

## Birmingham scientists highlighted for contribution to UK economy

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Scientists at the University of Birmingham have been highlighted for being among the leading bioscience groups contributing to the UK's economic and social wellbeing.

Prof Peter Fryer's research on chemical engineering and its applications in food manufacture and Prof Lynne Macaskie's work to develop technology to convert food waste into hydrogen to power fuel cells were both highlighted at a recent event at HM Treasury, run by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC). Prof Fryer's research is leading to opportunities to develop lower fat food with appealing texture while Prof Macaskie's research is looking to harness waste products from food manufacturing and spent automotive catalysts and use bacteria to turn these into hydrogen and the metals required for fuel cells respectively.

The event, 'Bioscience:Biomillions', illustrated how the UK's excellent bioscience research base, principally funded by BBSRC with over £400M of public money each year, is delivering substantial economic and social impact. Other high impact bioscience research on show included work to understand and defeat hospital superbugs, research to understand ageing and to develop ways to encourage healthier ageing, and research to help farmers increase crop yields and to cope with a changing climate.

Participants in the event included researchers from Birmingham and other bioscientists being highlighted for their contributions, dignitaries including Ian Pearson MP, the Minister of State for Science and Innovation, industry leaders, policy makers and leading academics.

Mr Pearson said: "Bioscience researchers in the UK have not only pursued excellent, world-class research, but they have also been active in ensuring that we all benefit from their efforts.

"In order to remain globally competitive and meet the future challenges of living within our environmental and population limits, it is vital that bioscience researchers continue to maximise the positive economic and social impacts of their research and activities."

Steve Visscher, BBSRC Interim Chief Executive, said: "The UK's world class bioscience research base underpins major economic and social sectors such as agriculture, pharmaceuticals, food, healthcare and the environment. Our researchers are amongst the best in the world in terms of the quality of their science but they are also making huge contributions to quality of life for people through economic and social impact."

The event also highlighted the success of BBSRC initiatives such as the Biotechnology Young Entrepreneurs Scheme in developing the innovators of the future, and the Business Plan Competition in facilitating the birth of new companies.

**ENDS**

### Notes to Editors

BBSRC recently presented 'Bioscience:Biomillions' at HM Treasury to give scientists, policymaker and industry leaders the chance to meet and celebrate the quality of UK bioscience and its contribution to our economy and society. Nearly 50 top academic researchers were highlighted for their research and social and economic impact.

Full details of 'Bioscience:Biomillions', including a complete list of all the bioscientists highlighted for their economic and social impact is available at: [http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/publications/corporate/bioscience\\_biomillions.html](http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/publications/corporate/bioscience_biomillions.html)

More information about BBSRC knowledge transfer and economic and social impact activities is available at: <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/business/index.html> (<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/business/index.html>)

### About BBSRC

The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council is the UK funding agency for research in the life sciences. Sponsored by Government, BBSRC annually invests around £420M in a wide range of research that makes a significant contribution to the quality of life for UK citizens and supports a number of important industrial stakeholders including the agriculture, food, chemical, healthcare and pharmaceutical sectors. <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk> (<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/>)

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