

A CONFERENCE FOR HEALTH AND NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS

21<sup>ST</sup> APRIL  
2026

W5, ODYSSEY  
BELFAST



WHAT'S NEW?

# Food choice and eating behaviour

## PROGRAMME

5:00pm Arrival of delegates and refreshments

5:45pm **Professor Sean Strain, OBE**

ULSTER UNIVERSITY

**Chairperson's introduction**

5:50pm **Dr Anestis Dougkas**

INSTITUT LYFE RESEARCH & INNOVATION CENTRE, LYON

**Beyond nutrients: sensory perception, dairy foods, and their role in enhancing sustainable diets**

6:20pm **Dr Suzanne Spence**

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

**When policy meets preference: school food choices through policy, environment and pupils at the centre**

6:50pm **Professor Marion Hetherington**

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

**Loss of appetite in older adults: comparing food first and oral nutritional supplements to prevent and treat malnutrition**

7:20pm **Dr Ruth Price**

ULSTER UNIVERSITY

**Targeting the brain: how surgery and medications for obesity reshape the way we eat**

7:50pm **Q&A**

8:00pm Close

## BOOKING

**There is no charge for this event.**

Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Bookings should be made no later than Friday 17 April.

To reserve your place, please fill out our online booking form at: [www.dairycouncil.co.uk/news](http://www.dairycouncil.co.uk/news) or respond with your details to [nutrition@dairycouncil.co.uk](mailto:nutrition@dairycouncil.co.uk)

For further information please contact:  
Dr Carole Lewis - 07740 683 999  
or Dairy Council for Northern Ireland on  
028 9077 0113

## BIOGRAPHIES

### Dr Anestis Dougkas

Anestis Dougkas is Director of Nutrition and Eating Behaviour at the Research Centre of the Institut Lyfe (formerly Institut Paul Bocuse) in Lyon, France. His research explores how the nutritional and sensory properties of foods influence appetite regulation, food intake and health outcomes in both healthy and clinical populations. He completed his PhD in Human Nutrition at the University of Reading (UK), focusing on dairy consumption, obesity risk and appetite regulation through epidemiological and intervention studies. He subsequently conducted postdoctoral research at Lund University (Sweden) on protein quality and appetite control. His current work integrates nutrition, sensory science and eating behaviour, with interests in sustainable diets and sensory alterations in clinical populations. He is a member of ASN, NS, EASO and an alumnus of the European Nutrition Leadership Platform.

### Dr Suzanne Spence

Suzanne Spence is a Lecturer in Public Health Nutrition at Newcastle University. Her research focuses on how School Food Systems shape what children and young people eat, particularly in secondary schools. She has studied the impact of Universal Free School Meals, the effectiveness of School Food Standards, and is interested in how availability, pricing and the wider school food environment influence pupils' choices. Suzanne is also interested in how policy and school based interventions can help improve pupils' food and drink decisions throughout the school day. Her work centres on involving stakeholders from pupils to policymakers. She has received external funding for this research, both as PI and Co-I, and contributes academic expertise to several school food bodies, including the School Food Plan and the APPG on School Food.

### Professor Marion Hetherington

Marion Hetherington is Professor Emerita in Biopsychology, University of Leeds, and an Affiliate Professor in Nutritional Sciences, Pennsylvania State University. Marion trained in experimental psychology at the Universities of Glasgow and Oxford, then held postdoctoral fellowships at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health, USA. She has more than 30 years of experience researching human appetite across the lifespan and is a specialist in the psychology of food choice and food acceptance. Until 2025 she was Editor in Chief of the journal Appetite and was trustee of the Give A Child A Hope charity working in partnership with the Revival Centre, Matugga, Uganda providing education and support to disadvantaged children.

### Dr Ruth Price

Ruth Price is a Research Fellow and Clinical Trials Manager at Ulster University's Nutrition Innovation Centre for Food and Health (NICHE), with more than 25 years' experience delivering complex human trials and first in human metabolic studies. Her research focuses on obesity, appetite regulation and the objective measurement of eating behaviour. She has played a central role in advancing understanding of the mechanisms of action underlying bariatric surgery by shifting reliance in this field from verbal self-reports to robust, objective approaches that directly capture how treatments alter ingestive behaviour. Ruth's current work includes supporting a major European Commission-funded initiative delivering an obesity care programme to 9,000 patients in the northwest of Ireland.

### Professor Sean Strain

Sean Strain is Emeritus Professor of Human Nutrition at Ulster University. He is the founder and former director of the Nutrition Innovation Centre for Food and Health (NICHE) at Ulster. He is an author of over 300 peer-reviewed research publications and has attracted over £38M in external research funding during his career. In 2002, he was elected a member of the Royal Irish Academy. He is a Fellow and former President of The Nutrition Society, and in 2014 he was awarded an OBE for services to nutrition research and education. He was President of the Board of the European Nutrition Leadership Programme, Vice-Chairman, Panel on Dietetic Products, Nutrition and Allergies (NDA), Chairman of the NDA Working Group on Claims, European Food Safety Authority, and Chair of the International Science Advisory Panel for the New Zealand Government funded, High Value Nutrition Programme.



 @dairycouncilni

 @dairy-council-ni