



# RSB Director's seminar series: Gastronomics: Human genomics meets consumer science

**Friday 4 December 11am–12pm**

**Event to be followed with cheese and fruit platters**

## Speaker

### **Richard Newcomb**

Chief Scientist at Plant & Food Research  
and Professor of Evolutionary Genetics at  
the University of Auckland, New Zealand.

## Location

### **Slatyer Seminar Room**

R.N. Robertson Building  
46 Sullivans Creek Road  
The Australian National University

## Contact

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This lecture is free and open to the public

RSB event information:

[biology.anu.edu.au/news-events](http://biology.anu.edu.au/news-events)



Humans vary in their ability to smell many odours with variation within odorant receptor (OR) genes contributing to these differences. However, it remains uncertain whether such variation also impacts flavour perception, hedonics and food choices. I will describe our work to identify variants within the human genome responsible for differences in sensory acuity for many flavour compounds and go on to detail sensory and consumer science experiments that test whether these genetic differences for sensory acuity for one flavour compound, beta-ionone, explain differences in flavour perception and food consumption associated behaviour.

Biography: Richard completed his BSc and MSc at the University of Auckland, with his PhD in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from The Australian National University based at the CSIRO in Canberra. In 1996 he returned to Auckland to work at Hort Research and the University of Auckland. Richard is an author on over 100 publications and is an inventor on five patents. He is associate editor for the Journal of Chemical Ecology and PLoS ONE and on the editorial boards of Insect Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and Flavour, and is a regular reviewer for a number of other international scientific journals and granting agencies. Richard has been the President of the Australasian Association for ChemoSensory Science, New Zealand's representative on committee at the Genetics Society of Australasia and on the board of the Queenstown Molecular Biology Meeting. He is an investigator at two of New Zealand's Centres for Research Excellence: a Principle Investigator at the Allan Wilson Centre for Molecular Evolution and Ecology and an Associate Investigator at the Maurice Wilkins Centre for Molecular Biodiscovery. Richard has broad research interests focused around the biology, genetics and evolution of odour sensing in animals. Recent work includes the identification of genetic differences between people in their ability to detect food aromas and the isolation of receptors from insects that allow them to detect important odours and sex pheromones. Currently Richard is the Chief Scientist at Plant & Food Research and Professor of Evolutionary Genetics at the University of Auckland, New Zealand.

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