with you. In 2020 Future Food Utrecht kept putting its energy and invested funds in finding its way among the stakeholders in the food sector, making Utrecht University visible as a research university with a food profile and creating opportunities for UU researchers to collaborate on relevant food-related challenges for society. We also focused on addressing topics in (online) meetings of general interest for our community to increase the Food Literacy of researchers and students interested in food related topics.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Funded projects &amp; Scientific Articles &amp; Reports</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Which current EU-level policies have a (potential) positive influence on the food environment?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Who are the frontrunners in the current agro-ecological approaches in the current Dutch agricultural system?</strong></td>
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<td>Utrecht researchers Sanne Djojosoeparto en Carlijn Kamphuis participated in an EU research project focusing on the evaluation of policies influencing food environments as developed by the European Commission. The results can be found in the report: ‘Healthy Food Environment Policy Index (Food-EPI): European Union. An overview of EU-level policies influencing food environments in EU Member States.’</td>
<td>In 2020 the final report of the WINK project on sustainable farming, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, was published. The report, in which Jerry van Dijk participated, addresses the position of frontrunners in agro-ecological approaches in the current Dutch agricultural system and how a knowledge base for agro-ecological approaches can be set up that is practically useful for farmers, and that can accelerate a sustainability transition in agriculture by enabling diffusion of that knowledge throughout the wider farmer community.</td>
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<td><strong>Future Food Utrecht awarded (Seed) funding grants to four interdisciplinary teams:</strong></td>
<td><strong>NWO Talent program grants for two FFU researchers</strong></td>
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<td>- ‘Photonics for Early Allergic response Detection’</td>
<td>Kaisa Kajala, from the Plant Ecophysiology group received a VIDI grant for her project ‘How do roots protect themselves?’. She will study how to strengthen a root cell layer that many crops have, under controlled genetic level. This knowledge can be used for breeding more tolerant crops.</td>
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<td>- ‘You are what you eat! Real World Evidence on the Dutch diet through automatic nutrient intake recognition’</td>
<td>Ine Dorrestijn, from the Copernicus Institute for Sustainable Development, received a VENI grant for her project ‘How the past influences conflicts between wildlife and humans’ to study the complexity of conflicts between wildlife and humans in contexts when livestock predation and damage to crops are at stake.</td>
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<td>- ‘Holistic intestinal biological efficacy of different lettuce lines’</td>
<td><strong>Future Food researchers participate in first transdisciplinary consortium in the Netherlands set to work on the transition food system as a whole</strong></td>
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<td>- ‘Catalysing the plant-based protein transition in the Netherlands’</td>
<td>Brian Dermody, Merel Soons, and Arjan Stegeman participate in the NWA project ‘Transition to a sustainable food system’ which received NWO funding to search for ways to accelerate the transition to a healthy and sustainable food system in the Netherlands. A total of 20 knowledge institutions, companies and civil society partners joined the project.</td>
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<td><strong>Go to gallery awarded projects</strong></td>
<td><strong>In 2020, the first joint perspective paper written by Future Food researchers, spread across many disciplines and all the UU-faculties and the University College Roosevelt was published in the OA Journal Challenges</strong></td>
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<td><strong>EU Horizon 2020 funding for a large potato project</strong></td>
<td>‘Towards Healthy Planet Diets—A Transdisciplinary Approach to Food Sustainability Challenges’</td>
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<td>- ‘Accelerated Development of multiple-stress tolerant PoTato (ADAPT),’</td>
<td>How can the Netherlands transition to more nature-inclusive dairy farming? It’s rather complex as research from the Copernicus Institute for Sustainable Development at the Utrecht University shows. The researchers, Hens Runhaar, Marko Hekker, Niko Wojtynia and Dorith Vermunt, provided policy advice to the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality.</td>
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<td>In total a sum of nearly 5 million euro was awarded to the ADAPT project, in which several institutions and potato breeders in Europe will collaborate. Within the project, Utrecht University plant scientist Rashmi Sasidharan will lead the investigations into the potato response to flooding.</td>
<td><strong>Five barriers to more nature-inclusive dairy farming</strong></td>
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**More information**
The Future Food Massive Online Open Course, an interdisciplinary course developed by UU and UMCU researchers, has been offered for four years in a row. Last November the number of participants reached the 10,000 with a total of 600 students worldwide completing the full course. The course lasts five weeks and focuses on two themes: food shortage and healthy choices, each taking up two weeks of the course.

Utrecht University is one of the knowledge partners participating in this initiative. In 2020 Utrecht students had the chance to participate on several activities related to Nature Inclusive Agriculture organized by the partners, like a visit to Warmonderhof, a learning company(farm). Reason to visit this farm was to find out to what extent Warmonderhof can act as an example for the transition to circular agriculture.

FFU considers the development of food-related interdisciplinary education a cornerstone for the formation of the next generations of academics and professionals. Since 2018 Future Food has been working on the development of a food-minor. Unfortunately due to the Covid-19 pandemic and consequently the cancellation of the Future Food Summer School Course last July, where the test-pilot of the first introductory course was to be held, the FFU-Board decided to postpone the start of the minor till 2022.

Just before the year ended the Future Food Board appointed Prescilla Jeurink as the new Future Food Ambassador, succeeding Herman Lelieveldt, who stepped out last April to pursue new challenges and take up new responsibilities.

Prescilla is fascinated by the potential impact of a healthy diet and lifestyle in the maintenance of good health. Her ambition as ambassador is to seek synergies between expertise on human, animal and plant immune resilience and nutrition within academic groups, companies and medical centers.

Together with the other two FFU ambassadors, Guido van den Ackerveken en Jerry van Dijk, she will help to further promote our FFU research profile both in and outside the university. They will focus on enhancing research opportunities and collaborations within the FFU topics.
Engagement with Stakeholders

Future Food Ambassador Guido van den Ackerveken represents the UU in NWO-funded community to support the NWA route Sustainable production of healthy and sustainable food.

This network route plays a role in organizing the field and ensuring increased involvement along the entire knowledge chain, bringing together relevant consortium partners, facilitating knowledge utilization, giving recognition to potential societal and/or scientific breakthroughs in the route and monitoring the key aims of the route and the NWA.

Future Food Utrecht became a member of the Green Protein Alliance

In 2020 Future Food Utrecht joined the Dutch Green Protein Alliance, an innovative partnership working to accelerate the protein transition (in Dutch). Participation in this initiative offers Utrecht researchers the opportunity to participate in projects and initiatives with stakeholders working in the sector and contribute to the protein transition.

Regional Deal Foodvalley research projects started

Utrecht University/ Future Food researchers from six faculties participate in the consortium of the Regional Deal Foodvalley where the Dutch government, the provinces, universities and local parties will work together from 2020-2024 on a healthy living environment for humans and animals. A total of 14 million will be invested in research projects focusing on agricultural transition and healthy nutrition.

Visit Regional Deal Food Valley (in Dutch)

Collaboration with Eurest and the Green Office in the Future Food Lab – on hold

With most of the UU-staff and students working/studying from home it has not yet been possible to set forth the collaboration with the new caterer of the UU since August 2020, Eurest.

Eurest already has a reasonable amount of experience with sustainable catering concepts. We hope that the collaboration with the Future Food Lab can be continued in 2021.

The aim of the Future Food Lab is to conduct joint research on sustainable food systems with the microcosm of the university’s restaurant as a laboratory. This knowledge can be applied immediately in restaurants and kiosks. In other words, the university as a living lab.
Lunchlecture Symposium and city safari walking tour | ‘Food deserts or food swamps? Disparities in healthy food access in the U.S.’

On the occasion of the visit of Future Food’s visiting professor Daniel Block (Chicago State University) at the beginning of 2020, FFU organized a lunch lecture focusing on the large disparities in food access that exist in the U.S. and the differences with Europe. Associate professor Ozan Alakavuklar (Utrecht University) reflected on these issues from an ethical and political perspective.

After the lecture, participants went on a walking tour through Utrecht’s city center to experience whether this area looked more like a food swap or a food desert.

‘Accelerating plant protection: can we do without chemicals?’

On March 5th during the yearly Pathways to Sustainability Conference Future Food organized a Talk Show session about plant protection products used in agriculture and the transition towards chemical-free farming practices.

Together with speakers from science and practice we discussed the challenges on the road and addressed questions regarding how problematic current crop protection practices are, the alternatives science does have in stock and the policies in place that can accelerate the transition towards plant protection without chemicals.

This event brought together researchers in our community working on issues related to plant protection and contributed to increasing the Food literacy of the participants.

Future Food Utrecht ONLINE Event

Plant-based protein transition

In the coming years, Future Food Utrecht intends to focus, among other topics, on the Plant-based protein transition. To generate interactions between scientists and stakeholders on this topic, we organized an online event, on the 2nd of October, where participants could listen to lectures from the Green Protein Alliance (in Dutch), a key player in the plant-based protein transition in the Netherlands and also from Those Vegan Cowboys, who are on a mission to change the current dairy industry by developing milk-proteins through fermentation.
Future Food Utrecht yearly symposium: ‘Future Food in the EU | A critical multi-disciplinary look at the Farm to Fork Strategy’

Our **yearly symposium** is the recurring event that brings our community of researchers and stakeholders together, addresses a topic that is of interest to a broader group of disciplines and contributes to increasing the Food Literacy of our community.

This year’s symposium was held online on November 17th. The focus was laid on the European Commission’s Farm to Fork Strategy, one of the essential cornerstones for the European Green Deal. It sketches the critical topics and pathways to come to a healthy and sustainable EU food system.

A plenary specialist introduction from an EU representative into the F2F strategy was followed by in-depth parallel discussions on several important topics concerning transitions in the food system.

‘Worldwide challenges for agricultural water management in river deltas, and their consequences for the environment, food security, and society’.

On December 8th, Future Food Utrecht in collaboration with Veena Srinavasan, **Prins Claus Chair 2018-2020**, organized an **online seminar** addressing issues relating to climate change, intensive food production and other challenges in especially Asian and African river deltas.

Several speakers presented their work on how farmers and communities cope with these challenges and respond to government interventions. The discussion on Asian and African deltas will be followed by a reflection by Martin Wassen on the parallels with the Dutch situation.

‘Planetary Health: a recipe for resilience’

The global food system is not future-proof. The mantra of maximising yield per acre at the expense of everything else has exhausted our soils and decimated the biodiversity of the ecosystems we depend on for our food. We are literally eating away the health of our planet. **This in depth story**, with contributions from many FFU researchers, illustrates how food scientists in Utrecht aim to turn homogenized landscapes into mosaics that breath and bustle with life, making our food chain resilient, one seed at a time.

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