



"Connections and Solutions: A Transformational Journey achieved through Global Collaboration"

In March 2024, Nuffield, a non-profit organization established in 1947, brought together 140 young agricultural leaders from 15 countries in Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil for an intensive program. Aged between 25 and 40, these participants, known as "Nuffielders", were meticulously selected for their leadership potential and practical contributions to the sector – many running their own farm businesses. Nuffield directly operates in 14 countries - the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, France, Ireland, Netherlands, USA, Chile, Japan, Germany, Poland, Zimbabwe, as well as Brazil.

The aim of the event was to offer a global perspective on food systems and inspire them to become change agents. A strong feature of Nuffield is that everyone participates, no one is left behind, and participants quickly recognize their own biases and can then broaden their horizon of imagination through genuine discussions.

The Nuffield Contemporary Scholars Conference 2024, or CSC, event lasted 8 days in a key region for both arable production and biodiversity. The State Governor Eduardo Riedel and Federal Senator Tereza Cristina opened the event, followed by the National Anthem sung in Guarani by an indigenous student choir. Using interactive methodologies, the CSC facilitators quickly created a strong bond between participants and could delve into controversial topics. Presenters included Governor Eduardo Riedel himself, sharing his trajectory and personal reflections on leadership challenges, as well as his practical vision for the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. Guilherme Scheffer, a second-generation farmer controlling over 300,000ha brought his experience on family governance and succession, farm advocacy supporter Beverley Flatt ran a workshop on powerful storytelling, consultant Ingo Ploger challenged the group on geopolitical influence and impact, and farmer Luis Fernando Fonseca spoke on the role and needs of the Amazon. The event also covered thematic topics, including bioenergy, carbon-smart farming in the tropics, circular economy, future protein prospects, labour capability, agribusiness financing and public policies that work. Several practical visits were carried out, including small to large farms, research and training centres, agribusiness and ecotourism companies, an indigenous village and a slaughterhouse.

Brazil showed, in an honest and open way, its potential and its challenges - efforts to combat poverty and hunger alongside the strength of tropical agriculture, which with science, knowledge, technology and people, can achieve levels that others only dream of achieving. Also to share the difficulties of a young democracy to build critical mass and achieve the values of freedom, belonging and collaboration, which requires a lot of articulation, effort and convincing. Everything that a young person wants and an experienced person wants to share, in the exercise of leadership.

The CSC counted on the support of partners aligned with their values, including Bayer Global, JBS, SENAR/MS, Cosan, Cocamar, NovaAg and Mason Holdings. Nuffield's global network of over 2,000 members and 120 sponsors demonstrates the power of collaboration and sharing visions and experiences in advancing global food systems.

Not only during the CSC, but throughout the program, the environment oscillates between moments of serenity and periods of intense activity, where participants are challenged to make commitments, recognizing that the solutions to the problems faced depend on their own actions.



In one moment, participants had the unique experience appreciating a preserved riparian area on a farm while floating in crystal-clear waters and exploring aquatic biodiversity, while working in small groups in a 'hackathon-inspired format' on real issues including:



- How to balance agriculture and conservation in Bonito
- The energy future – what sources and resources, and how to take advantage?
- How can Mato Grosso do Sul state fill its 50,000 job vacancies?
- How to introduce “Mato Grosso do Sul carbon neutral” into the commercial market?
- Sustainable markets for sustainable Brazilian soy
- How to include agriculture in the school curriculum
- Financial systems that support nature-positive agribusiness
- How to increase the farmer’s voice to influence policy?
- Define for ourselves and the world “what regenerative agriculture is”

This collective journey not only inspired participants to recognize their role as agents of change, but also reinforced the belief that, together, we are capable of facing and solving the complex challenges of our time. The experience, which only Nuffield is able to provide, highlights the capacity for personal and collective transformation that emerges when engaged individuals meet and share knowledge and cultures.

In the words of those who participated:

"My beliefs have been challenged and my knowledge and contacts have expanded. I am leaving full of inspiration and energy, with a huge appreciation for the Brazilian people, their agriculture and the role they play in maintaining the planet's biodiversity and beauty." - Catherine Marriot, Australia, 2024 Nuffield Scholar

"This union promotes important discussions about the trap of producing more and more. It is important to produce more and more efficiently, but with planning and control of time and volume. There is no point in Brazil producing more soy and coffee if there is no one to sell it to." It is crucial to grow with planning and strategy so that Brazilian producers do not end up feeding the world and dying of hunger." - Murilo Bettarello, 2017 Nuffield Scholar, NI Board member.

"Everyone wants to go to heaven – but no one wants to die..." And this is where the complexity lies when we have global discussions about decarbonization – even more so when I consider the national perspective on our responsibilities. We had thought-provoking debates and - although they are not perfect (and none of us are) - I really enjoyed hearing about Mato Grosso do Sul's sustainability direction and their ambition to 'make it happen'. - Jenna Smith, New Zealand, 2024 Nuffield Scholar

"It is very difficult for any company to be up to date with all the news and opportunities that are happening in agribusiness around the world. Being close to Nuffield allows us to keep up with news and opportunities, as the networking developed is admirable. We really enjoy following the journey of 'Nuffielders' and we are open to learning alongside them. It's really a partnership for both sides." - Henrique Freitas, Cosan, sponsor.

The Nuffield Global Research Program

The Nuffield CSC is the launch of the multi-stage “**Nuffield Global Agri-Research Program**” whereby the selected Nuffield Scholars travel internationally for 8-16 weeks over a 18 month timeframe using the 2000 strong Nuffield network to deeply understand a self-selected topic of national importance related to production, distribution, management and communication issues in their country. The expectation that they bring home and implement the results to improve their sector in a short, medium and long term way. This includes adoption of new techniques and technologies, opening of new markets and partnerships, taking on leadership positions and influencing policy over the rest of their lives. **The key to Nuffield success over its 77 years as a not-for-profit / for-purpose entity is its strong culture connecting scholars and sponsors to the values of integrity, humility, life-long learning, open mindset, respect, diversity and reciprocity.**

For more information: www.nuffield.com.br
www.nuffieldinternational.org