Project Title: Engaging the next generation of agri-sector leaders with cellular agriculture

What will the project potentially involve?

This is a social science and public engagement project. The student will design, organise and facilitate an upstream engagement event bringing together students from agriculture-related subjects and researchers working in cellular agriculture. The project will also involve analysing the deliberations from this event and writing up the findings as part of the student's dissertation.

Outcomes for student lead

The student lead will gain experience in:

- Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI)
- Science and Technology Studies (STS)
- Cellular agriculture
- Public engagement and deliberative methods
- Project management
- Event organisation and delivery
- Facilitation of group discussions
- Qualitative data collection
- Qualitative data analysis

This project will provide practical, hands-on experience in designing and delivering social research and engagement activities, offering valuable skills for careers in research, public engagement, policy, and the wider agri-food and innovation sectors.

Background

The Cellular Agriculture Manufacturing Hub (CARMA) is currently on a mission to engage the public and stakeholders with cellular agriculture upstream of these technologies being widely deployed. As part of this wider research programme, we invite an MSc student to design and run their own engagement initiative with students who represent the next generation of agri-sector leaders.

The student will have scope to take ownership of the engagement design within CARMA's remit, with support from the RAU CARMA team, including Dr Atenchong Talleh Nkobou and Dr James Riley.

Cellular agriculture refers to a collection of technologies that aim to produce consumable products through cell culturing rather than through traditional agricultural systems. Within cellular agriculture, cultivated meat is currently the most widely recognised application. Cultivated meat is produced by taking a small sample of animal cells, feeding them with a growth medium, and allowing them to multiply in a bioreactor. Cultivated meat products have not yet been approved in the UK, but they are already on the market in a small number of countries around the world.

Another branch of cellular agriculture is precision fermentation, which uses microbes as cell factories to produce consumables. Some applications of precision fermentation are already in use, such as the production of fats for Omega-3 supplements, while researchers are currently developing a wider range of potential products.

These technologies have the potential not only to change what we eat, but also to reshape the kinds of jobs and skills that may be required within the agricultural sector. We are therefore interested in what current students—who will form the next generation of agri-sector leaders—think about the potential and pitfalls of these technologies, and how they see cellular agriculture shaping their vision of the future.

CARMA uses Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) and public engagement approaches to organise community deliberations about cellular agriculture and its potential impacts on food systems. This student project will sit within CARMA's broader programme of work, but there will be flexibility for the student to take ownership and shape the project in their own way, within the overall remit of CARMA.

Timeline

The engagement event should take place between May and June 2026. The project should be completed and the dissertation submitted between August 2026 and January 2027, in line with MSc programme requirements.

Costs covered

All reasonable travel and subsistence costs incurred during the project will be covered. The project also has a budget to cover venue hire and refreshments for engagement event attendees.

Contact

If you are interested in this student project, please contact:

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