**Getting to know Laura Vannini**

Laura Vannini works in AFBI’s Grassland and Plant Sciences Branch in Belfast. Here, we find out more about Laura and her interests inside and outside of work.

**Hi Laura. Tell us a bit about yourself.** I grew up in Italy and after about 15 years in academia at the University of Siena (Italy) and University of Georgia (US), I moved to Northern Ireland where I began working for AFBI 2 years ago.

**What attracted you to work for AFBI?** I have been a Molecular Biologist throughout my career and wanted to keep working in this field, preferably on something related to my Ph.D. AFBI provided me with the opportunity I was looking for.

**Tell us about your career with AFBI.** I spent my first year at AFBI in the Bacteriology unit where I was involved in statutory work. The expertise required there was a perfect fit for me. I had the chance to apply techniques that I already knew and acquire new ones. When I left the unit for a promotional opportunity, I knew I would be very lucky if my new lab was half as good as the old one. Currently I am in GPS and I just love it! I’m involved in research now and I have many opportunities to continue developing my scientific knowledge.

**What are you passionate about outside of work?** I love painting and do it whenever I have time. My favourite media is oil, but I like to experiment with acrylics and watercolours too. I also spend lots of time mixing and stirring things in the kitchen, for that practice known as cooking. I think I get good results in this, or at least I often pass my husband’s quality control.