



VistaMilk

The Year in Review

Director's Update

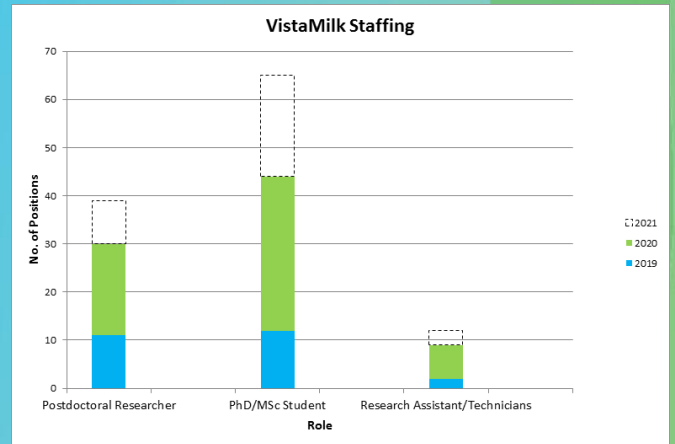
Donagh Berry

What a year! While 2020 has certainly challenged our resilience, there are still many reasons for VistaMilk to celebrate. Novel and exciting projects have commenced while on-going projects continue to deliver scientific excellence along the pasture-to-plate supply chain. As a testament to the scientific excellence of our interdisciplinary research, VistaMilk can boast of many different accolades from invited presentations at prestigious scientific conferences and recipients of several best paper awards, all the way to our scientists being recognised as the top 1% of scientists globally; even at such an early stage, several technologies developed by VistaMilk are being employed within the Irish agri-food sector. These achievements and honours proved great ammunition as we successfully navigated our first international scientific review; while the official report is not due until January 2021, I am confident that it will reflect the tremendous efforts of the VistaMilk community as we strive to deliver on our vision. Particularly pleasing to me is the acceleration in the forging of collaborations leading to the generation of novel ideas and innovations, materialising into exciting and well-received publications, reports and value-creating tools.

As we enter 2021, we have identified a number of areas of focus to complement our on-going efforts in delivering solutions to prevailing and future problem statements. These areas include: more formal and quantifiable outcome statements from the research program, running multi-national thematically aligned workshops, deepening our engagement with the general public, internationalisation, and strengthening the breath of our engagement with ICT industry partners.

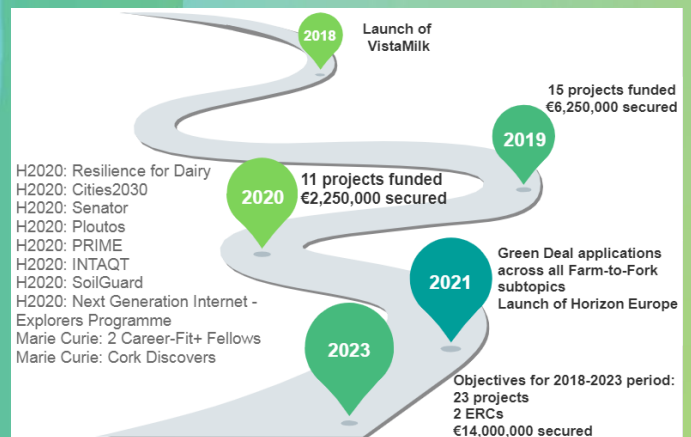
Finally, on behalf of the VistaMilk executive committee and governance board, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the entire VistaMilk community for helping making 2020 a great success and I am really looking forward with enthusiasm to the stimulating discussions and outcomes of what 2021 will bring!

Staffing Update



VistaMilk's team has been growing steadily throughout 2020. In a challenging year with Covid, we have welcomed over 50 new recruits across various disciplines in all of the research partner organisations. VistaMilk has grown its international reach with researchers coming from across the globe from the likes of Canada, India, China, South America, United States and Europe to further their research careers. We are currently at 70% capacity and are very much looking forward to welcoming more recruits in early 2021.

Funding Update

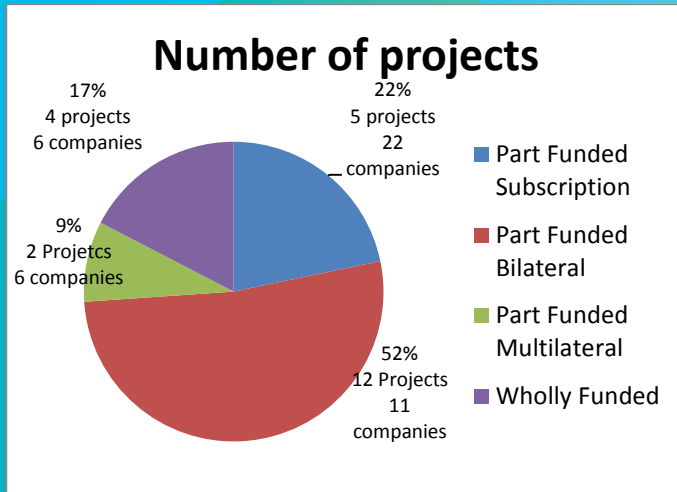


During 2020, 35 projects to EU funders, across different programmes (H2020, Marie Curie, ERA-Nets) were submitted and, so far, 11 of them have been successful; this has been worth €2.25m. Results from a further 4 projects are expected in early 2021. Seven projects are currently in preparation for the Green Deal Farm-to-Fork calls, involving most of VistaMilk RPOs with a submission date of the end of January 2021.



Next year will also see the launch of the **€96bn Horizon Europe**, the new framework programme for the period 2021-2027. Work programmes are likely to be released in the Spring.

Industry partner projects



A strong working relationship with our industry partners will be key to VistaMilk achieving its strategic goals. Over the course of the 2020 calendar year, a further 9 companies have signed up to VistaMilk which means we now have over 50 world leading agriculture, food & technology companies. There are now 15 fully executed projects in VistaMilk, a further 5 close to execution and a further 5 in various stages of development. At this point, across all of the projects signed off and in negotiation, our industry partners have committed over €3 million. A total of 42 of industry partners are signed up or have committed to a research project, with 15 of our industry partners committed to more than one project. There have been delays in finalising some projects, but overall the sector has shown itself to be resilient, and companies have shown their commitment to R&D over the course of 2020. This gives us confidence for the continuing growth of the agri-food tech sector in 2021.

Education and Public Engagement

Despite a very challenging year for active public engagement there was a very busy programme of events put together by the VistaMilk team. While we love meeting people face to face to talk about the great research work being undertaken by the centre, the virtual nature allowed us to reach even more people this year. There were many highlights throughout the year across a

broad range of stakeholders, from primary school children through to adults. Congratulations to our very hard working EPE manager, Eimear, who at the 3rd time of asking got married to Tom in early December! Best wishes to you both for the future!

