

Pollenzo Food Lab (PFL)
Sensory, Behavior and Cognition (SBC) Lab

Università di Scienze Gastronomiche di Pollenzo unisg.it
University of Gastronomic Sciences of Pollenzo

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Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, 9 Pollenzo, 12042

The Pollenzo Food Lab



POLLENZO
FOODLAB

Mission of PFL

The Pollenzo Food Lab is the **culinary research** and **innovation laboratory** of the University of Gastronomic Sciences.

The lab studies **gastronomic transformations** and **cooking** as a **link between the different disciplines** of the gastronomic sciences and as a **tool to impact food production and processing systems**.

The goal of the laboratory's **innovative action** is to offer **applied solutions** to ensure **access to healthy and sustainable diets,** enabling the transition of contemporary food sector demands into **effective and replicable actions.**



Università di Scienze Gastronomiche di Pollenzo
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What we do?



Education

Activities follow an educational model based on active and experiential learning, based in gastronomic sciences, cultural biodiversity, and social and environmental responsibility. This method ensures the free development of personal and creative paths into the future.

Trainings and Third Mission

Courses, collaborations, and consultancy follow a path of applied research with the aim of strengthening the synergy between academic research and the world of production. Applying the latest studies in the field of applied gastronomic sciences leads to contributions to innovation and the creation of gastronomic products and services.

Research

Collaborations with universities and research institutions are dedicated to spreading balanced food lifestyles that sustain humans and the planet. Foci on research areas such as Circular Economy, One Health and sustainable diets, food literacy and cooking as an educational tool, social inclusion, and empowerment.

Who we are?



Gabriella Morini
Assistant Professor

She is a well-published author and assistant professor in the field of taste and food sciences. In addition to teaching courses at UNISG, she has carried out research at the University of Milan, University of Reading, and Colorado State University. She has been a Visiting Scientist at the Swiss Institute for Alternatives to Animal Testing and at the National Institute for Medical Research in London. Since January 2004, she has been working at the University of Gastronomic Sciences, where she participated in the design and development of the first degree course in Gastronomic Sciences.

Education: Food Science (University of Milan)

Area of expertise: chemoreception, genetics of taste, taste for health, taste education, food choices



Carol Povigna
Pollenzo Food Lab Director

She has decades of experience in the kitchen and its organization, holding positions of management responsibility, as well as being involved in food education and training. Since 2013 she has been working at UNISG where she carries out teaching and research activities, and since 2017 she has been directing and coordinating PFL activities.

Education: Gastronomic Sciences (UNISG)

Area of expertise: food science, nutrition education, food literacy, culinary medicine

Who we are?



Nahuel Buracco
Head of R&D

He has previous experience in restaurants as chef poissonier, chef de cuisine and bakery. He started his experience at UNISG in 2018 with the Academic Tables project and since 2019 he has been working at PFL where he is involved in applied research, product development and process implementation.

Education: Bachelor in Gastronomic Sciences and Cultures (UNISG), Master of Slow Art of Italian Cuisine (UNISG)

Area of expertise: food science, research and development, circular cuisine



Kiva Victoria Talty
Research Project Manager

She has an interdisciplinary background in humanities, environmentalism, and cultural heritage. Her roles at UNISG have included Classroom Assistant, Researcher, and Project Manager, the latest of which is for PRO-BEN S.A.M.B.A., a funded project promoting wellness programming for university students in the Piedmont.

Education: Bachelor of Arts in Hispanic & Latin American Studies (Spring Hill College), Graduate Certificate in Museum Studies (Harvard), Master of Gastronomy in World Food Cultures & Mobility (UNISG)

Area of expertise: food anthropology, regional cultural studies, ethnobiology, museology



Matteo Zanoni
Laboratory Technician

He has worked in food technology and R&D laboratories in both academic and corporate settings, gaining experience in product development, product optimization, and sensory analysis. Since 2023, he has been working at the University of Gastronomic Sciences in Pollenzo, spending one year in the Sensory Cognition and Behaviour Lab before joining the PFL, where he is involved in applied research, product development and fermentation projects.

Education: Bachelor in Biological Sciences (UNIBO), Master in Food Biotechnology (UNIVR)

Area of expertise: food science, research and development, sensory science

Our process

Knowledge of Raw Materials

Raw materials are analyzed through the multidisciplinary lens of gastronomy: what ecosystem they are an expression of, what constitutes them, what influences them, what they represent to the consumer.

Study of Processes

Transformation processes are tested using a systemic and scientific approach to assess the impact of variation in individual parameters on the overall sensory profile.

Relational Mapping

For each raw material and process, the network of interactions is delineated according to the specific impacts and objectives to which they may lead.



Areas of intervention



Circular Economy and Upcycling

Product development projects in the bread, pasta, tomato, horticultural and infusion production chains.

Funded projects:
Life Foster, Fusilli, School Food 4 Change



Taste Education and Progressive Exposure

Projects to develop organizational models, menus and recipes for school food service.

Funded projects:
Learn4Earth, School Food 4 Change



Food and Health and One Health Approach

Research projects and dissemination activities; menu and recipe development.

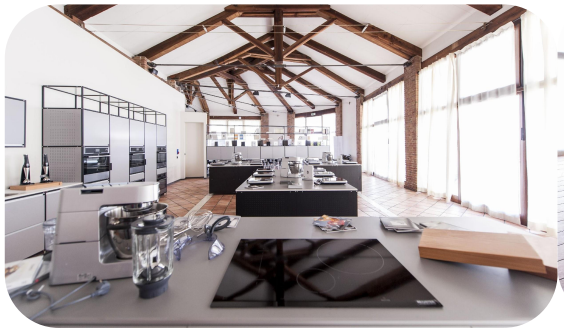
Collaborations:
ANED, Verduno Hospital, Humanitas, ONCA, Meet your Taste.

Facilities and tools

Didactic kitchen

any kitchen tools, planetary mixers, electric hobs and food dehydrators







Professional kitchen

Fermentation chambers, professional oven, professional bread oven, ultrasonic baths, etc.



Sensory Behavior Cognition Lab



SENSORY
BEHAVIOR
COGNITION
LAB

Food research toward a sustainable
and healthy future for people

WHO WE ARE



SENSORY
BEHAVIOR
COGNITION
LAB

Food research toward a sustainable and healthy future for people

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI SCIENZE GASTRONOMICHE
- POLLENZO -

Sensory, Behavior and Cognition Lab

SENSORY BEHAVIOR COGNITION LAB
Food research toward a sustainable and healthy future for people



Full Prof. Luisa Torri - Director of the laboratory
Food Science and Technology



Ass. Prof. Maria Piochi, Phd
Food Science and Technology



Riccardo Migliavada, Phd
Cognitive Neuroscience
Decision-Making Processes



Chiara Chirilli, Phd
Food Science and Technology



Andrea Devecchi, Phd
Medicine, Nutrition



Chiara Nervo
Laboratory technician



Joseph Chibueze Ofoegbu
Food Engineering



Kaisun Nesa Lesa
Food and Nutritional Science

SENSORY
BEHAVIOR
COGNITION
LAB
Food research toward a sustainable and healthy future for people

VISION

Food research towards a sustainable and healthy future for people and the planet

MISSION

To support agrifood systems as a trusted research leader, pioneering science-driven advancements and industry collaboration that enable healthier, sustainable products and practices for a better future

SENSORY
BEHAVIOR
COGNITION
LAB

Food research toward a sustainable and healthy future for people

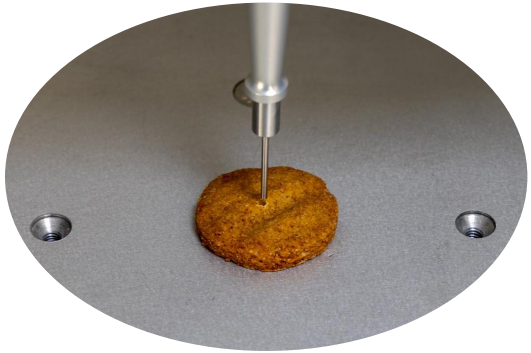
WHAT WE DO

The **Sensory, Behavior and Cognition Lab** is dedicated to Research, Training and Business Consulting activities.

The objective of the laboratory is to study and understand the sensory perception of food and the behavior of people in relation to food, in order to promote healthy and sustainable food choices.



AREAS OF INTERVENTION



Sensory and instrumental analysis

- Food acceptability and preferences
- Sensory and physical characterization of food products
- New Product Development



Exploring Individual Differences

- Study individual differences in taste and texture perception
- Relationship between health status and sensory perception and/or alteration of taste



Study of psychological and behavioral factors

- Surveys on food choices and behaviors
- Multisensory perception study
- Planning and development of behavioral interventions to promote healthy and sustainable food choices





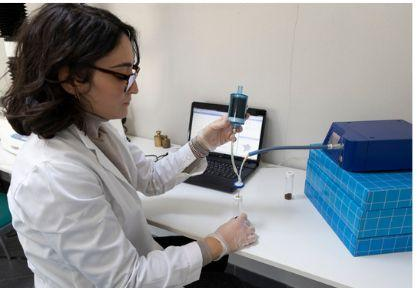








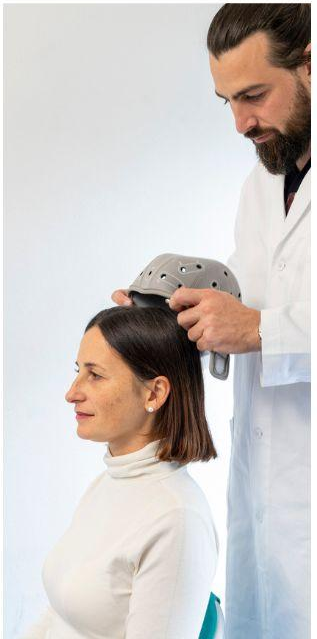
OUR TOOLS













OUR FACILITIES AND TOOLS

Sensory and instrumental analysis

- Sensory Analysis Laboratory (24 individual booths)
- Texture Analyser
- Colorimeter
- Electronic nose
- Weighing scale with statimeter



Exploring Individual Differences

- Advanced Thermosensory Stimulator
- Tools for assessing oral tactile acuity



Study of psychological and behavioral factors

- Electroencephalogram (EEG)
- Skin Conductance (GSR)
- Analysis of facial expressions
- Eye tracking
- Behavior analysis software



FUNDED PROJECTS

European Projects

- FEAST – Horizon Europe (2022–present)
- SCHOOLFOOD4CHANGE – H2020 (2022–present)
- RADIANT – H2020 (2021–present)
- Scrap the Food Waste – HADEA (2025–2026)
- DIGI-CASE – Erasmus+ (2021–2023)

National Projects

- NODES - Nord Ovest Digitale e Sostenibile - PNRR funded by the European Union (2022–present)
- DMD – Digital Mediterranean Diet – PNRR (2023–2025)
- SusPlantIC4.5 – Plant-based functional ice cream – PNRR (2024–2025)
- VALORVITIS / VALORVITIS 2.0 – AGER (2011–2019)
- PRIN 2015 – Individual differences in the acceptability of healthy foods: focus on phenol and fat content (2017-2020)

Regional Projects

- PRIME – Green chemistry innovation (2019–2022)
- FOOD-DRUG-FREE – Drug detection in food. POR FESR 2014/2020 (2019–2022)
- FISH – Fertilizzate Idrolizzato Suolo e Habitat (2020–2022)
- SHEEP-UP – Ovine biodiversity valorisation (2019–2021)

CHALLENGES AND NEEDS

Main challenges

- Understanding individual variability in food perception for promoting healthy and sustainable dietary choices
- Increasing the integration among food technology, sensory science, neuroscience and nutrition approaches

Current needs

- Access to multidisciplinary research collaborations
- Development of large consumer datasets
- Funding for advanced equipment and experimental studies
- Support for applied research with industry partners

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AND POSSIBLE DIRECTIONS

- Call HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-07: Improving biomass flows for a sustainable and circular bioeconomy

- ERC Synergy Grant 2028 (expected deadline: November 2027)

- Third/Fourth Call of the FutureFoodS Partnership (expected deadlines: January 2027/2028)

CALL TO ACTION

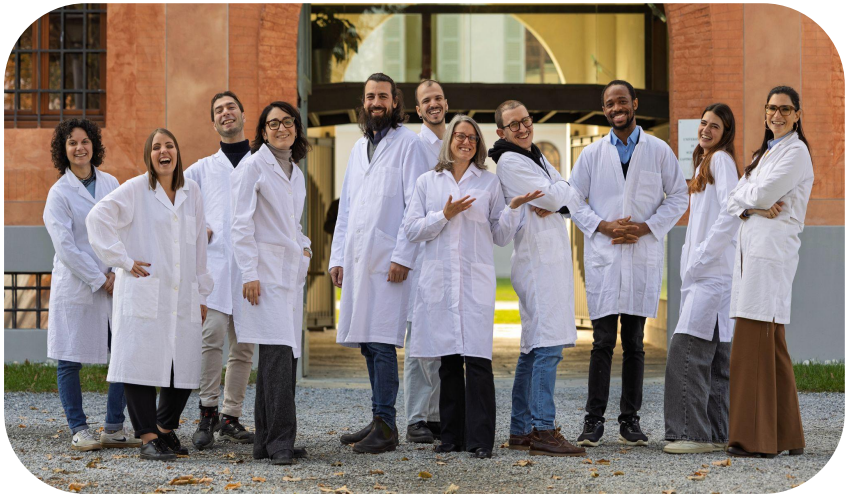
Research topics for collaboration

- Consumer perception of healthy and sustainable innovative foods
- Multisensory influences on food choice and consumption
- Cross-cultural studies

- Food education
- Culinary medicine
- Circular cuisine

CONTACTS

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