



European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics (EurSafe)

Newsletter **Volume 4, No.1, March 2002**

Editorial

This first issue of the fourth volume of the quarterly Newsletter of the European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics (EurSafe) witnesses some of the editorial changes that were agreed upon at EurSafe2001 in Florence, Italy. Each issue of the EurSafe Newsletter will begin with an invited commentary of 1-2 pages on a hot issue in agricultural and food ethics. John Webster, Professor of Animal Welfare at Bristol University in the United Kingdom, has the honour of giving this new section in the EurSafe Newsletter a kick-start. The EurSafe Newsletters of June, September and December 2002 will include invited commentaries on hot issues in biotechnology, food quality and food safety respectively. Furthermore, each issue of the EurSafe Newsletter will contain 1-2 pages of EurSafe news (responsible editor – Volkert Beekman, e-mail: v.beekman@lei.wag-

ur.nl), 1-2 pages on conferences and courses (responsible editor – Kate Millar, e-mail: kate.millar@nottingham.ac.uk), 1-2 pages on books and journals (responsible editor – Silke Schicktanz, e-mail: schicktanz@mdc-berlin.de) and 1-2 pages features, stories and discussion (responsible editor – Geir Tveit, e-mail: get@kvl.dk). Since the EurSafe Newsletter has a smaller editorial board now, the idea is to establish a broader network of occasional but regular contributors to the EurSafe Newsletter. Two former editors of the EurSafe Newsletter – Dirk Lips and Erminio Monteleone – already agreed to participate in this broader network. Please contact Volkert Beekman in case you are also interested to participate in this network.

*Volkert Beekman, Chief-Editor EurSafe
Newsletter*

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Animal Welfare: Science into Practice

John Webster

*Department of Clinical Veterinary Science
University of Bristol*

Thirty years ago, most scientists working with animals studied them as if they were machines: machines that were fascinating in themselves, machines which we could develop for our own use as sources of food, or as expendable pawns in the battle to conquer our own diseases. However a new discipline was emerging, Animal Welfare Science, the study of animals as sentient creatures in their own right.

The impetus for this science came from a growing ethical and emotional concern for the physical and mental welfare of the animals used by humans on the farm and in the laboratory. This provoked scientific questions as to the nature of motivation and aversion, pain and suffering, cognition and consciousness in animals. As evidence began to accumulate it became increasingly clear that much (not all) of the public expression of heart-felt concern about our treatment of animals could be supported by scientific evidence. Animal Welfare Science evolved as a rational response to an ethical need to give proper respect to the animals we exploit for our own needs by seeking to provide for them the environment, resources and care necessary to promote their physical and mental wellbeing.

If the heat of emotion usually serves as the beacon to highlight problems in animal welfare, so the cool head of science should be the best vehicle to help us resolve these problems through a better understanding of the nature of animal needs and animal suffering. Much of animal welfare science involves experiments designed to ask animals how they feel about features of their external and internal environment and how strongly they feel about these things. However, it is

not enough for animal welfare scientists simply to research these problems and publish our results in papers designed for our peers. We have a responsibility to use our special knowledge of how animals feel to direct practical systems of animal husbandry in ways that are increasingly sensitive to their needs, so systems are better equipped to achieve a fair compromise between their needs and ours.

Animal Welfare Science and Ethics, proceeding in tandem, have stimulated the development of improved standards of husbandry for animals on farms and in laboratories. Some of these have been incorporated into legislation (e.g. the UK Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act, 1986). There has also been a proliferation of voluntary Quality Assurance (QA) Schemes relating to the production of food from animals. The message of these schemes is that participating farmers operate to certain high (above statutory minimum) standards of husbandry, hygiene, biosecurity and especially animal welfare. Thus the value of food is defined not only by the end product but also by the production methods. Quality Assurance depends, of course, on Quality Control, so all these schemes require effective audit. This is easier said than done. In practice most welfare-based QA schemes for farm or laboratory animals are based on audit of the *provisions* made to promote good welfare (feeding, accommodation, disease control, record-taking) rather than the *outcome*, namely the actual welfare state of the animals. This is fair, since while it is the responsibility of the animal keeper to make provision for good husbandry s/he cannot always ensure it. It is also understandable since it is much easier to assess management on the farm or

in the laboratory than it is to assess the welfare state of the animals themselves. Nevertheless this is what really matters.

One of the top priorities for Animal Welfare Scientists is now to develop powerful, animal-based methods to assess the welfare of animals kept in groups on farm or in the laboratory. On 4-6 September 2002, the University of Bristol (UK) will host the second International Workshop on Assessment of Animal Welfare at Farm and Group Level. This is the successor to the highly successful first workshop held at the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, Copenhagen in 1999. An international cast of invited speakers will address the main themes: methods for monitoring welfare, evaluation of welfare through interpretation of multiple indices, practical ethics, stockmanship and the implementation of best practice. Participants may present original work by oral communication or poster presentation. There will also be two syndicate sessions in which the symposium will divide into discussion groups. The first will consider the principles that should govern the measurement and evaluation of animal welfare. The second will discuss the

practical application and implementation of welfare assessments and recommendations. The proceedings of the conference, including the conclusions and recommendations from the syndicates will be published as a special issue of the journal 'Animal Welfare' (For workshop information contact: Conference Office, e-mail Langford-CE@bristol.ac.uk. Also see the Newsletter Conference section).

I have been involved in Animal Welfare Science (inter alia) for over 25 years. It has always been a fascinating subject in its own right. However, I believe that the most exciting time is now since we have both the knowledge and the political will to carry our scientific understanding forward to the pursuit of best practice. The next few years should see big changes, both radical and right, in the way that we care for the animals we use for food and for science. I further believe that the Bristol Workshop will do much to help map the direction of these changes.

(John Webster has been Professor of Animal Husbandry at the University of Bristol since 1977)

EurSafe News

Ethics as a Policy Dimension

4th EurSafe Congress

March 20 - 22, 2003

Toulouse, France

Program Outline

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is one of the pillars on which the structure of the European Union has been based. In the founding principles, a close connection existed between the ethical concerns of political decision-makers and the rights of farmers on the one hand, and economic imperatives on the other hand. It was necessary to reconstruct European agriculture and to achieve universal food self-sufficiency, in order to ensure the elimination of poverty and to contribute – as far as possible – to peace between the nations.

Nowadays, this harmony between ethics, politics and economics has been lost for a number of reasons. Among these are: over-production as a direct consequence of the CAP, globalisation and the introduction of agriculture and food products into the agreements of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and the vertical integration of agricultural activities between supply-industries and food-distributors. Furthermore, the growing capacity to control life, particularly through genetic engineering (GMOs, animal cloning, etc.), and the huge efforts by some multi-national companies to monopolise commercial use of these techniques on the one hand, and the growth of ecological concerns, due to risks to the environment, on the other hand also contribute to the tension between ethics, politics and economics in the field of agriculture.

To be more specific, important ethical questions are raised by, among others, the following issues: public support for farming and for the way its benefits are

distributed; competition between land use and environmental interests; consumer demand; the partnership between public research and private industry; international trade rules and the development of southern countries. These problems cannot be addressed without identifying and analysing the conflicts in values that lie behind them. Other issues, of a more social nature, are also worth considering from an ethical point of view. One example is the social status of farmers involved *nolens volens* in the globalisation process; another is the role of public debate in the process of introducing innovations, keeping in mind that social acceptance and ethics are highly distinct concepts.

The fourth EurSafe congress in Toulouse (France) in March 2003 will address the economic and technical developments in the fields of agriculture and food production from various ethical perspectives. This may help to identify the agenda for future agricultural policies and thereby be of particular relevance for a European association.

Practical Information

The conference will take place at the Diagora Congress Centre – Labège Innopôle, in the Toulouse suburbs, a very well equipped location for a successful meeting. By the end of May 2002, the website of the conference will be open to provide all the useful information.

Contact

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EurSafe Session at the EEN 2002 Summit
August 29-30, 2002
Parlement Europeen, Brussels

EurSafe invites participation at the forthcoming Summit of the European Ethics Network in Brussels. EurSafe will be responsible for organising one of the parallel sessions on the afternoon of the second day, where each short presentation of twenty minutes will be followed by ten minutes of discussion. We invite senior as well as junior researchers to submit paper proposals addressing ethical issues involved in agriculture and food supply. With reference to the general theme of the Summit: Sustaining humanity beyond humanism.

General Summit Theme

"Never before in history have so many ethical issues been discussed. In our society characterised by profound and rapid change as a result of new scientific, biotechnological, political and economic developments, the opinions and arguments of ethicists have become an integral part of public debate. There is, however, no new consensus about the relevance of ethical traditions or future frameworks. While some contemporary philosophers proclaim the crisis or end of humanism, the quest for humanity as a moral criterion and the search for meaningful human life persists. More than ever, a new hermeneutic of what it is to be human is called for."

Papers at the EurSafe Session shall be delivered in English. Abstracts for consideration, between 100 and 200 words in English, should be sent to the EurSafe EEN Planning Committee, M. S. Ali and Frans W. A. Brom at e-mail: eursafebrussel@yahoo.com

Deadline for Receipt of Abstracts

April 15, 2002

Decision on Acceptance

May 15, 2002

Abstracts not accepted under the EurSafe call for papers may be forwarded to the EEN for consideration under the general scope of the Summit (please indicate if you would like not to have your abstract forwarded, in the event). Submissions in French, German or Spanish, in addition, should be forwarded direct to the EEN, not under the EurSafe call. Papers initially accepted on the basis of an abstract may be considered for publication subject to subsequent paper refereeing in the Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics or proceedings associated with the Summit. Speakers accepted to the parallel session are eligible to register for the Summit at the members rate of EUR 300, which includes the Summit Dinner on the first evening. In addition, the EEN has reserved accommodation at a number of hotels near the venue, that may be booked on an individual and private basis. Information (with continual updates) on the Society and the Summit, including details of other European societies' involvement and speakers at the Plenary session, are available at websites:

<http://www.eursafe.org/>

<http://www.kuleuven.ac.be/een/Contents/introduction.html>

EurSafe EEN Planning Committee

M. S. Ali (Philosophy Programme, University of London)

Frans W. A. Brom (Centre for Bio-Ethics and Health Law, Utrecht University)

Conferences & Courses

March 2002

- Mar 13 - 15** ***Food Safety Summit & Expo (USA)***
Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, Washington, D.C. More information:
<http://www.usda.gov/oce/waob/agforum.htm>
- Mar 14 - 15** ***Facets of Humanity (USA)***
The 5th National Undergraduate Bioethics Conference. More information,
website: <http://people.bu.edu/tbsbu/lobby.html>
- Mar 16 - 20** ***FAO Biotechnology and Sustainable Development (Egypt)***
More information: Dr. Ismail Serageldin, Chair, Program Committee,
BIBLIOTHECA ALEXANDRINA. The Executive Secretariat, 116 El-Horreya Av,
Bab Sharqi. Alexandria, P.O.Box 138 El-Mansheya, Tel: +203-4876024 – 4876028 –
4876052, Fax: +203-4876001, E-Mail: egyptbiotech@bibalex.org
- Mar 18 - 19** ***11th Annual Meeting of the New York Biotechnology Association (USA)***
New York, USA. More information: <http://www.nyba.org/annual/>

April – June 2002

- Apr 8** ***What Price Cheap Food? (UK)***
University of York, UK, organised by the British Society of Animal Science
(BSAS). More information, website:
<http://www.bsas.org.uk/meetings/occasion.htm> (also see below)
- Apr 9 - 10** ***Applied Ethology in the Laboratory, on the Farm and at Home & Ethical Issues in Animal Science (UK)***
University of York, UK. Second Joint Annual Meeting of the International Society
of Applied Ethology (ISAE), British Society of Animal Science (BSAS) and World
Poultry Science Association (WPSA). More information, website:
<http://www.isaeuk.fsnet.co.uk/>
- Apr 24 - 25** ***3rd China Crop Protection, Biotechnology and Food Safety Conference (China)***
Tel: +65 6345 7322; Fax: +65 6345 5928; email: sandy@cmtsp.com.sg
<http://www.cmtevents.com/3crop02.htm>
- Jun 3 - 5** ***Eat and Drink and Be Merry? Cultural Meaning of Food and Drink in the 21st Century (the Netherlands)***
ASCA, University of Amsterdam; Mansholt Graduate School, Wageningen
University, Felix Meritis Foundation, Keizersgracht 324, Amsterdam. More
information from: ASCA Office: Dr Eloë Kingma, e-mail: asca@hum.uva.nl,
website: <http://www.hum.uva.nl/~asca>, Spuistraat 210, 1012 VT Amsterdam,
The Netherlands

- Jun 3 - 7** ***Introduction to Biosafety and Risk Assessment for the Environmental Release of GMOs: Theoretical approach and Scientific Background (Italy)***
International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, Trieste, Italy
Contact: courses@icgeb.trieste.it
<http://www.icgeb.trieste.it/~bsafesrv/bsfn0112.htm>
- Jun 10 - 11** ***Food Chains: Connecting Value with Values. 12th Annual World Food & Agribusiness (The Netherlands)***
Noordwijk, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. More information:
<http://www.ifama.org>
- Jun 10 - 13** ***FAO World Food Summit: five years later.***
<http://www.fao.org/worldfoodsummit/>
- Jun 13 - 16** ***The City in a Garden: Producing and Consuming Food in the New Millenium***
Joint 2002 Annual Meetings of the ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF FOOD AND SOCIETY (ASFS) and the AGRICULTURE, FOOD, AND HUMAN VALUES SOCIETY (AFHVS) (USA). Chicago, Illinois, USA. More information:
<http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/rhaynes/afhvs/>
- Jun 15 - 19** ***Institute of Food Technologists Annual Meeting and Food Expo (USA)***
Anaheim, California, USA. Call IFT at 312-782-8424, fax 312-782-0045, e-mail info@ift.org More information: www.ift.org
- Jun 17 - 26** ***EU Advanced Workshop: Biotechnology Ethics and Public Perceptions of Biotechnology (UK)***
Oxford University, St. Edmund Hall, UK. Organised by EFB Task Group on Public Perceptions of Biotechnology. More information:
<http://www.kluyver.stm.tudelft.nl/efb/TGPPB/oxford.htm>
- Jun 23 - 28** ***Plant Biotechnology 2002 and Beyond (10th IAPTC&B Congress) presented by International Association for Plant Tissue Culture & Biotechnology (USA)***
Disneys' Coronado Springs Resort, Orlando Florida, USA. Tel: (301) 324-5054 or 1-800-741-7476 (USA/Canada); Fax: (301) 324-5057; E-mail: sivb@sivb.org
<http://www.hos.ufl.edu/ikvweb/iap tcb.htm>

July – September 2002

- Jul 5 - 12** ***Humankind/Nature Interaction: Past, Present and Future (Italy)***
XVth Congress of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences. Florence, Italy. More Information, website: <http://www.icaes-florence2003.com>, e-mail: secretariat@icaes-florence2003.com, Prof. B. Chiarelli, Institute of Anthropology, University of Florence, phone + 39 055 2398065, fax + 39 055 283558.

- Jul 7 - 13** ***Ethics and Food in Modern Society. Food Ethics: A New Branch of Applied Ethics? (The Netherlands)***
 Summer School Research School for Applied Philosophy, The Netherlands. More information: Hella van den Elshout, Department of Philosophy, Free University of Amsterdam, De Boelelaan 1105, 1081 HV Amsterdam, The Netherlands, phone + 31 20 444 66 79 , fax +31 20-444 66 35, e-mail: ozse@ph.vu.nl, website: <http://www.XS4ALL.nl/~ozse>
- Jul 11 - 14** ***6th International Conference on Agricultural Biotechnologies: New Avenues for Production, Consumption and Technology Transfer (Italy)***
 Sponsored by the International Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology Research. Ravello, Italy <http://www.economia.uniroma2.it/conferenze/icabr/>
- Jul 22 - 27** ***European Culture in a Changing World: Between Nationalism and Globalism (UK)***
 The 8th International Conference of The International Society for the Study of European Ideas (ISSEI), The University of Wales, Aberystwyth. More Information: Dr. Daniel Meyer-Dinkgrafe, e-mail: dam@aber.ac.uk, fax + 44 1970 622831, Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies, Perry Williams Building, Penglais Campus, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 3AJ, Wales UK.
- Aug 6 - 10** ***36th International Congress of the International Society for Applied Ethology (The Netherlands)***
 Egmond aan Zee, The Netherlands. More information, e-mail: H.J.Blokhuis@id.wag-ur.nl or Berry.Spruijt@etho.vh.wau.nl, website: <http://www.isae2002.org>
- Aug 11 - 15** ***4th World Congress on Alternatives and Animal use in the Life Science (USA)***
 New Orleans. More information, website: <http://www.worldcongress.net> or contact: Donna Pease, Gaithersburg MD 20879 USA, Tel. * 301-548-7771, Fax * 301-548-7726
- Aug 19 - 23** ***7th World Congress of Genetics Applied to Livestock Production (France)***
 Montpellier, France More information: <http://wcalp.toulouse.inra.fr/>. Contact: secretariat@wcalp.toulouse.inra.fr. Phone number : +33 (0) 820 820 664, Fax number : +33 (0) 820 820 665
- Aug 28 - 31** ***Exploring Diversity in the European Agri-food System (Spain)***
 The tenth congress of the European Association of Agricultural Economists (EAAE), Zaragoza, Spain. More information: J.C. Bureau, Program Committee EAAE Congress, INRA-ESR, BP1, 78850 Thiverval-Grignon, France, e-mail: eaae.papers@grignon.inra.fr, website: <http://www.lei.dlo.nl/EAAE/activities/indexa.htm>
- Sep 2 - 11** ***World Summit on Sustainable Development (South Africa)***
 Johannesburg, South Africa More information: <http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/>

Sep 18 - 21 ***Genetic Engineering and the Intrinsic Value and Integrity of Animals and Plants (UK)***
Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, UK. For more information: website <http://www.anth.org/ifgene/2002.htm>, or contact Ifgene UK co-ordinator: Dr David Heaf, Hafan, Cae Llwyd, Llanystumdwy, LL52 0SG, UK. Tel/Fax: 01766 523181. Email: 101622.2773@compuserve.com

October – December 2002

Oct 26 - 28 ***3rd International Symposium on Sustainable Agri-Environmental Systems: New Technologies and Applications (Egypt)***
National Authority for Remote Sensing and Space Sciences (NARSS), Cairo, Egypt. More information: http://www.ifama.org/calendar/nonmem_caldetail.asp?calid=76 Tel: (202) 2964386 - 2975688 Fax: (202) 2964387 - 2964385, email: sirahman@intouch.com

Nov 24 – 29 ***Biotechnología Habana 2002: Agro-Biotech in the new millennium (Cuba)***
More information, e-mail: bioagro@cigb.edu.cu, website: <http://bioagro.cigb.edu.cu/>

2003

Jul 16 - 20 ***Feeding the World: Opportunities without Boundaries (USA)***
12th World Congress of Food Science and Technology (IUFoST Congress XII), which will take place in Chicago, Illinois, USA. More information, website: <http://www.worldfoodscience.org/congress/overview.html>

Books & Journals

**Agriculture and Environment
Biotechnology Commission (AEBC),
Annual Report (2000-1)**
See: www.aebc.gov.uk

Brodwin, P. (ed.), *Biotechnology and Culture: Bodies, Anxieties, Ethics* (2001)

Cavaliere P. & C. Woollard, *The Animal Question* (2001)
Oxford University Press, ISBN 0195143809

Chadwick R. (ed.), *Applied Ethics* (2001)
Routledge, ISBN 0415208386

Decker, M. (ed.) *Interdisciplinary in Technology Assessment* (2002)
Springer, ISBN 3-540-42792-9

Dutch Report on the results of the public debate on genetechnology and food in the Netherlands
You can download the full report (in Dutch) from www.etenengenen.nl as well as an English summary. More Information: Huib de Vriend, stichting Consument en Biotechnologie, Postbus 1000, 2500 BA Den

Haag, The Netherlands phone: +31 70 44 54 498, fax: +31 70 44 54 595.

Farm Animal Welfare Council (DEFRA - UK), *Foot and Mouth Disease 2001 and Animal Welfare: Lessons for the Future* (2002)

Linneman, M. & C. Schorcht (ed.), *Vegetarismus: Zur Geschichte und Zukunft einer Lebensweise* (2001)
Harald Fischer Verlag

Food Ethics Council, *Fourth Report of Food Ethics Council – After FMD: Aiming for a Values-Driven Agriculture* (2001)

See: www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~foodeth
Contact : Food Ethics Council, Minister Chambers, Church Street, Southwell, Nottinghamshire NG25 0HD

Gaskell, G. & M.W. Bauer (eds.), *Biotechnology 1996-2000 -the years of controversy* (2001)

Science Museum. ISBN 1-900747-43-X

Janich P. et al. (eds.), *Biodiversität* (2001)
Springer, ISBN 3540426582

UNDP, *Human Development Report 2001 – Making new technologies work for Human Development*

See: www.undp.org

Meyer, G. & P. Sandoe, *Dialogue on biotechnology in relation to plants*

Project report 1., Centre for Bioethics and Risk Assessment. The report can be downloaded from www.bioethics.kvl.dk or the paper version can be ordered free of charge from get@kvl.dk

Pardey, G.P. (ed.), *The Future of Food: Biotechnology Market and Policies in an International Setting* (2001)

Johns Hopkins University Press, ISBN 0896297098

Royal Society, *Release of a new Report on Safety assessments of genetic modified food* (2002) The report can be downloaded at: <http://www.royalsoc.ac.uk/templates/statements/StatementDetails.cfm?statementid=165> or at: <http://www.royalsoc.ac.uk/files/statfiles/document-165.pdf>

Sax, B. & K.P. Fischer, *Animals in the Third Reich* (2001)

Schweizer Zentrum für Technikfolgenabschätzung, *Zelluläre Xenotransplantation* (2001)

Schneider, M. (ed.), *Den Tieren gerecht werden: Zur Ethik und Kultur der Mensch-Tier-Beziehung* (2001)

ISBN 3-89792-053-0, to order at: info@schweisfurth.de

Singer, P., *Writings on an Ethical Life* (2001)

ISBN 1 84115 550 0

Smith, G.P., *Bioethics and the Law* (2001)

University Press of America; ISBN 0819191779

Teutsch, G.M., *Soziologie und Ethik der Lebewesen. Eine Materialensammlung* (2000)

Biblioviel

Bochum

Are Ready-Made Dishes Evil?

Gitte Meyer

Attitudes to safe food: Almost a thousand Danes were asked what they regard as unsafe to eat. Ready-made dishes topped the list, closely followed by sweets and sugarfree light products.

Can you imagine the most popular food of your country being marketed as high-tech? Hardly. And food manufacturers are probably very sensible when they attach words like *natural* and *home-made* rather than *high-tech* and *highly processed* to their products. When a representative sample of the Danish adult population (978 individuals) were asked in a telephone interview survey at the beginning of 2001, what they regarded as unsafe to eat, the top three food products, out of a 16 possible groups, were identified as ready-made dishes, sweets and sugarfree light products. Further down the list came beef, eggs and poultry, which normally occupy a considerable part of the public food debate, particularly concerning concrete risks of BSE and Salmonella. Potatoes, milk products, cheese and bread were regarded as totally safe by most of the people asked.

This is one of many results from a study of attitudes and practice regarding food safety conducted by two Danish researchers, Lotte Holm at the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University and Bente Halkier at Roskilde University. The two researchers are now in the process of interpreting the results of the survey.

The initial results indicate that a considerable part of the Danish population associate *safe food* with *proper food* rather than with *undangerous food*. Danes also tend to perceive *proper food* to be only a short step from fresh ingredients and always made by real humans. The responses to a question about what guarantees safe food are along the same line: only 15 % agree that

competition in the food market leads to good and safe food products, and 17 % agree that public authorities guarantee safe food. However, 52 % fully agree with the following statement: "*What I or my family or friends grow in our gardens is safer to eat than what I can buy*".

Not really worried, but...

Danes are not usually worried when buying their food, and as is the case of other nationalities, they are most comfortable with food they buy in their own country. This pattern is also found in studies in Belgium, England, Norway and Russia. When asked generally, only slightly more than one in ten express that they do not believe that bought food is harmless. Nevertheless, the picture is not totally idyllic when actual examples of what is safe to eat are brought up.

Lotte Holm believes that the ready-made dishes received the highest negative score due to bad associations with foods which have undergone a high degree of processing. The ranking of sweets and sugarfree light products, which come next on the list, further strengthens this conclusion. It is also supported by other findings: Buying lean meat is often mentioned as a safety strategy. However, low-fat light products are given the same ranking as unsafe as beef, eggs and poultry. To what extent the same individuals prefer lean meat, but want to avoid products like low-fat pâté, is not clear. However, the two preferences can be logically combined if the deliberations are about avoiding highly processed food as well as avoiding fat.

The results of the study may be interpreted in many ways. But one possible interpretation is that several decades of Danish experiences with industrial food processing and with regulation and control

of the industry have not made these industrial processes commonly accepted. On the contrary, they are disliked. This interpretation may also contribute to an understanding of the background for the opposition to modern biotechnology in the food sector.

An alternative or supplementary interpretation is that ready-made dishes are regarded as a symbol of dissolution of the proper family, where proper home-made food is prepared and eaten together. Both Lotte Holm and Bente Halkier have observed this attitude in earlier studies which included in-depth interviews regarding attitudes to food. *"It is our common experience that most people dissociate themselves from ready-made dishes. Therefore, we are not really surprised by this new finding. We have experienced that most people associate buying ready-made dishes with feeling ashamed and doing something wrong. One simply does not do such a thing as buying them. Even if one in fact does buy them"*, tells Lotte Holm.

In the study, safe food is defined as not harmful for health or the environment. The answers, however, indicate that very few focus on safety as such when thinking about food. Lotte Holm comments: *"The deliberations seem to be broader. When people are asked about food safety, they do not only think about risks and chemical substances. They are obviously identifying what they believe is right, and their deliberations are also about how the society functions. Therefore, I believe it is a sidetrack to try to reassure through risk assessments alone. These will hardly hit the worries."*

A large part of the questions were designed to provide a description of what people do and do not do to carry safe food home from the shops. A small third do not invest time and effort on this at all. Among the rest, buying Danish and buying organic are criteria often mentioned. Regarding meat, quite a few mention buying at specialist butcher shops or via networks. If people really followed the habits they were describing when interviewed, butcher shops and producers of organic meat would

experience golden days. This would mean that 10-15 % of all meat sold in Denmark would be organic. However, studies of actual consumption, estimate organic beef accounts for only 1.3 % of the total beef sold, while not more than 0.3 % of all pork sold in Denmark is found to be organic.

"This reminds us how careful one should be when using results from studies like ours. For instance, it could often be disputed whether people give answers to what one believes to have asked about. We must always interpret. In this case we have interpreted statements about people's daily habits as explaining mostly how they believe it is possible and desirable to act in the food market of today. We believe that the statements should be understood as descriptions of what people sometimes do or as a declaration of intention rather than as a precise description of what they actually do", Lotte Holm explains.

Scepticism against the market

Many earlier studies have concluded that politicians, the food industry, agricultural organisations as well as supermarket chains have a serious problem of distrust. This is confirmed in the new Danish study, in which statements regarding motives and competition put the general distrust theory into perspective. Between 40 % and 50 % of the interviewees believe that production and sale of food are steered according to a system where producers and supermarkets are driven more by profit than by the interests of the consumers, and where the authorities pay more attention to the producers than to the consumers. These views are indicative of a number of answers given in the study. Trust in producers of organic food is generally somewhat higher than trust in other producers, and buying organic is one of the safety precautions most frequently mentioned. However, this trust is far from all embracing. 20 % believed that the producers of organic food do not follow the rules for organic production.

No less than 82 % answered that they fully or partly agreed with the statement: *"The consumers through their*

choices have a big influence on the quality of food commodities". Nevertheless, more than half backed the following statement: "The competition between the supermarkets is a force which deteriorates the quality of food commodities". Does this show a general scepticism against the market and against the presumption that competition further quality? Or does it represent the view that competition does not work as it should and ideally can? Whatever the conclusion, there is considerable scepticism regarding whether market forces work according to their ideal in the Danish food market.

In Eurobarometer studies of consumer trust in the safety of eggs, fish and meat, Denmark ranked 16th among 18 countries. The level of trust is highest in Finland, Norway, Spain and Sweden. Only in Germany - East and West looked at separately - were the levels of trust lower than in Denmark. In this respect, Lotte Holm's and Bente Halkier's study offers no explanation of the enormous difference

between Denmark and the other Nordic countries. However, further analysis and interpretation may come up with some clues. For the time being there seems to be no easy way for the food sector to react to an apparent widespread distrust in the sector's motives and production methods. Although focusing marketing strategies on words like *natural* and *home-made* is apparently well-founded, but not sufficient.

"Trust is not the same as objective, scientifically based safety", comments Professor Peter Sandøe, head of the Centre for Bioethics and Risk Assessment. He adds: "This does not mean that the objectively defined food safety should be thrown overboard, but it is necessary to include other trust-building measures. A way forward could be a dialogue which takes the concerns of the population seriously."

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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 subscriptions and address changes should be sent to the EurSafe Secretariat (e-mail: eursafe@theo.uu.nl). Items for inclusion in

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