

Professor Timothy Lang, Hon DSc

Thursday 25 July 2024, am

Chancellor,

Our honorary graduand this morning is an internationally renowned expert on food policy. I am delighted to introduce PROFESSOR TIMOTHY LANG.

Tim – ‘the man who invented food miles’ - is Emeritus Professor at City, University of London’s Centre for Food Policy, which he founded in 1994. His work addresses the challenges of creating a food system that meets the needs of consumers, environment, social justice and public health. His research interests have ranged across sustainable diets, food security and the implications of Brexit. Across this work, he’s explored the policy mismatch between production and consumption, and why we seem reluctant fully to address food’s impacts on climate change, biodiversity, water and land use, and culture.

After a social psychology PhD on school phobias, in the 1970s he switched careers, becoming a hill farmer in Lancashire. It was there that he became intrigued by poor diets and how people’s food choices are shaped by their circumstances. Diets reflect social conditions more than

choice, he argues. A good diet and knowing how to cook from raw food would connect people to the land more.

Tim's interests and those of the School of Life Sciences coincide most strongly with regard to fresh food. Research into many of the aspects of fresh food production, particularly vegetables, is one of our key themes.

Tim's admission to the degree of Doctor of Science is well-timed, as this year we celebrate 75 years of research on vegetable production at Warwick Crop Centre, situated on our Innovation Campus close to Stratford-on-Avon. The campus started life in 1949 as the National Vegetable Research Station, to assist with increasing national food production after the second world war. In the 1990s it became the headquarters of Horticulture Research International and then part of the University 20 years ago. We remain a vital resource for the UK's important fresh produce farming sector. In the last five years, at our request, Tim has delivered two challenging keynote presentations at public events, on the importance of vegetables in the UK and more recently, on UK Horticulture, its policy lock-ins, disruptions and options. These have helped us to reflect on the impact of policy on our research, and its future direction, as we look ahead to strengthening our research efforts in this regard, working closely with colleagues across the University. Indeed, Tim is currently preparing a report for the National

Preparedness Commission on civil food resilience – how would the food system work in the face of national shocks, such as war or a pandemic like the one we recently experienced. Access to fresh food absolutely needs to be a key part of this.

Tim has worked at the highest level with regard to food policy in the UK – advising four Parliamentary Inquiries - and internationally at the EU and the UN. He was Land Use and Natural Resources Commissioner on the UK Sustainable Development Commission, 2006-11, a member of the UK Council of Food Policy Advisers, 2008-10 and since 2009 has been a member of the London Food Board advising Mayors of London. He was policy lead of the EAT-Lancet Commission's highly cited 2019 *Food in the Anthropocene* report. He has written 128 articles, 62 book chapters, 89 reports/briefings, and 14 books – the latest being *Feeding Britain*, 2020. A firm believer in public communication, he was recognised by the Chancellor's Prize of his own University in 2015, *The Observer's* Lifetime Award in 2007, and the BBC Food Derek Cooper Award back in 2004. In 2014 he was made Fellow by Distinction of the Faculty of Public Health, in 2016 a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Cooks of London, and has an honorary doctorate from the University of Lincoln, his birthplace. It is a great pleasure to welcome him to Warwick today.

Chancellor: in the name of the Senate, I present to you for admission to
the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*, PROFESSOR
TIMOTHY LANG.