



NEWS FROM THE TASMANIAN INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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Astronaut food, yummy bacteria and sneaky microbes

Visitors to Agfest will get a chance to see and learn about the latest developments in world-leading food safety and food innovation research being undertaken in Tasmania.

The TIA Agfest exhibit includes samples of astronaut food, microbes that give cheese its distinctive and delicious flavour and an illuminator machine that will reveal how easy it is for sneaky microbes to be transferred from a simple handshake.

The Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA), a joint venture between the University of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Government, is undertaking research across a diverse area of food science, including developing new food storage and processing techniques that will keep food fresher for longer and working with microbes to enhance food safety, health benefits and flavour.

Professor Tom Ross works in TIA's Food Safety Centre and will be showing visitors some weird and wonderful space foods like freeze-dried ice-cream.

"It is vital that food for the astronauts does not contain bacteria that will make them sick," he said.

"If an astronaut gets a food-borne illness in space, the consequences would not only be messy, but could also be catastrophic – an astronaut not able to do all the necessary tasks to control the space ship, or one distracted by illness, could make fatal errors."

Director of TIA's Centre for Food Innovation, Professor Roger Stanley, collaborates with Defence and CSIRO on the development of long shelf life foods that can be used in military rations, or exported without refrigeration, to boost Australia's food industries.

Professor Stanley is working on technology to make foods that taste great and last 2+ years and will deliver a public talk at Agfest on new foods for Tasmania at 12pm on Saturday in the University of Tasmania exhibit at site 503.

TIA's display is co-located with the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment at site 813/815 Eighth Avenue.

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