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Mapping the barriers and facilitators to the diversification of the food system with forgotten, landrace and underutilised crops.

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***Presentation type*:** Oral Presentation

Title:

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Introduction:

Global levels of agrobiodiversity are decreasing, resulting in food and nutrition insecurity, loss of dietary diversity and culinary heritage. The homogenisation of the food systems after the Green Revolution have led to the loss of ingredient variety; where, 90%, of today's global food production originates from just 15 crops and many of the minor-crops and traditional varieties have been lost or have diminished from consumer plates. On the contrary, there are at least 7,039 edible plant species, but only around 417 are considered food crops. Many of these *forgotten edibles* have great economic, societal, and sensory potential, where all could be exploited through various innovative gastronomic concepts. Despite many existent facilitators, many barriers to the diversification of food systems with forgotten crops also exist and those must be studied through an interdisciplinary lens.

Aim:

The aim of the study is to map the barriers and facilitators to the diversification of food systems with forgotten and underutilised crops.

Objectives:

- To critically analyse forgotten edibles food supply chain through a systematic document analysis.
- To critically analyse the barriers and facilitators to food supply chain diversification with forgotten edibles through semi-structured interviews.
- To synthesise the findings and develop a forgotten-edible value chain map.

Methodology:

A case study approach has been developed for an existing food enterprise that specialises in the distribution of forgotten and minor foods across the UK and parts of Europe. This food business has developed a unique value chain for the forgotten edibles and is representative of the entire market. A Case Study Protocol by Yin, (2018) and PRISMA have been developed and followed throughout the study.

- A systematic document analysis of the business and its value chain to map the barriers and facilitators to the diversification. Data retrieved from the document screening has been thematically analysed using NVivo Pro 14 software programme.
- 9 semi-structured interviews with key representatives of the enterprise. The Snowball sampling technique has been applied for the recruitment strategy. The audio recordings have been transcribed and analysed thematically using Zotero 6 and Nvivo Pro 14 software programmes.

Results:

The results indicate that there are significant barriers to the diversification of food value chains with forgotten and minor edibles. These span across four key themes of policies, markets, investments, and value chains. All actors along the supply chain must communicate effectively to facilitate the uptake of these innovative ingredients. Clever use of these ingredients in gastronomic concepts (downstream value chain) is crucial and can lead to mutual benefits shared across all the stakeholders. Nevertheless, many 'bottlenecks' still exist and must be considered by all actors including the producers, retailers, distributers, food service professionals including chefs, consumers but also policy makers such as food safety authorities and regulatory bodies.

Conclusions:

Food value chain actors must take advantage of the hidden gastronomic potential of forgotten and underutilised crops. Further research around the revival strategies for these forgotten edibles is required.