

## PRESS RELEASE

### An entrepreneurial extravaganza at #YES18

YES welcomed eight finalists to the Royal Society on Tuesday 11 December to present their business ideas to #ProtectOurPlanet in a bid to compete for the £16.5k prize fund.

Professor Simon Mosey, University of Nottingham and Chair of YES, said: "The 23<sup>rd</sup> year of YES was the most innovative yet with ideas ranging from dairy free milk to plastics made from food waste. A particular highlight was to welcome seven YES alumni onto the judging panel, making the final at the Royal Society an emotional and inspirational event."

All three competitions, Biotechnology YES, Engineering YES and Environment YES, are specifically designed to allow ECRs to develop commercialisation skills, raise career awareness and appreciate how their research can bring positive impact to society and the economy.

The winners of Biotechnology YES were Phytocolours from the University of Leicester. Their company reduces pollution from the fashion industry by providing structurally coloured cellulose fibres from microalgae. Their product Rayonbow™ is used in the manufacture of eco-sustainable textiles to produce fabric that never fades and doesn't cost the earth.

CEO of Phytocolours Laura Delfino, also crowned best presenter, said: "The YES competition has been an incredible opportunity to start developing our entrepreneurial skills. It was a great chance to network and we look forward to the BIA Gala Dinner in January to extend our connections even further. Stepping out of our scientific comfort zone has been challenging but extremely rewarding - winning was just the cherry on the cake! I would definitely recommend this experience to all postgraduates and postdocs!"

The winners of Engineering YES were LactoLab from the Universities of Durham, Liverpool and Newcastle. Their company aims to reduce non-degradable single-use plastic in labs by providing a compostable alternative using food industry by-products. Plastic is rendered chemically and biologically inert through a novel coating.

LactoLab, who were supported by the BBSRC's Newcastle/Liverpool/Durham DTP, said: "Overcoming the challenge of being from separate universities really brought us together as a team, we have loved participating in YES and it has made us consider a career in business! We are so delighted to have won and will definitely be keeping in touch with our new friends from across the country."

MooFree from the University of Reading won the Environment YES competition as well as the people's choice award sponsored by Indigo. Their company uses genetically engineered yeast to produce dairy proteins. MooFree dairy proteins help businesses provide sustainable, ethical dairy proteins without having to compromise on taste and nutrition unlike any other options currently on the market.

CMO of MooFree Andrew Goodall said: "Taking part in YES18 was a fantastic experience and showed us what goes on behind the scenes when commercialising scientific ideas. The transferable skills and knowledge we have gained will be useful in our future careers and are something that we wouldn't have been exposed to without this competition."

Professor Parveen Yaqoob, Pro Vice Chancellor (Research & Innovation), University of Reading said: "We are extremely pleased to support the YES Competition again this year and I am thrilled that our innovative young researchers at the University of Reading have come home with two awards. This outstanding achievement not only reflects our excellence in food and agriculture research but is also testament to the talent that is nurtured through entrepreneurial programmes at the University."

There are many representatives from academia, business and industry who give up their time to act as speakers, mentors and judges for the competition. This year, there were 117 people from 70 organisations involved in supporting the competition, who donated a total of 700 hours of their time. Through significant commitment to the aims and objectives of the scheme, these organisations recognise the importance of YES in providing the basis for the continuing success of the UK economy.

Dr Malcolm Skingle CBE, Director of Academic Liaison at GSK, commented: "GSK is delighted to support this initiative that helps ECRs gain valuable transferable skills and to learn the importance of their research delivering economic impact. It is also a fantastic opportunity for ECRs to cultivate strong business and industry networks."

Dr Dave Hughes, Head of Technology Identification and Evaluation for Crop Protection at Syngenta, said: "Collaboration between industry and universities is key to achieving a strong knowledge-driven economy. For the past eight years we have hosted a YES workshop to tackle specific challenges in order to showcase innovate ideas and to stimulate blue-sky thinking amongst potential future entrepreneurs to enable them to foresee potential opportunities. Once again there were some great ideas pitched so the future remains bright!"

**ENDS**

### Images

Pictures of finalists and more details available on request.

### Further information

Tracey Hassall-Jones, The University of Nottingham's Haydn Green Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, on [tracey@biotechnologyyes.co.uk](mailto:tracey@biotechnologyyes.co.uk) or +44(0)7956 156 629.

### Notes to editors

The YES competitions receive financial support from Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), GSK, Medical Research Council (MRC), Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), Syngenta and University of Nottingham Haydn Green Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (HGI).

The following awards were also presented at the finals:

- Best consideration of financial planning strategy sponsored by James Cowper Kreston won by Global Diagnostic Solutions from Queen Mary University of London
- Best consideration of IP strategy sponsored by Potter Clarkson won by Health & Co from the University of Sheffield
- Best healthcare business plan sponsored by GSK won by About from Queen Mary University of London
- Best plant, microbial and environmental business plan sponsored by Syngenta won by SkyEarth from Loughborough University
- Best presenter award sponsored by The Haydn Green Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship won by Laura Delfino of Phytocolours from University of Leicester
- People's choice award sponsored by Indigo won by MooFree from the University of Reading

### About The University of Nottingham

The University of Nottingham is a research-intensive university with a proud heritage, consistently ranked among the [world's top 100](#). Studying at the University of Nottingham is a life-changing experience and we pride ourselves on unlocking the potential of our 44,000 students - Nottingham was named both Sports and International University of the Year in the [2019 Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide](#), was awarded gold in the [TEF 2017](#) and features in the top 20 of all [three major UK rankings](#). We have a pioneering spirit, expressed in the vision of our founder Sir Jesse Boot, which has seen us lead the way in establishing campuses in China and Malaysia - part of a globally connected network of education, research and industrial engagement. We are ranked eighth for research power in the UK according to [REF 2014](#). We have [six beacons of research excellence](#) helping to transform lives and change the world; we are also a major employer and industry partner - locally and globally.