



## Annual Scientific Sessions 2026 of the Nutrition Society of Sri Lanka

### Cinnamon Lakeside, Colombo – 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> January 2026

Theme: One Health, One Nutrition: Ensuring Optimal Nutrition for People and the Planet

#### PROGRAMME

Day 1: 24 <sup>th</sup> January 2026	
TIME	ITEM
7.30 am	Registration
8.00 am	Arrival of the Guests
8.10 am	Formalities of the Opening Ceremony National Anthem Lighting of the Oil Lamp
8.15 am	Welcome Address – President, Nutrition Society of Sri Lanka
8.20 am	Address by the Chief Guest: Prof. E.M.P. Ekanayake – Vice-Chancellor, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
8.30 am	Keynote Address: Targeting the Renin–Angiotensin System to Develop Novel Organ-specific Therapies in Nutrition-Linked Liver Diseases: New Horizons for Type 2 Diabetes, MAFLD, Cirrhosis and Hepatocellular Carcinoma Prof. Chandana Herath – Head, Hepatology Research and Liver Cancer Laboratory, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences, Monash University, Australia
9.15 am	Presidential Address
9.25 am	Special Appreciation Award to Professor Nihal Wijesinghe by the President
9.45 am	Vote of Thanks – Joint Secretary, Nutrition Society of Sri Lanka
10.00 am	TEA BREAK
10.30 am – 11.35 am	Symposium 1: Reversing the NCD Tide: Synergising Nutrition and Physical Activity for a Healthier Nation Symposium Chair: Prof. K.K.D.S. Ranaweera – Emeritus Professor/Food Science and Technology, University of Sri Jayewardenepura
10.30 am	Plenary Lecture: From Risk to Resilience: Addressing the Growing Cardiometabolic Burden in a Changing Nation Prof. Mahinda Abeywardena – CSIRO Health and Biosecurity, Adelaide, Australia
10.55 am	Symposium Lecture I: Nutrient Intake Goals and Enabling Food Environments for NCD Prevention: The Evidence Prof. Pulani Lanerolle – Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo
11.15 am	Symposium Lecture II: Reverse the NCD Tide: Optimise Diet and Physical Activity in Children Prof. Pujitha Wickramasinghe – Department of Paediatrics, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo

Day 1: 24 <sup>th</sup> January 2026	
TIME	ITEM
11.35 am – 12.40 pm	<b>Symposium 2: Holistic Perspective in Dietary and Food Behaviour for Enhancing Health Outcomes</b> <b>Symposium Chair: Prof. Eresha Mendis</b> – Department of Food Science & Technology, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya
11.35 am	<b>Plenary Lecture: Nutritional Challenges in Contemporary Sri Lanka: Insights from the BRIGHT National Survey 2024-25</b> <b>Dr. Derek Headey</b> – Senior Research Fellow in the Poverty, Health and Nutrition Division at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
12.00 noon	<b>Symposium Lecture I: The Power of Movement: Physical Activity as Medicine for Disease Prevention and Control</b> <b>Prof. Ananda Chandrasekara</b> – Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Faculty of Livestock, Fisheries and Nutrition, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
12.20 pm	<b>Symposium Lecture II: Chrono-Nutrition and Time-Restricted Eating: Impacts on Cardiometabolic Risk Markers</b> <b>Prof. Kumari M. Rathnayake</b> – Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Faculty of Livestock, Fisheries and Nutrition, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
12.40 pm	<b>Panel Discussion – Symposium 1 &amp; 2</b>
12.55 pm	<b>LUNCH BREAK</b>
1.30 pm – 2.30 pm	<b>Symposium 3: Beyond Macronutrients: Nutraceuticals, Microbiome Modulation, and Micronutrients in Precision Nutrition</b> <b>Symposium Chair: Dr. Dhammadika Senanayake</b> – Institute of Sports Medicine, Colombo 07
1.30 pm	<b>Plenary Lecture: Phytochemicals and Metabolic Health: Mechanistic Pathways and Emerging Therapeutic Potential</b> <b>Prof. K.K.D.S. Ranaweera</b> – Emeritus Professor/Food Science and Technology, University of Sri Jayewardenepura
1.50 pm	<b>Symposium Lecture I: Beyond Calories: Unmasking the Silent Crisis of Micronutrient Deficiencies</b> <b>Dr. Manojo Gamage</b> – Consultant Nutrition Physician, Nutrition Division, Ministry of Health and Mass Media
2.10 pm	<b>Symposium Lecture II: The Low-FODMAP Diet: Evidence-Based Dietary Strategy for Managing Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders</b> <b>Dr. Geeshani Somaratne</b> – Senior Lecturer, Department of Food Science and Technology, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya
2.30 pm	<b>Panel Discussion – Symposium 3</b>
2.45 pm	<b>Expert Group Discussion – Rethinking Ultra-Processed Foods: From Dietary Patterns to Metabolic and Microbiome Health</b> <b>Chair: Prof. Renuka Silva</b> – Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Faculty of Livestock, Fisheries and Nutrition, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka <b>Panel: Prof. Prasanna Gunathilake, Prof. K.K.D.S. Ranaweera, Prof. Ananda Chandrasekara</b>
3.15 pm	<b>Prof. T. W. Wikramanayake Oration: One Health, One Nutrition: Ensuring Optimal Nutrition for Individuals</b> <b>Prof. Sunil J. Wimalawansa</b> – Professor of Medicine, Endocrinology and Human Nutrition
4.15 pm	<b>Oration Tea</b>
4.30 pm	<b>NSSL Annual General Meeting 2026</b>
7.00 pm	<b>“NutriFeast” Dinner – Cinnamon Lakeside Colombo (7.00 pm – 11.30 pm)</b>

**Day 2: 25<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

TIME	ITEM
8.00 am	<p><b>Oral Presentation Session 1:</b>  <b>Mechanistic, Clinical, and Intervention-Focused Research on Cardiometabolic Health and Precision Nutrition (12 Presentations)</b></p> <p><b>Session Judges:</b></p> <p><b>Chair: Prof. Usha Hettiarachchi –</b>          Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura</p> <p><b>1. Dr. Geeshani Somaratne –</b>          Senior Lecturer, Department of Food Science and Technology, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya</p> <p><b>2. Dr. Shanthi Gunawardana –</b>          Consultant Community Physician;          Past President, NSSL</p> <p><b>Poster Presentation Session 1:</b>  <b>Community and Clinical Nutrition: Determinants, Risks, and Health Outcomes (18 Posters)</b></p> <p><b>Session Judges:</b></p> <p><b>Chair: Dr. Darshika Pathiraja –</b>          Senior Lecturer, Department of Food Science and Technology, Faculty of Livestock, Fisheries and Nutrition, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka</p> <p><b>1. Mr. Wilfred Narammala –</b>          Former Deputy Director, SLPS</p> <p><b>2. Mrs. Mala Abeygunawardena –</b>          Senior Dietitian, Sri Jayewardenepura General Hospital</p>
10.00 am – 10.55 am	<p><b>Symposium 4: AI-driven Diagnostics and Behaviour Change to Improve Diets and Nutrition in Sri Lanka</b></p> <p><b>Symposium Chair: Prof. Renuka Silva –</b> Chair Professor, Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Faculty of Livestock, Fisheries and Nutrition, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka</p>
10.00 am	<p><b>An Overview of PlantVillage Food</b>          Dr. Aulo Gelli – Senior Research Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington DC</p>
10.05 am	<p><b>Plenary Lecture: AI-assisted Diet Monitoring for Adolescent Girls in Sri Lanka: Evidence from Validation Against Conventional Methods</b>          Dr. Thushanthi Perera – Senior Lecturer, Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Faculty of Livestock, Fisheries and Nutrition, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka</p>
10.20 am	<p><b>Symposium Lecture I: Feasibility and Effectiveness of Using Mobile Phone AI-Assisted Dietary Assessment and Nudging to Improve Diets of Female Adolescents in Sri Lanka</b>          Ms. Nilmini Karunaratna – Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Faculty of Livestock, Fisheries and Nutrition, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka</p>
10.30 am	<p><b>Symposium Lecture II: Highlights from Other Countries: FRANI App for Accurate, Real-Time Nutrient Insights in LMICs and Beyond</b>          Dr. Phuong Nguyen – Senior Research Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute</p>
10.40 am	<p><b>Symposium Lecture III: From Validation to Impact: Leveraging FRANI for Real-World Dietary Assessment and Promoting Food-based Dietary Guidelines Adherence</b>          Prof. Renuka Silva – Chair Professor, Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Faculty of Livestock, Fisheries and Nutrition, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka</p>
10.50 am	<p><b>Panel Discussion – Symposium 4</b></p>

11.10 am	TEA BREAK
<b>Day 2: 25<sup>th</sup> January 2026</b>	
TIME	ITEM
11.30 am	<p><b>Oral Presentation Session 2: Population-Level, Life-Course, Behavioural, and Policy-Oriented Nutrition Research (13 Presentations)</b></p> <p><b>Session Judges:</b>  <b>Chair: Prof. Indu Waidyatilaka</b> – Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Prof. Kanchana Abeysekera</b> – Department of Agricultural Technology, Faculty of Technology, University of Colombo</li> <li><b>Dr. Dammika Gunaratne</b> – Consultant Community Physician, Department of Public Health, CMC</li> </ol> <p><b>Poster Presentation Session 2: Functional Foods, Bioactive Compounds, Food Innovation, and Safety (18 Posters)</b></p> <p><b>Session Judges:</b>  <b>Chair: Prof. Swarna Wimalasiri</b> – Department of Food Science and Technology, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Dr. Haily Seneviratne</b> – Senior Lecturer, Department of Food Science and Technology, Faculty of Livestock, Fisheries and Nutrition, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka</li> <li><b>Dr. Isuri Jayawardena</b> – Postdoctoral Scientist (FMR), National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment (INRAE), France</li> </ol>
1.40 pm	<b>LUNCH BREAK</b>
2.30 pm	<p><b>Nutri-Quiz Competition</b></p> <p><b>Coordinator/Chair: Dr. Thilanka Ranathunga</b> – Head, Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Faculty of Livestock, Fisheries and Nutrition, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka</p> <p><b>Contestants:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>P. Mathusha – Department of Food Science and Technology, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka</li> <li>W.G.H.I. Adikari – Department of Food Science and Technology, Faculty of Applied Science, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka</li> <li>T.A.S.D. Devindi – Department of Nutrition &amp; Dietetics, Faculty of Livestock Fisheries and Nutrition, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka</li> <li>J. Yanooja – Department of Nutrition &amp; Dietetics, Faculty of Livestock Fisheries and Nutrition, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka</li> <li>S.S. Nasrin – Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya</li> </ol> <p><b>Quiz Conductor/Compere: Ms. Shehari Wijesinghe</b></p> <p><b>Judges:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Dr. Disna Kumari</b> – Senior Dietitian, Hemas Hospitals and Health Care, Wattala</li> <li><b>Dr. Nipuni Nayanathara Waidyaratna</b> – Senior Lecturer, Department of Pre Clinical Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University</li> <li><b>Ms. Manjula Sandamali</b> – Technical Specialist - Nutrition, Scaling Up Nutrition People's Forum</li> </ol>
<b>Closing Ceremony</b>	
4.30 pm	<b>Awards and Appreciations</b>
5.15 pm	<b>Closing Remarks – Conference Chair, NSSL Annual Scientific Sessions 2026</b>
5.30 pm	<b>Vote of Thanks – Conference Coordinator, NSSL Annual Scientific Sessions 2026</b>

**5.40 pm**

**Close of the Ceremony**