

European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics (EurSafe)

Newsletter

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Volume 2, No. 2

June 2000
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Editorial

This is the last issue of the EurSafe Newsletter before the Second Congress of the European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics (EurSafe) in Copenhagen, Denmark. We look forward to an exciting second conference, and hope to meet you all! The next, September, issue of the EurSafe Newsletter will be edited by Kate Millar and Sandy Tomkins of the Centre for Applied Bioethics at the University of Nottingham. So, please send all contribution to Kate Millar (e-mail: kate.millar@nottingham.ac.uk) before September 1, 2000.

Volkert Beekman, Berit Faber, Dirk Lips, Kate Millar, Erminio Monteleone, Silke Schicktanz

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EurSafe News

Transatlantic Platform for Consumer Concerns and International Trade, First Meeting

June 17-17, 2000, Lelystad, The Netherlands. EurSafe organises a first meeting of the *Transatlantic Platform for Consumer Concerns and International Trade*. This meeting is a closed meeting for 50 experts of divergent disciplinary, regional and occupational background. The objective of the first meeting is to establish an agenda for this platform. This agenda identifies and prioritises research themes, clarifies what WTO and other policy-makers can expect from the platform, and lists future activities of the platform. Such an agenda will be presented in pamphlet. In order to reach this objective, the meeting starts with a plenary session of two presentations from both sides of the Atlantic (to highlight potential conflicts) by Lester Crawford and Christophe Bureau, and proceeds by defining the problem of consumer concerns and international trade in both substantial and procedural terms. Then, in a first round of four parallel workshops, the issues at stake are further identified. Each of these workshops starts with a statement (by Lynn Frewer, David Blandford, Dominique Vermersch and Lawrence Busch) and a first comment (by Klaus Peter Rippe, Lowell Hill, Douglas Powell and Ben Malayang), and proceeds with an interdisciplinary and interregional discussion. In a second round of the parallel workshop, conclusions and agenda's for the future are drawn. These conclusions and agenda's from the workshops are presented and discussed in a concluding agenda-setting plenary discussion. This final discussion should provide the materials for drawing a pamphlet. More information on future activities of the platform: Volkert Beekman, Project Assistant Consumer Concerns and International Trade, European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics (EurSafe), Centre for Bioethics and Health Law, Utrecht University, Heidelberglaan 2, 3584 CS Utrecht, The Netherlands, phone + 31 30 2534399, fax + 31 30 2539410, e-mail: vbeekman@theo.uu.nl

EurSafe 2000, Two Systems - One World

August 24-26, 2000, Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, Copenhagen, Denmark. Second Congress of the European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics (EurSafe). Deadline for signing up at reduced rates is June 15, 2000. More information: Annelise Ito or Berit Faber, Centre for Bioethics and Risk Assessment, The Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, Groennegaardsvej 8, 1870 Frederiksberg C, phone + 45 3528 3009/10, fax + 45 3528 3022, e-mail: EurSafe@ICS.dk, website: <http://www.bioethics.kvl.dk>

Comparison of EU and US Arguments regarding Environmental and Human Health Risks associated with Genetically Modified Foods

August 26-27, 2000, Copenhagen, Denmark. In continuation of the successful follow-up workshop at the last EurSafe congress exploring the social and ethical issues most salient to conflicting European and North American approaches to food biotechnology, this years EurSafe congress will also be followed by a workshop comparing the US with EU. This year the focus will be on a comparison of the recently surfacing arguments regarding environmental and human health implications associated with agricultural biotechnology advanced in North American and European contexts. The follow-up workshop will take place immediately after the EurSafe congress. More information: Tarla Rai Peterson, phone + 1 409 8628851, e-mail: tpeterson@bushschool.tamu.edu

Conferences

Millennial Stews: Food and Food Systems in the Global City

June 1-4, 2000, Department of Nutrition and Food Studies, University New York City, New York, USA. The Year 2000 Joint Annual Meeting of the ASFS and AFHVS. More information, website: <http://www.nyu.edu/education/nutrition/foodconference>

3rd Agricultural Biotechnology International Conference (ABIC 2000)

June 5-8, 2000, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. More information, website: <http://www.abic.net>

Healthy Environments - The Local Challenge

June 5-9, 2000, Oslo, Norway. 6th International World Congress on Environmental Health. More information, website: <http://www.fmh.no/ifeh/English/start.htm>

Science Advice, Policy Making and Public Confidence

June 7, 2000, CCFRA, Chipping Campden, Glos GL55 6LD, UK. More information: Campden & Chorleywood Food Research Association (CCFRA), phone + 44 1386 842000.

Farm Animal Welfare: Challenge 2000

June 10, 2000, Guelph, Ontario, Canada. More information, website: http://www.carc-crac.ca/english/meetings_wkshps/faw-cfre.htm

2000 Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) Annual Meeting and Food Expo

June 10-14, 2000, Dallas Convention Centre, Dallas, USA. More information, website: <http://www.ift.org/meetings/meethome.shtml>

Challenges for Science and Engineering in the 21st Century

June 14-18, 2000, Stockholm, Sweden. International Network of Engineers and Scientists for Global Responsibility (INES). More information: INES 2000 Conference Secretariat, Gutenbergstr. 31, 44139 Dortmund, Germany, phone + 49 231 575218, fax + 49 231 575210, e-mail: INES2000@t-online.de

Risk Assessment and Communication or Food Safety

June 20-22, 2000, Central Science Laboratory, Sand Hutton, York, UK. First Joint CSKL/JIFSCAN Symposium on Food Safety and Nutrition. More information, website: <http://www.csl.gov.uk/jifscan/>

Feather Pecking in Laying Hens

June 21, 2000, Langford (near Bristol), Somerset, UK. More information: Rita Hinton, phone + 44 117 9289502, e-mail: rita.hinton@bristol.ac.uk

Consumers, Technology and Environment: Creating Opportunity and Managing Risk

June 24-28, 2000, Chicago, Illinois, USA. 10th World Food and Agribusiness Congress. More information, website: <http://www.ifama.org/conferences/conf.asp>

Connecting Environmental Ethics, Ecological Integrity and Health in the Millennium

June 24-29, 2000, San Jose, Costa Rica. More information: ISEE, Laura Westra, Sarah Lawrence College, 1 Meadway, Bates 100, Bronxville, NY 10708-5999, USA, phone + 1 914 3952487, fax + 1 914 3952666, e-mail: lwestra@mail.sl.c.edu

European Pesticide Residue Workshop: Pesticides in Food and Drink

July 3-5, 2000, York, UK. More information: EPRW 2000 Secretariat, Central Science Laboratory, Sand Hutton, York, YO41 1LZ, UK, phone + 44 1904 462459, fax +44 1904 462253, e-mail: eprw2000@csl.gov.uk, web-site: <http://www.csl.gov.uk/news/level2/eprw3.htm>

Health and Risk II

July 3-5, 2000, St.Catherine's College, Oxford, UK. Second Biannual International Conference. More information, e-mail: p.dolan@sheffield.ac.uk

6th International Symposium on the Biosafety of Genetically Modified Organisms

July 8-13, 2000, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. More information, web-site: <http://www.usask.ca/agriculture/biosafety/>

British Society for Ethical Theory

July 13-16, 2000, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands. More information: Prof. Dr. Theo

van Willigenburg, Erasmus University Rotterdam, PO Box 1738, 3000 DR Rotterdam, The Netherlands, phone + 31 10 40808977, fax + 31 10 21204048 , e-mail: vanwilligenburg@fwb.eur.nl

International Conference on Microbial Biotechnology, Trade and Public Policy

July 15-17, 2000, Hyderabad, India. More information, website:
<http://www.osmania.ac.in/microbiology/lake1.html>

Food Safety - A Global Priority, International Food Safety Congress 2000

July 19-21, 2000, Orlando, Florida, USA. More information, website:
<http://www.restaurant.org/congress2000>

Sustainable Technologies for the Food Industry

July 19-21, 2000, San José, Costa Rica. First Congress of Food Science and Technology. More information, website: <http://www.cita.ucr.ac.cr>

The Ethical Challenges of Globalization

July 19-23, 2000, Sao Paulo, Brazil, The Second World Congress of the International Society of Business, Economics, and Ethics (ISBEE). More information, web-site:
<http://www.synethos.org/isbee/SecondWorldCongress.htm>

7th Annual Conference on Bioethics: Bioethics in the New Millennium

July 20-22, 2000, Centre for Bioethics and Human Dignity, Trinity International University, The Deerfield, Illinois, USA. More information, website: <http://www.cbhd.org>

Between Nature: Explorations in Ecology and Performance

July 27-30, 2000, Centre for the Study of Environmental Change & Department of Theatre Studies, Lancaster University, Lancaster, UK. More information, web-site:
<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/users/csec/betweennature>

The 9th Annual Food Choice

July 28-31, 2000, Trinity College, University of Dublin, Ireland. More information, e-mail: r.g.platts@bham.ac.uk

New Cultures of Food Environments

July 30 - August 5, 2000, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Workshop at the World Congress of the International Rural Sociological Association (IRSA). More information: Dr. Mara Miele, University of Pisa, Dept. of Agricultural Economics, via del Borghetto 80, 56124 Pisa, Italy, phone + 39 50571553, fax + 39 50571344, e-mail: mmiele@agr.unip.it

Ethical Students Conference

July 30 - August 5, 2000, Aarhus, Denmark. Ethics and human rights, ethics and humour, the ethical dilemmas of psychiatry, and medical ethics in the future. More information, e-mail: esc@studmed.au.dk, website: <http://www.studmed.au.dk/esc>

XXIV International Conference of Agricultural Economists

August 13-19, 2000, Berlin, Germany. More information, website: <http://www.iaae.iastate.edu>

Measuring Behaviour 2000

August 15-18, 2000, Nijmegen, The Netherlands. 3rd International Conference on Methods and Techniques on Behavioral Research. More information, e-mail: mb2000@noldus.nl, web-site: <http://www.noldus.com/events/mb2000>

IAATH (The International Alliance for Animal Therapy and Healing)

August 17-20, 2000, Washington State University Vancouver, Washington, USA. More information: Penny Ramey, phone + 1 360 2548436, e-mail: ramey@coopext.cahe.wsu.edu

Thinking about the Environment: Our Debt to the Greek and Medieval Past

August 17-20, 2000, Firenze, Italy. More information: Laura Westra, Sarah Lawrence College, 1 Mead Way, Bronxville, NY 10708-5999, e-mail: lwestra@mail.slc.edu

EAAP - 2000, 51st Annual Meeting of the European Association for Animal Production

August 21-24, 2000, The Hague, The Netherlands. More information, website: <http://www.eaap2000.wau.nl/>

Human Healthcare - Sciences, Technologies, Values

August 23-26, 2000, Second World Congress of Philosophy of Medicine, Krakow, Poland, organized by the European Society for Philosophy of Medicine and Health Care, the Central and East European Association of Bioethics, and the Department of Philosophy and Bioethics, Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland. More information: Prof. dr. Henk ten Have, Dept. of Ethics, Philosophy and History of Medicine, School of Medical Sciences, University of Nijmegen, PO Box 9101, 6500 HB Nijmegen, The Netherlands, phone + 31 24 3615320, fax + 31 24 3540254, e-mail: H.tenHave@efg.kun.nl

4th International Conference on the Economics of Agricultural Biotechnology

August 24-28, 2000, Ravello, Italy. More information, website: <http://www.economia.uniroma2.it/conferenze/icabr/>

IFOAM 2000: The World Grows Organic

August 28-31, 2000, 13th International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements Scientific Conference, Basel, Switzerland. Includes 1st International Seminar on "Organic Food Processing. Organic Food: How to Guarantee Premium Quality for the New Millennium", as accompanying event, August 29-30, 2000. More information: IFOAM 2000, FiBL, Ackerstrasse, 5070 Frick, Switzerland, phone + 41 62 8657297, fax + 41 62 8657273, e-mail: ifoam2000@fibl.ch, web-site: <http://www.ifoam2000.ch>

Biotechnology 2000, The World Congress on Biotechnology

September 3-8, 2000, Berlin, Germany. 1st European Congress on Agri-Biotechnology. More information, website: http://www.dechema.de/englisch/veranst/ibs11/pages/i_ibs_1.htm

International Congress on Food Production and the Quality of Life

September, 4-8, 2000, Sassari, Italy. More information, website: <http://www.uniss.it/giubileo/>

Biotechnology in Agriculture: Present and Future

September 5-7, 2000, Al-Salt, Jordan. More information, website: <http://www.bau.edu.jo/~anfoka/>

Individuality in Farm and Laboratory Animals, ISAE West Central Europe Workshop 2000

September 8-9, 2000, Zurich, Switzerland. More information: Dr Lars Schrader, e-mail: lars.schrader@inw.agrl.ethz.ch

Valuing the Health Benefits of Food Safety

September 14-15, 2000, University of Maryland, USA. More information, web-site: <http://www.umass.edu/ne165/upcoming.html>

International Conference and Exhibition on Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals

September 14-17, 2000, Houston, Texas, USA. More information, e-mail: fshahidi@morgan.ucs.mun.ca, or: s-koseoglu@tamu.edu

Fifth World Congress of Bioethics

September 21-24, 2000, Ethics, Law and Policy, Imperial College, London, UK. More information: Anne Lavender, Centre for Ethics in Medicine, 73 St Michael's Hill, Bristol, BS2 8BH, UK, e-mail:

anne.lavender@bristol.ac.uk, web-site: <http://www.uclan.ac.uk/facs/ethics/fifthcon.htm>

Alternative and Complementary Methods to Animal Testing in Biomedical Research

September 24-26, 2000, Austria. 9th Austrian International Congress. More information, website: <http://www.zet.bartl.net/kongress/>

International Association for Environmental Philosophy

October 7-9, 2000, Pennsylvania State University, USA.

2nd International Conference on Air Pollution from Agricultural Operations

October 9-11, 2000, Des Moines, Iowa, USA. More information: Bryan Shaw, Texas A&M University, phone + 1 409 8459793, fax + 1 409 8478828, e-mail: bw-shaw@tamu.edu

3rd International Conference on Transgenic Animals(ICTA)

October 16-21, 2000, Beijing, China. Sponsor: ISTR(International Society for Transgenic Research). Abstract Deadline: May 1, 2000. More information: David L. Kooyman, Department of Animal and Veterinary Science, Brigham Young University, 392 WIDB, Provo UT 84602-5169, USA, e-mail: david_kooyman@byu.edu, web-site: <http://www.ciccst.org.cn/icta>

34th International Congress of the International Society for Applied Ethology (ISAE)

October 17-20, 2000, Florianopolis, Brazil. Deadline for abstracts: March 31, 2000. More information, web-site: <http://www.cca.ufsc.br/isae2000>

Is Nature ever Evil, Wrong or Ugly?

October 23-25, 2000, Amsterdam. More information: Beziningscentrum Vrije Universiteit, De Boelelaan 1105, 1081 HV Amsterdam, The Netherlands, phone + 31 20 4445670, fax + 31 20 4445680, e-mail: wb.drees@dienst.vu.nl, website: <http://www.lustrum2000.nl/evil>

Prospects for a Sustainable Dairy Sector in the Mediterranean

October 28, 2000, Hammamet, Tunisia. More information: Symposium Secretariat, Mon M Quellouz, Office de l'Elevage et des Paturages, 30 Rue Alain Saxory, 1002 Tunis, Tunisia, e-mail: DG.OEPC@Email.ati.tn

Biotechnology: Environmental Technology for the Future

October 30-31, 2000, Stuttgart, Germany. Ministry for Environment and Traffic Baden Württemberg. More information, e-mail: britta-antje.behm@uvm.bwl.de or joerg.goldschmidt@uvm.bwl.de, website: <http://www.uvm.baden-wuerttemberg.de.uvm.infoserv.html>

32nd International Congress on Applied Ethology 2000

November 9-11, 2000, Freiburg, Germany. German Veterinary Society, Section of Applied Ethology. More information: Dr U Pollmann, phone + 49 761 1502287, fax + 49 761 1502299, e-mail: pollmann@thi.cvuafz.bwl.de

Tecnologia, Ética y Futuro

November 16 -17, 2000, Institut de Tecnoètica, Barcelona, Spain. More information, website: <http://www.tecnoetica.com>

Value-free Science - Ideal or Illusion

February 23-25, 2001, University of Alabama, Birmingham, USA. More information, website: <http://www.uab.edu/ethicscenter/conference2001.html>

Taking Nature Seriously: Citizens, Science, and Environment

February 25-27, 2001, University of Oregon, USA. More information: Environmental Studies program, 10 Pacific Hall, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-5223, USA, phone + 1 541 3465399, fax +

1 541 3465096, e-mail: tns@dwarking.uoregon.edu, web-site: <http://dwarking.uoregon.edu/~tns>

Organic Meat and Milk Production from Ruminants

September/ October 2001, Athens, Greece. Joint BSAS and Hellenic Society of Animal Production Meeting. More information: BSAS, phone + 44 131 4454508, fax + 44 131 5353120, e-mail: bsas@ed.sac.ac.uk

Courses

Bioethics, Iowa State University, Bioethics Institute

ISU Model Bioethics Institutes are week-long seminars that seek to assist life science professors in implementing ethics discussions in the classroom. The mission of the ISU Bioethics Program is to nurture reasoned examination of bioethical issues pertaining to agriculture, food, animals and the environment; to provide ongoing assistance to, and education of, science faculty members in introducing ethical issues to their students; and to support faculty members as they reflect on various moral dimensions of their research. The Institutes are sponsored by the ISU Office of Biotechnology, the National Science Foundation and the National Agricultural Biotechnology Council (NABC). During the summer of 2000, Institutes will be held at North Carolina State University and in Lisbon, Portugal (see below).

NABC Bioethics Institute, North Carolina State University

June 3-8, 2000, Raleigh, North Carolina, USA. More information, website: <http://www.cals.cornell.edu/extension/nabc/bioethicsinstintro.html>

FLAD Bioethics Institute

July 8-14, 2000, University of Lisbon, Portugal. More information, website: <http://www.flad.pt/pt/bioethic.html>

5th Summerschool on Biomedical Ethics

September 7-12, 2000, Castel Bellinzona, Swiss Association for Biomedical Ethics. More information, e-mail: sseb@bluewin.ch, phone + 79 3015569, fax + 91 81056142

Ethics and Genetics, Advanced European Bioethics Course

November 16-18, 2000, University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands. More information, e-mail: n.steinkamp@efg.kun.nl, website: <http://azn.nl/scientist/departments/departments.html>

Academic Groups

Centre for Bioethics and Risk Assessment

A new Danish, multidisciplinary research centre, focusing on the use of gene technologies in food production.

For the forthcoming three years the use of gene technologies in food production and in laboratory animals will be the intellectual meeting point for a multidisciplinary group of about twenty Danish researchers. Representing and practising biology, social sciences and philosophy and based at seven major Danish research institutions, they will work together for the Centre for Bioethics and Risk Assessment, striving to produce food for thought and for informed, public debate on whether, how and

when to use genetically modified crops and animals. The research centre is mainly publicly funded through the Danish Research Council and the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries. And the task of the centre is to respond to concerns, voiced or otherwise demonstrated by the Danish public, regarding further advances in gene technology in food production and the release of genetically modified plants into the environment.

The Danish public is rather sceptical about the use of gene technologies in food production. Gene technology is considered risky, and in this field there is a tendency to distrust people in power - be it political or commercial power - and to trust NGOs instead. In this respect Denmark differs very little from other Western European societies. But Denmark has a tradition of public discussion of the use of technology, and there is a broad consensus among decision makers - in the public and private sectors - that the concerns of the public are to be taken seriously, should be taken into consideration in decision making, and cannot be ignored as just another example of public ignorance. But this is easier said than done: It is not fully understood what the concerns are really about. And, because of lack of scientific knowledge, many questions regarding potential environmental effects or harm to animals cannot be answered properly.

The Centre for Bioethics and Risk Assessment is a tailor-made research centre, designed to fit into - and to profit from - this specific Danish context. The centre will concentrate on providing facts, figures and understanding to fill knowledge gaps, thereby improving the conditions for an informed debate. The results will be communicated to the public by means of newsletters and public meetings.

To fulfil this task the researchers will have to develop an appropriate working style. Multidisciplinarity, focusing on the topic rather than on the discipline, will have to inform the whole exercise from the very beginning. Ethical considerations and analysis will be integrated into biological research. And communication about the research with all sorts of interested groups in the Danish society - allowing information and opinion to flow both ways - will inspire the research processes.

Lack of knowledge

Genetically modified crops and animals are topics loaded with conflicts - and probably opposing value systems - but it is difficult to characterize the conflicts in greater detail as they have not been analyzed in depth. Who worries about what? Do risk assessment procedures and regulation recognize the concerns of the public? Social scientists will use qualitative in-depth interviews to gain insight into the ethical considerations which lie behind attitudes to the use of gene technologies in the public and in NGOs. Other questions to look into are: Do NGOs and the public worry about the same things? Do NGOs in other words represent the public in these matters? And how do the NGOs influence political decisions about biotechnology? Do they actually have such great influence as they are widely thought to have?

Meanwhile biologists will investigate the likelihood of genetically modified plants spreading in the environment and/or hybridizing with other plants, resulting in new, competitive weeds. They will question the stability and efficacy of biological containment: Plants are supposed to be sterile when they lack the ability to seed, but such plants may be more prone to vegetative reproduction.

Other biological experiments will focus on the interplay between plants and soil. Transgenic plants may alter the microbiological activity and decomposition of the soil. Disease-resistant proteins from transgenic plants may harm microorganisms in the soil, and such effects may harm soil productivity. Experiments cannot give certainty that such effects will not occur, but they will provide more knowledge about mechanisms of that kind, and eventually, about circumstances under which they may occur.

At the same time social scientists will develop scenarios of possible future use and regulation of genetically modified crops. Differing economical, social, ethical, legal and political aspects will form the basis of the scenarios. It is important to note the difference between a scenario and a prognosis. The scenarios will not claim to represent what will actually happen in the future, but will provide hints about likely outcomes of different choices, thus improving the conditions for discussing principles for use and regulation.

Philosophers will analyze the basis of such discussions from an ethical perspective. Classical theories of ethics say nothing about the challenges of uncertainty and risk, but uncertainty is inescapable in today's biotechnology. It cannot be ignored. Decisions must be made without certain knowledge about their consequences. Decisions should also be the result of democratic processes,

but democracy still has to learn how to function with scientific uncertainty. It will be one of the tasks of the philosophers of the centre to analyze this challenge.

Scientific research is needed to respond to concerns regarding the welfare of transgenic animals. Scientists of the centre will focus on transgenic laboratory animals. Today millions of such animals can be found in laboratories all around the world, one of their functions being to act as models for human diseases. More knowledge is needed about these animals to ensure that any suffering is minimized and well-being optimized. For example, the production of hormones is a common target for genetic modification, but it is not known whether such animals will react to tests in the same way as non-modified animals. In fact many tests actually use hormones as parameters of well-being. And if the behaviour of the animals is changed, they may also need different living conditions. Investigations into such areas will be combined with ethical considerations and analysis, and the results will be reported widely to inspire public debate on future use of transgenic animals.

Communication

An important task for the board of the Centre for Bioethics and Risk Assessment will be to sustain and inspire multidisciplinary. It has been decided that at least one third of the scientific publications should be genuinely multidisciplinary.

Another criterion of success will be that the research must be relevant to frontline biotechnological food research. Therefore, close contacts with biotechnological food research institutions are important to the centre. Many public research institutes, working with biotechnology in crops and animals, have agreed to take part in a continuous dialogue. The same is true for several major Danish companies in this field, some of which will also supply the biological researchers with plant material.

The relevance of the research to Danish society as a whole - and to the world - will be the overall criterion of success. The public, as citizens and consumers, is understood not only as a target group for the research and communication, but also as a partner. And so are agriculture, industry, researchers, NGOs, politicians and civil servants.

The researchers of the centre are physically based at the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, Research Centre Risoe, the Danish Institute of Agricultural Sciences, the National Environmental Research Institute, the University of Aarhus, Aalborg University, the University of Southern Denmark Odense, the Technical University of Denmark and the University of Copenhagen. Together they cooperate with researchers from universities in Australia, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Sweden, the UK and USA. Peter Sandøe, research professor at the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, is the licensee of the research projects of the centre, the secretariat of which is based at the same university.

Convivium: The Philosophy and Food Roundtable

A new philosophical group devoted to fostering research and dialogue on the intersection of food and philosophy. More information: Glenn Kuehn, 14 Highgate Circle, Madison WI 53717, USA, e-mail: philchef@chorus.net

European Federation of Food Science & Technology (EFFoST)

EFFoST is a non-profit association, with 80 societies in 21 European countries affiliated to it. EFFoST has become a focus for European cooperation among food scientists, engineers, technologists and businesses in food and food-related areas. Its aims are to:

- * develop closer contact between food producers and distributors, universities and research institutes;
- * enhance rapid technology transfer from ideas/research into industrial applications to improve European competitiveness;
- * promote continuing professional development and education excellence within food science and technology;
- * harmonise food legislation and enforcement programmes throughout Europe;
- * maintain a collaborative network of (research) organisations within the European food industry aimed at cooperation and 'knowledge sharing'.

More information, website: <http://www.ato.dlo.nl/effost/default.asp>

Issues

Further Afield: EU Food Safety Policy and the (Cl)aim of Confidence

In the recently published *'White Paper on Food Safety'* the European Commission presents its latest plans for improving food safety standards in the years to come. A striking feature of the White Paper is its emphasis on consumer confidence. The White Paper aims to contribute fundamentally to enhancing and re-establishing consumer confidence in its food supply.

It is evidently clear that this is all the more important. Recent food safety affairs as BSE, swine fever or dioxin are thought to have a negative effect upon public trust in agricultural production chains, and a positive one upon emerging public concerns in agriculture and its food products. Taking consumer concerns into account is, on the other hand, a sine qua non since that we are living in an affluent consumer society populated by critical and jaded consumers. For reasons of legitimacy and loyalty, taking consumers' interests to heart is a key policy priority for contemporary organisations, companies and governments. The White Paper may be qualified as a frenetic effort to connect the new European Food Safety policy to the buzz word of customer relationship management (CRM).

The overall idea of the White Paper is to establish a comprehensive and integrated food safety policy. An approach covering all sectors – 'links' – of the food chain from farm to table, is, in principle, in line with the recent focus on CRM and the much-discussed topic of demand-led food chains that concentrates on the transformation of food systems from product driven to consumer driven. All this is closely connected to consumer concerns that range from issues such as food safety, environmental considerations, animal welfare or the ethical appropriateness of methods of production. Bringing confidence into the realm of food safety policy, then, is firmly embedded in this context. While it is therefore hardly problematic to find compelling reasons for this manoeuvre, the move itself is anything but a trivial affair. In the White Paper this is insufficiently acknowledged. In other words, the (cl)aim of confidence as a matter of prime importance is confused and compared with a matter-of-course.

Though consumer confidence is a very complicated issue, the White Paper likes its readers to believe that the establishment of a scientifically oriented European Food Authority (EFA), or the installation of new regulatory and legal frameworks, alert systems and control guidelines, are naturally and directly related to the (cl)aim of restoring and maintaining consumer confidence. However, it may be undoubtedly true that the measures proposed are necessary conditions, they are by no means sufficient ones with respect to recovering consumer confidence.

It should be recognised that confidence and its counterpart trust are only partially situated in the domain of detecting certain pesticides and residues, or of sound scientific evidence in general. Laboratories, legislation, and even labelling, are neither simply nor univocally related to gaining and sustaining public confidence in food safety. Conquering consumer confidence requires looking at food safety from another, or rather complementary, angle. It demands social and emotional intelligence and means to develop this in order to keep track of the signs of the time, and to become both sensitive and alert to socio-cultural developments and differences.

The (restricted) attention paid to consumer information in the seventh chapter of the White Paper does not rectify its 'technocratic' character. Despite mentioning that consulting the public is essential, as well as that it is important to facilitate discussion and dialogue with consumers, these issues are just touched upon in only one of the 117 points that the White Paper consists of. No proposals whatsoever are to be found intended to give consumers direct influence and a strong voice, e.g. via Internet or evaluative surveys.

Information in the White Paper is first and foremost one-way communication. This is regrettable because the EC deprives itself of the opportunity to gain from what consumers have to say, and what they think and feel. As we are living in a network society it is vital that parties or persons become (conversation) partners. In this perspective, consumers are not only heard, but food policy-makers and scientists also communicate directly with consumers about subjects such as ignorance and anxiety, or about their food choices, value judgements, lifestyles, etc.

Undoubtedly, such a food safety policy with a human touch would quickly make clear that consumer confidence and consumer concerns are not simply and solely matters of verified facts and

figures. In addition to 'objective' scientific proof, 'subjective' emotions and ethical considerations are involved. Concentration on the installation of an EFA implies emphasising the establishment of a technical body for food safety. This is a food safety policy that is actually based on a limited approach and neither suitable nor sufficient to encompass the (c)aim of confidence entirely. Briefly, the proclaimed comprehensive approach of the White Paper is not comprehensive enough as yet to meet the (c)aim of consumer confidence.

Hans Dagevos, Senior Researcher Agricultural Economics Research Institute (LEI), The Hague, The Netherlands.

Publications & Journals

Appleby, M.C., *What Should We Do About Animal Welfare?*

Blackwell Science, Oxford 1999.

1. Noah's New Ark: why should we do anything?;
2. Humans, animals and machines: understanding animal welfare;
3. One big happy family: differences between animals;
4. To have and to hold: keeping and killing animals;
5. Made in our image: selection and modification of animals;
6. Home is where the heart is: housing and environments;
7. Give and take: animal treatment;
8. Buying power: individual action;
9. Votes and lobbies: action by society.

Consumers' Association, *Confronting Risk - A New Approach to Food Safety*

Policy Report Consumers Association, London 1999.

Risk communication should be a two-way inclusive process that enables the public to participate in decisions about what risks are acceptable. If the public are involved from the outset, judgements about the balance between consumer choice, on the one hand, and safety on the other, and therefore the legitimate role for government regulation, will be socially acceptable. It is time for a new approach to risk decisions and therefore food regulation. Such an approach should be based on: "*Greater openness and transparency; an acknowledgement of the limitations of a purely scientific approach resulting in a more precautionary approach; and continuous public involvement and dialogue throughout the process*". This report is available at a cost of £ 20 (quote code CONRIS) from the Consumers' Association, 2 Marylebone Road, London NW1 4DF, UK, phone + 44 20 78306000, fax + 44 20 78306220.

Global Bioethics

Periodical of the Italian Society for Bioethics - a forum for reflection and debate on all questions relating to medical ethics and environmental ethics. The intention of the journal is to integrate biological sciences with humanistic understanding and to develop different approaches within the field. More information: Brunetto Chiarelli, International Institute for the Study of Man, Università di Firenze, Via del Proconsolo 12, 50122 Florence, Italy, phone + 39 55 2398065, e-mail: antropos@cesit1.unifi.it

Hampel, J. & U. Pfenning, *Biotechnology and Public Perception of Technology*

The German Case. Online available at: <http://www.ta-akademie/publikationen/publiste.html>

Marsden, T., A. Flynn & M. Harrison, *Consuming Interests: the Social Provision of Foods*

UCL Press, London 2000.

1. Introduction: regulation, retailing and consumption: deregulating states and concerned consumers;

PART I Concepts and framework

2. Food policy and regulation;
3. Restructuring and retailing;
4. Citizenship, consumption and food rights;

PART II National strategies

5. Food consumers: the limits of formal and collective representation;
6. The retailers: the emergence of retailer-led food governance;
7. Evolving methods of food regulation;

PART III Local strategies

8. Local retail-consumption spaces and hierarchies;
9. The nationalisation of food regulation: coping with space;
10. The local regulatory interface: enforcement practice on the ground;
11. Conclusions: retailing, regulation and consumption.

Monthly Genetic Engineering Newsletter

Oeko-Institut e.V. (Institute for Applied Ecology).

It is conceptualised a condensed resource for decision makers and persons engaged in the development of sustainable agriculture and food production. It focuses on genetic engineering as one of the most problematic developments in the context of maintaining a non-GMO option, the freedom of choice for all members of a society and interregional, international and intergenerational equity/equality. If you would like to receive this Newsletter on a regular basis, just send an e-mail to Alexandra Baier (baier@oeko.de).

Of Cabbages and Kings: A SEED Europe's Anti-Genetic Engineering Cartoon Book 2000

- * What is Genetic Engineering;
- * The Genetic Engineering Industry;
- * Genetic Engineering and the EU;
- * Genetic Engineering in the Global Economy;
- * Corporate Control of Seed and "Feeding the World";
- * Genetic Engineering Products;
- * Health, Environment, and Ethics;
- * Alternatives to Genetic Engineering;
- * Other Applications of Genetic Engineering.

Science and the Precautionary Principle

An interesting communication from K.R. Foster *et al.* (World Health Organization) about the application of the precautionary principles in risk management could be found at the archive of May 12, 2000 at website: <http://www.gene.ch>, see also: Commission of the European Communities, website: http://europa.eu.int/comm/off/com/health_consumer/precaution.htm

Thomas, M.R. & O.L. Wardman, *Pesticide Usage Survey Report 150: Review of Usage of Pesticides in Agriculture and Horticulture Throughout Great Britain 1986-1996*

1999

There have been significant changes in cropping pattern and pesticide use over the ten-year period 1986 to 1996 throughout agriculture and horticulture in Great Britain. Cropping patterns have clearly had some effect on usage, but other factors such as levels of support gross margins and changes in CAP and GATT have influenced the profitability of pesticide use, as well as directly affecting the areas of individual crops grown year to year. This report summarises the gross changes in area treated and weight of pesticides applied and attempts to explain these major changes in the light of product development and cropping patterns. This report by the Central Science Laboratory's Pesticide Survey team is available at a cost of £ 2 (quote PB 4188) from MAFF Publications, Admail 6000, London, SW1A 2XX, UK, phone + 44 645 556000.

Web Sites

<http://www.foeeurope.org/biotechnology/about.htm>

Information from the Biotechnology Programme of Friends of the Earth Europe

<http://vsb.nott.ac.uk/vsb/>

Virtual School of Biodiversity, a multi-university centre for distributed environmental education founded by the University of Nottingham, The University of Hong Kong, The Natural History Museum of London and the TLTP Biodiversity Consortium.

<http://www.oneworld.net/>

OneWorld Online, the leading web site in the field of human sustainable development

<http://www.ifoam.org>

Background Information on the Neem Patent (a patent granted to the United States Department of Agriculture and the multinational corporation W.R. Grace for a method of controlling fungi on plants by the aid of an extract of seeds from the Neem tree) fight and the problem of biopiracy at the EPO.

<http://www.oecd.org/subject/biotech/edinburgh.htm>

GM Food Safety: Facts, Uncertainties, and Assessment, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

EurSafe

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Newsletter

The Newsletter of the European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics (EurSafe) is published quarterly. The Spring Issue is published and mailed in March, the Summer Issue in June, the Fall Issue in September, and the Winter Issue in December. Requests for subscription and address changes should be sent to the EurSafe Secretariat (EurSafe@theo.uu.nl). Items for inclusion in the September 2000 issue of the Newsletter should be sent to Kate Millar (kate.millar@nottingham.ac.uk) before September 1, 2000.

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