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## Venue

Churchill College, University of Cambridge  
Storey's Way  
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# 80<sup>TH</sup> IIRB CONGRESS

7 - 9 July 2026

Advancing Sugar Beet in a  
Dynamic Environment

Churchill College, Cambridge (UK)



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE  
OF SUGAR BEET RESEARCH

## IIRB aisbl

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# Programme

## Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2026

- 5.00 pm Reception drink
- 6.30 pm End of reception

## Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2026

### Opening Session

- 8.30 am MARK STEVENS (BBRO): Presidential address
- 8.45 am KEITH PACKER (British Sugar): The evolution of the UK sugar beet sector: a processor's perspective
- 9.00 am KIT PAPWORTH (NFU): The evolution of the UK sugar beet sector: a grower's perspective
- 9.15 am SIMON PEARSON (LIAT): Robotics and AI: Key challenges and opportunities
- 9.30 am Coffee break

### 1 Advanced agronomy in environmental challenges (Chair: ANDRÉ VAN VALEN (IRS))

- 10.10 am GEORGINA BARRATT (BBRO): Identifying and mitigating greenhouse gas emissions from sugar beet production
- 10.30 am ANNA JACOBS (IfZ): Is sugar beet really detrimental to soil organic carbon?
- 10.50 am ANDRIUS HANSEN KEMEZYS (NBR): Nitrogen-fixing bacteria to improve nitrogen use efficiency. Do biostimulants deliver what they promise?
- 11.10 am PAUL TAUVEL (ITB): Advising sugar beet growers on irrigation in diversified contexts
- 11.30 am FINN GROßMANN (University of Kiel): Drought-sensitive sugar beet modelling for ideotyping future high-yielding genotypes
- 11.50 am BETTINA MÜLLER (Strube D&S): BeetAdapt: New technologies for high-throughput phenotyping and phenomic selection in sugar beet breeding

### 12.10 pm Lunch break

### 2 Current perspectives on weed control and resistance management (Chair: ANDRÉ WAUTERS (IRBAB))

- 1.40 pm ANNE LISBET HANSEN (NBR) & SJEFF VAN DER HEIJDEN (IRS): Current deployment and challenges of the Conviso® One herbicide-based weed management system in European sugar beet cultivation
- 2.00 pm JOHN CUSSANS (ADAS): Acetolactate synthase (ALS) resistant weeds in sugar beet

2.20 pm CHRISTINE KENTER (IfZ): Performance of Conviso Smart sugar beet varieties under classical and Conviso One herbicide programmes – smarter beets, better yields?

2.40 pm THOMAS LEBORGNE (ITB): PARSADA: a French national plan to anticipate the herbicide molecules withdrawal

3.00 pm ABEL BARRETO (IfZ): Robotic weeding performance: recent insights from the digital experimental field FarmerSpace

3.20 pm **Poster Session I** & Coffee break

### 3 Rhizomania & Cercospora leaf spot: Fungicide and genetic resistance mechanisms (Chair: LOUISE HOLMQUIST (NBR))

4.30 pm KRISTIN BENJES (IfZ): Resistance to rhizomania: Interaction of the resistance protein Rz2 with the avirulence protein TGB1 and evaluation of the resistance stability

4.50 pm AUSTIN LIEN (University of Minnesota): Genome wide association study of *Cercospora beticola* following repeated exposure to Demethylation inhibitors reveal complex fungicide resistance mechanisms

5.10 pm SÉVERINE FONTAINE (INRAE): Investigating genetic diversity and DMI resistance in French *Cercospora beticola* populations with both neutral and selected genetic markers

5.30 pm WIBKE IMGEBERG (AGRANA): High resistance is not absolute: lessons from *Cercospora beticola* epidemics in Austrian sugar beet

5.50 pm End of day 1

7.30 pm Conference dinner

## Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2026

### 4 Virus Yellows: Breeding, disease control and agronomic tools (Chair: MARK VARRELMANN (IfZ))

9.00 am ALISTAIR WRIGHT (BBRO): Variety tolerance, the key to unlocking IPM strategies for Virus Yellows

9.20 am NIELS WYNANT (Florimond-Desprez): Breeding sugar beet for tolerance to mixed Yellowing Viruses

9.40 am AUDREY FABAREZ (ITB): PNRI-C: Developing strategies to manage beet yellows disease

10.00 am ISABELLE STOCKMANS (IRBAB): VirBiCon: Integrated approaches to understand and mitigate virus yellows in sugar beet cultivation in Belgium

10.20 am ELMA RAAIJMAKERS (IRS): The effect of seed treatments on foliar insect pests in young sugar beet plants

10.40 am **Poster session II** and coffee break

### 5 Beet weevils & Cicades I

(Chair: MARION SEITER (AGRANA))

11.30 am BENJAMIN COUSSY (FNAMS): Search for alternative control solutions against the beet weevil, *Lixus juncii*

11.50 am DANIELA WÖBER (AIT): Cracking the sugar beet weevil: molecular resources for RNAi-based pest control

12.10 pm ŽIVKO ČURČIĆ (Institute of Field and Vegetable Crops): Why sugar beet RTD persists in Serbia: The newly revealed sunflower-wheat lifecycle of *Reptalus quinquecostatus*

12.30 pm CHRISTOPH KREITZER (AGRANA): Distribution and dynamics of cixiid vectors transmitting phloem-restricted pathogens in Austrian sugar beets

12.50 pm Lunch break

### 6 Cicades II & SBR Complex

(Chair: ELMA RAAIJMAKERS (IRS))

2.20 pm ANNE-KATRIN MAHLEIN (IfZ): Poster award & Best PhD Talk

2.30 pm OMID EINI (IfZ): Directed sequencing of plant specific DNA identifies the dietary history of *Pentastiridius leporinus*

2.50 pm FACUNDO ISPIZUA YAMATI (IfZ): Image-based automated identification of SBR and Stolbur-transmitting planthoppers on sticky traps

3.10 pm OLAF CZARNECKI (KWS) & CARSTEN STIBBE (KWS): Identification of infestation patterns in the SBR-RTD disease complex: The base for resistance breeding and agronomic control measures

3.30 pm ACHIM JESSER (Südzucker AG): Agronomic pathways to mitigate Syndrome des Basses Richesses (SBR): Integrating cultural practices and vector control for yield stabilization

3.50 pm VINCENT LAUDINAT (ITB): Closing words & End of day 2

## Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2026

### Excursion – Botanical Garden, Cambridge

From 10.00 am Start of the visit in small group (staggered over time)