

# EurSafe News

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Dear EurSafe members,



After our conference in Vienna in June, it is my pleasure to present you the October issue of EurSafe News. Firstly, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the editorial board for appointing me to the EurSafe editorial board. I'm honoured to introduce the present issue as well as to help edit the Newsletter in the future.

This issue focuses on the flourishing research field of Veterinary Medical Ethics. The following four contributions show the manifold ways in which this field is explored and indicate that Veterinary Medical Ethics are a research subject which allows the development of ideas and arguments from various perspectives and angles.

In the first contribution, 'A 'Complete Regulator': The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and Veterinary Regulation in the UK', Stephen May draws attention to the constant tension between the state, the market and professional organisations, and argues for regulatory systems that ensure a balanced efficiency through high standards of service within the profession, so that values can be effectively preserved and persons be treated fairly. Against this background, he reports on the important role of 'The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons' as a statutory regulator for the veterinary profession in the UK, which aims to set standards in veterinary practice and regulate the professional conduct of veterinary surgeons.



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Joachim Nieuwland's contribution, 'One Health: Challenging Veterinary Ethics as we know it', addresses the increasingly discussed concept of One Health, which seems primarily related to zoonotic diseases and antimicrobial resistance within the veterinary profession. Nieuwland (and Meijboom) propose a basic understanding of One Health based on four functions, which should help facilitate the discussion about its scope and meaning. He sees a need for reflection on the currently dominant interpretations of One Health in order to critically reflect on the concept and its assumptions, especially in veterinary training.

In the third contribution, 'Teaching Animal Ethics to understand Animal Welfare', Alma Massaro and Paola Fossati argue for an in-depth introduction of various ethical frameworks and approaches in order to teach veterinary students an animal welfare concept which goes far beyond the knowledge of the existing legal and scientific contexts.

The final contribution presents the topic of Johanna Karg's diploma thesis on 'Handle with care: an alternative view on livestock medicine'. Karg was awarded the Vonne Lund Prize at this year's EurSafe conference. She and her supervisor Herwig Grimm consider a feminist ethics of care a promising future approach to veterinary ethics because of the increasing number of female students studying veterinary medicine. The authors illustrate differences between a traditional ethical account and an ethics of care by introducing a paradigmatic case of veterinary medicine.

Further, this Newsletter contains two book reviews. Firstly, Samuel Camenzind introduces Christine M. Korsgaard's work on 'Fellow

Creatures. Our Obligations to the Other Animals' and secondly, Christian Dürnberger comments on the book 'Theories of living collections. Plants, microbes and animals as biofacts in gene banks', edited by Nicole C. Karafyllis.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to Franck Meijboom's update on the work of the Executive Committee. As usual, you will find a list of upcoming events and congresses. If you are interested in contributing to EurSafe News in the future, please feel free to contact any member of the editorial board. We are looking forward to your ideas and suggestions for further articles, book reviews, conferences, books, and symposia.

I hope you will enjoy reading this Newsletter, and I wish you a great start to the new season!

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## A 'Complete Regulator': The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and veterinary regulation in the UK

Stephen May

Defining a profession is problematic, but six common elements can be discerned in any exploration of the literature (Thistlethwaite and Spencer, 2008). These are: A skill based on specialist knowledge, a professionally-defined educational programme, control of assessment of competence and entry to the profession, an organisation and register of members, a code of conduct and disciplinary process, and a service that recognises and respects the needs of clients.

In the UK, the professions in this form are a product of the 19th century, and can be viewed as based on a social contract in which society's need of a complex professional service, with standards assured throughout that service, is achieved by entrusting this judgement on standards and their policing to the profession itself. The ensuing monopoly created by control of entry and self-regulation within the profession is controlled by the implicit threat that violation of the charge to provide a service that does not take advantage of the client, as a result of the superior knowledge of the professional, and loss of trust, will lead to the profession being 'hammered with Draconian rules' (Rollin, 2006). In part, a lack of serious scandals in the veterinary profession in the UK has meant that its structures and the underpinning legislation have been left unchanged for more than 50 years (Hobson-West and Timmons, 2016). In contrast, after being rocked by a series of scandals over two decades, the medical profession in the UK has been the subject of a series of reforms that have progressively reduced the profession's control of its own destiny.

At the heart of professional regulation is individual members being accountable and answerable for their actions against a code of conduct agreed by the profession as a whole, in line with the promise all members make on

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admission to the veterinary register. Professionals expect to be held accountable, and to hold themselves accountable, but they expect that to happen in fair systems associated with cultures of justice (Dekker, 2016). Crucially, this means being judged against the standards of their peers, and having their decisions analysed with the understanding of their context and the time at which they were taken. Professionals are very conscious of the dangers of a modern, rather simplistic focus on outcomes, recognising that 'there is almost no human action or decision that cannot be made to look flawed and less sensible in the misleading light of hindsight' (Hidden, 1989).

It is increasingly recognised that the best way of protecting the public is for professional service providers to embrace learning cultures that allow the community to build on their individual and collective experiences in a process of continual improvement. Boundaries need to be drawn that

identify misconduct, such as recklessness and working way beyond an individual's or team's area of competence, but, faced with uncertainty, within the area of well-judged professional action, professionals must feel confident in exposing all their work to scrutiny by colleagues (Edmondson, 2012). In this context, professionals in an organisation become each other's mentors and coaches, and also each other's consciences, within a larger profession that, in an ideal world, oversees both the capability of an individual and the quality of service organisations.

Uniquely, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) is a hybrid structure empowered through statutory law in the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, and prerogative law, that can fill 'the gaps' left by statutory law, via the Privy Council in its Royal Charter. This allows the RCVS to fully embrace all six elements of a profession and make statements that define and uphold its evidence base, set stan-

dards of professional education and assessment, through its own quality assurance processes, grant a licence to practice through membership, set codes of conduct for individual members, set standards for service organisations, and ask individual professionals to account for their actions if members of the public make complaints about the practice of registered veterinarians.

A challenge to professional self-regulation will always be that those involved are conflicted by being members of that same profession. So, for some professions, oversight of the different elements is distributed between different organisations, which may or may not be under professional control. For the RCVS, the use of Legislation Reform Orders to modify the VSA has created a division, supported by separate appointment processes, between disciplinary committee members and its Council and Standards Committee that together are involved in creating codes against which veterinarians are judged, and modification of RCVS Council itself to include more lay representation, alongside official representation of the UK's other veterinary profession, the veterinary nurses.

With appropriate safeguards, professional regulation allows judgement of actions within codes that prescribe principles on which judgements might reasonably be made, and accommodates the way in which the complexity of clinical work and the need for unique solutions relevant to individual contexts makes proscriptive, regulatory approaches inappropriate. External regulation, by those from outside the profession, eliminates conflicts but inevitably results in rules for, and oversight of, experts by non-experts. The framework and regulations thus created can then be seen not as principles that govern all practice, but limits to be worked around. Systems become 'gamed', with experts outwitting the regulators and, where possible, trying to avoid accountability because of a lack of respect for those in charge.

As society, professions and political structures evolve, there is a constant tension between the state, the market and professional organisations. Legislative frameworks that support economic

development for the enrichment of society and the benefit of all are essential, but so also are well-structured and conceived systems of regulation that ensure efficiency is balanced by high standards of service, so that we are effective in providing value and dealing fairly with one another.

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# One Health: Challenging veterinary ethics as we know it

Joachim Nieuwland

The idea of One Health brings out the interconnectedness between human and non-human animal health against an ecological backdrop. In response to emerging infectious diseases and their impact at the beginning of the 21st century, One Health was put forward to highlight the relevance of wildlife with respect to public health, and foster collaboration between different disciplines to cut through the complexity of disease emergence in a globalizing world.

Veterinarians were at the forefront since the beginning, pushing and shaping the agenda of One Health (AVMA, 2008), and their efforts have trickled down into the curricula of several veterinary faculties, fitting into already existing courses throughout the curriculum, or giving rise to new tracks. At the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of Utrecht University, for example, you can now choose to get an MSc degree in One Health: '(w)hen you are motivated to become a researcher at the interface between humans, animals and the environment, this Master's programme should be a perfect fit. You get to integrate concepts from human and veterinary epidemiology, ecology and population dynamics, microbiology and toxicology' ([www.uu.nl/masters/en/one-health](http://www.uu.nl/masters/en/one-health)).

A recent survey showed that veterinary students associate One Health primarily with zoonotic disease and antimicrobial resistance (Daley, 2018). When Franck Meijboom and myself recently hosted a workshop on One Health ethics within veterinary education (as participants in the VetEd conference 4-6 July 2018, Utrecht University), we received a similar response from attendants, most of them actively engaged in teaching veterinary students.

This association of One Health with zoonotic disease and antimicrobial resistance is rather selective, especially in the light of the more general formulation that stresses all interconnections between the health of humans and animals, put against the ecological background, and coupled with the aim to safeguard optimal health across the board (Lapinski et al., 2014).

The introduction of One Health in veterinary curricula prompts questions about its meaning and its implications. Should we prevent the apparently prevalent, narrow, and implicitly normative account of One Health – focusing on human health and interests primarily – from taking hold of veterinary curricula? A way to address this concern would be to generate awareness about the 'hidden curriculum' of One Health, a term that signifies the values that are often implicitly endorsed within curricula, shaping the outlook of future graduates (Jones, 2003). What is implied by the notion of One Health that is used? And importantly, what is left out?

At the wonderful EurSafe congress in Vienna, we (Meijboom and Nieuwland, 2018) proposed a basic understanding of One Health, based on

four functions, that recognizes causal as well as comparative links between human and animal health. From this emerges a thorough interspecies and ecological overview of the vulnerability and dependency of human health, broader than the definition apparently (and based on a small and contingent sample) endorsed by both students and veterinary educators. We propose this understanding of One Health as an alternative to the anthropocentric rendering in terms of zoonotic diseases and antimicrobial resistance. In doing so, we hope to stimulate others to make their understanding of One Health explicit, which is especially relevant considering the way it is already shaping the knowledge and outlook of future veterinarians.

But are we not moralistic ourselves in proposing this particular understanding of One Health? Im-



portantly, we arrive at our proposal largely by following the notion of One Health to its logical and empirical conclusion, rather than making strong normative claims. Interspecies relations could (1) impose threats to health or (2) provide benefits to health. From a (3) comparative point of view, One Health brings attention to the epistemic challenge of knowledge transfer across species boundaries. Finally, (4) health is always ecologically embedded. These relations can be of relevance from both directions, depending on the health concern at hand. The four functions invite health professionals to outline all relevant ecological pathways connecting human and animal health, as well as study the epistemic challenge of trans-species knowledge transfer. With such objective knowledge in place, values can then help to determine how to navigate the complexities of interspecies health, and develop policy.

Besides thinking about the concept of One Health itself, One Health also has the potential to broaden the ethical horizon of veterinarians, and change veterinary ethics as we know it. For an important part, veterinary ethics consists of animal ethics, somewhat similar to medical ethics in its emphasis on the relation with the patient (with the exception that animals have owners, or less of an exception if one understands the relation in terms of guardianship, akin to the relation between guardians/parents and children) as well as the professional responsibility of the veterinary professional. What are the implications for veterinary ethics when we break down barriers with the aim to foster collaboration across disciplines and safeguard health? Whereas each field has its specific ethical questions, cutting across disciplines as One Health invites us to challenge, what I call, domain-specific applied ethics.

It is helpful to investigate how we ended up with these domain-specific applied ethics. Tracing back our steps alongside the development of biomedical ethics – the prime example of domain-specific applied ethics – we find the (perhaps until now) underappreciated efforts of Van Rensselaer Potter, who coined the term ‘bioethics’ and saw it as a

bridge across various binary opposites, such as nature and culture, and culture and science (ten Have, 2012). Much to his disappointment, bioethics developed with a narrow focus on the affected individual within a clinical setting, disconnected from the broader socio-ecological factors in play. The principlism of Tom Beauchamps and James Childress (including the four principles of beneficence, maleficence, autonomy and justice) has come to epitomize this clinical focus by largely structuring ethical reflection along the interchange between physician and autonomous affected individual. In some way, One Health can be seen as a recalibration of this focus, reviving Rensselaer Potter’s initial proposal of ‘bioethics’ by reconnecting the dots between the clinical setting and the burgeoning complexity of determinants that to such great extent determine individual health.

In what way does this affect veterinary ethics? One Health opens up the world in terms of its social-ecological relations. It is no surprise that several have indicated environmental ethics as fertile new ground (e.g. Thompson and List, 2015; Verweij and Bovenkerk, 2016; Nieuwland and Meijboom, 2015). However, merely throwing together these various sub-fields of ethics appears insufficient, as they have been developed for moral deliberation within a particular context. As with the natural sciences, the danger of specialization and reduction is also applicable to the various sub-disciplines of ethics. The introduction of environmental ethics into veterinary curricula would certainly help to broaden the scope. In its original form, contrasted with human and animal ethics, it could undercut the aim to highlight interdependency. It would remain stuck in the silos eschewed by holistic One Health thinking if it was merely added instead of integrated.

It would be equally insufficient to copy one methodology and paste it across context. So for example, we could broaden the scope of principlism beyond the confines of the clinic but this would flatten rather than enrich our moral vocabularies. Integration is key. As the background changes, the sort of ethics should follow suit. The challenge

is to some extent to become generalists in ethics, and specialists in interdisciplinary intelligent problem solving (e.g. Minteer, 2011). Rather than taking a single dominant methodology and set up shop in adjoining fields, let’s peruse the array of perspectives, while at the same time working on novel interdisciplinary angles apt for our inextricable ecological and interspecies environments.

To conclude, I have argued that we need to reflect on the dominant current interpretations of One Health, especially as they are beginning to shape veterinary curricula. Those who teach veterinary ethics are well suited to invite veterinary students to critically reflect on the concept and its assumptions. The proposed four functions of One Health (Meijboom and Nieuwland, 2018) could help to facilitate discussion about its scope and meaning. Of course, we welcome feedback on our proposal.

Moreover, as One Health invites us to take an upstream approach, it introduces veterinary students with all new kinds of ethical considerations. For example, in what way should we structure our international and national health-related institutions so as to safeguard human rights and animal welfare / rights? If so, how should we configure our urban landscapes to promote health across species boundaries? What are the limits of livestock production in ethical and ecological terms? To what extent should policy be geared towards management of social determinants of health in comparison to access to healthcare / pharmaceutical development / medical technology?

These questions reach beyond veterinary ethics as we know it. It invites us to ponder the appropriate range of ethical considerations for veterinary students and rethink our own separations between humans, animals and the environment within veterinary ethics.

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## Teaching animal ethics to understand animal welfare

Alma Massaro and Paola Fossati

Thanks to higher consumer expectations that animals in the production process are treated with appropriate care, there has recently been a significant increase in the attention given to issues related to animal welfare across Europe. For this reason, from the 60s onwards several attempts to define a concept of welfare that applies to animals reared for human ends have been made.

The first step in this direction was the publication of the 'Report of the Technical Committee to Enquire into the Welfare of Animals Kept under Intensive Livestock Husbandry Systems' (1965) better known as 'The Brambell Report'. In it the Authors stated that animals should have the freedom 'to stand up, lie down, turn around, groom themselves and stretch their limbs'. These recommendations – widely known as the 'Brambell's Five Freedoms' – are still used as a framework for good animal husbandry and as a basis for action for professional groups, including veterinarians. They are also highly regarded by the main organisations for the protection of animals.

Another important step has been the recognition of animals as 'sentient beings' under the law (Treaty of Amsterdam, European Union 1997, a view then inherited by the Treaty of Lisbon, European Union 2007). As a result, the protective legislation in force has been strengthened so that animals enjoy superior protection compared to mere goods, and animal interests are expected to be taken in consideration.

Following this trend, Universities and their Veterinary departments have created courses meant to cover the issues related to the concept of animal welfare, in order to prepare professionals to be able to understand and deal with the different problems connected with the rearing of animals. Teaching animal welfare in Veterinary School is therefore a quite recent phenomenon, 'The first lecture for veterinarians was in 1986 at Cambridge Veterinary School in the United Kingdom (Broom, 2005). Since that time, courses in Veterinary

Schools have been implemented beginning in European Universities' (Zapata, 2016). From that moment students all over Europe started to be introduced to the concept of welfare, animal welfare issues, and all the legislation that concerns it.

However, notwithstanding the big role played by this concept, it is still quite difficult to find an unambiguous definition (Sobbrio, 2013): is it to be construed in a negative way as the absence of all those conditions listed in the Five Freedoms? Or, is it to be construed in a positive way as the presence of certain characteristics, in order to improve the conditions of the animals reared?

Likewise, should this concept be thought as a minimum for animal survival, as 'the ability of an individual to cope with its environment' (Broom, 1986), or should it include their 'mental, psychological, and cognitive needs' (Duncan and Petherick, 1991, 5017-5018)? In the first case, welfare would be a state that can be scientifically measured according to well-defined indicators 'without the involvement of moral considerations' (Broom, 1991). On the contrary, the second case includes conditions that go beyond the physical level and hint at the consciousness of non-humans animals (The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness), making it harder to find those scientifically assessable indicators needed by scientists – including veterinarians – in order to assess if the animal is benefiting or suffering from good or bad welfare. The second point of view integrates values and judgements about the quality of life of single animals.

But if this is the case then veterinarian students cannot be introduced to animal welfare only from a scientific/legal approach but need also to be trained in different ethical frameworks and approaches that underlie this concept. Philosophy, therefore, becomes an important tool for the veterinary profession, able to provide thought instruments to analyze the numerous quandaries raised by human-animal relationship in general and animal farming in particular.

Ethical considerations have already been recognised to be of foremost importance for the assessment of good scientific and farm practices (Shammo and Resnik, 2009). Veterinarians, in fact, face a range of ethical challenges that affect their professional roles. This increases their need to be trained in the ethical dimension of the profession, in order to ensure best veterinary practices, and also to foster the public's trust in the veterinary profession itself.

For this reason, it is realistic to preview a deeper training in ethics for veterinarians and practitioners in order to encourage them to consider the ethical aspects of their practice and to prepare them to critically think about the different ways animals can be handled and treated, foreseeing improvements for humans and non-humans. In this sense animal ethics needs to be thought of as a propaedeutic topic to the courses of animal welfare in order to offer students the tools to understand what Welfare (as a concept) means and what it can be in practice for an animal reared for human ends. And in order to let philosophical thought make its way into veterinary practice, animal ethics classes should be carried out by philosophers, rather than by animal welfare scholars, who are familiar with the legal framework surrounding this concept but are not trained in ethical thinking.

The development and refinement of veterinary ethics teaching is supported also by the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) and the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE), who states that 'one cannot be a good clinician without being aware of the ethical issues in decision-making in practice' (Morton, 2013).

Providing veterinary students with ethical frameworks and teaching them a correct approach to animal welfare will help integrate science-based knowledge about animals and preferences with ethical values, which will strengthen ethical welfare vocabulary and reasoning skills of future practitioners. As has already been noted, we are witnessing 'an increasing convergence of science

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and philosophy. In fact, ethicists began to look at empirical research to solve ethics issues, while animal welfare science started to recognise the importance of subjective experiences' (Carenzi, 2009).

In this sense veterinarian students need to be introduced to the different ethical frameworks and approaches employed to address animal welfare in order to develop a deep understanding of this concept that goes far beyond the knowledge of its scientific and legal frameworks.

# Paper

## Handle with care: An alternative view on livestock medicine

Johanna Karg and Herwig Grimm

The following summary takes reference from the full paper as published in the Conference Proceedings 'Professionals in food chains' of this year's Eursafe Conference in Vienna.

The basic idea of care ethics is still of little importance in veterinary practice. However, veterinary medicine is undergoing a radical gender change as the percentage of female graduates has risen from 15% to 80 % in the last thirty years. Since the ethics of care originates from a largely feminist approach, the radical increase of female veterinarians may require a reevaluation. We wanted to create new links between feminist approaches, and veterinary ethics by asking: What happens if a feminist criticism of traditional ethics is transferred into the field of veterinary ethics?

We will present one response of a distinguished philosopher, Bernard Rollin, to a typical dilemma in livestock practice, to demonstrate how answers to moral questions are given within the classic veterinary ethics frame. We will subsequently examine this dilemma with criteria addressed in care ethics and contrast them on that basis with traditional accounts.

### The case: Cow with cancer eye

The practical case to be discussed here is presented by the author as follows: 'You examine a cow in late pregnancy that has keratoconjunctivitis, blepharospasm, and photophobia due to an ocular squamous cell carcinoma. You recommend enucleation [surgical removal of the tumor] or immediate slaughter. The owner wants to allow the cow to calve, wean the calf, and then ship the cow. He does not want to invest in surgery for a cow that will soon calve.' (Rollin, 2006: 106)

In this case surgery and elimination of the tissue affected by the often painful tumor would be the therapy of choice for the veterinarian. But surgery is an expensive procedure and sedation, stress or anaesthesia can cause a loss of

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pregnancy. This may be enough reason for the farmer not to invest in surgery even if his animal is suffering. The veterinarian, in contrast, will probably not reach his decision as quickly: Should he leave the cow untreated?

## A feminist debate about the response to this case

We will debate the case by plotting the traditional response based on classical ethics and then present feminist criticisms. We will thereby proceed by considering how the accounts address three important criteria/corner-stones of moral thinking: the moral point of view, universality and the quest for an external source of normativity.

### 1. The Moral point of view

The author of this case, Bernard Rollin, takes this dilemma to be a 'classic example' of the 'Fundamental Question of Veterinary Medicine: Does the veterinarian have primary obligation to the animal or the owner?' (Rollin, 2006: 106). The veterinary analyst in this case tries to keep a detached, objective and impartial position by understanding the farmer's position right from the beginning. He assumes, 'that it is not in the economic interest of the farmer to treat the cow, as, for example it would be if the untreated eye were to eventuate in an aborted calf' (Rollin, 2006: 106). But throughout the rest of the text, he seems to reduce the case to a problem of animal welfare, leaving all other interests aside in order to allow for a single best answer: Treatment of the cow is without any alternative. 'If the veterinarian can persuade the client that by doing good [i.e. surgery on the cow], he will also do well, the issue is resolved'. In fact, it's all about the conviction of the farmer and his 'lack' of a 'personal ethic' (Rollin 2006: 106). Under the camouflage of a so-called 'moral point of view' the author takes a partisan position in favor of the animal without even indicating an alternative solution. It seems clear that the viable solution can only be based on the norm of taking care for animal welfare.

Feminist ethicists consider the idea of this 'moral point of view' hypocritical: if animal welfare should be the only parameter discussed in veter-

inary ethics, cases can be easily solved. However, veterinarians seem to struggle with their ambivalent and often conflicting responsibilities towards animals and owners. In practical terms, they rarely have the experience that only the animal can be given priority. Instead they are faced with the challenge of finding the right balance between animal welfare and other relevant aspects, such as economic profit.

### 2. Universality

Although Rollin deals in his book with particular cases, their analysis is carried out along abstract principles he argues for in the first part of the book. In practice, this context-independency often leads to a simplification of a conflict such that individual agents and motivations are put aside and the specific complexity of every single conflict becomes irrelevant. In the case described above, Rollin talks about the 'The Fundamental Question of Veterinary Medicine' (Rollin 2006: 106) and does not allow for a description that takes the case's individual characteristics into account. For instance, why does the farmer not want to pay? Is he short on money or is he just not willing to pay for the treatment? How seriously is the cow deprived of welfare after the treatment because of the loss of one eye? Does the veterinarian have the medical abilities required for the surgery? These questions would complicate the case in an enormous way. However, these details also make the case more challenging. An Ethics of Care aims to discuss and find flexible approaches for every single conflict by adapting and conforming to the respective situation and highlights the risk of simplifying: the moral problem erodes due to the application of abstract principles.

### 3. The quest for an external source of normativity

To 'arm' the veterinarian for the situation described and to look for 'guidance' for his actions, the author of our example refers to an external voice: 'The Veterinarian's Oath and The Federal Law in the United States' (Rollin, 2006: 106). This perspective is further fostered with the closing argument of the case: 'Thus veterinarians should embrace social and legal change mandating

control of animal suffering, for only through this avenue can their authority be made commensurate with their responsibility.' (Rollin, 2006: 107). In other words, the answer to the moral question 'What should I as a vet do?' is given on the basis of external sources of normativity. The guiding idea to structure veterinary responsibility is: What does one expect from a veterinarian?

The case study leaves the various relationships between the involved agents as an untouched source of normativity. A relational ethics would highlight these dimensions and take a closer look at them. Involved agents and their background, their particular relations and corresponding duties serve as an internal source for reflecting on one's moral responsibility. In other words, relationships carry normative weight (Held, 2006).

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## Conclusion

In this contribution, we used a paradigmatic case in veterinary medicine to illustrate some differences between a traditional ethical account and an Ethics of Care. Veterinary ethics in the traditional mindset runs the risk of losing important features of the case due to the – laudable but problematic – idea of reducing complexity by applying to fixed principles. Our aim was not to provide an alternative that solves all problems, but develop another way of approaching and reflecting on challenging cases. In light of the fact that more and more females are taking up the veterinary profession, a feminist Ethics of Care might have a promising future in veterinary ethics, and may find its way into textbooks to come.



# Theories of living collections

## Plants, microbes and animals as biofacts in gene banks

Nicole C. Karafyllis

By Christian Dürnberger

If ‘gene banks’, ‘biobanks’ or ‘seed banks’ appear in public debates, they are usually associated with dystopian scenarios: The materials are collected for fear of the ultimate catastrophe, be it a nuclear war, an asteroid impact or a pandemic. To combat the risk of losing treasures of mankind, e.g. in the form of important types of grain, crucial genes and biomaterials, they are saved in these modern ‘arks’ in order to guarantee a future after the collapse. Such images, often used in Science Fiction, may be exciting and stimulating – but what does the work on such collections of ‘genetic resources’ actually look like? What practical difficulties do they face? What is actually collected – seeds, genes, genomes or data? And from which origin – of species, varieties or populations? Which goals and motives structure the collection and storage? And above all: Which theoretical approaches are framing their work?

The anthology ‘Theories of living collections. Plants, microbes and animals as biofacts in gene banks’, edited by Nicole C. Karafyllis, Professor at the Department of Philosophy at TU Braunschweig, tries to answer these questions and to contribute to making the theoretical and practical work of real gene banks understandable. In doing so the volume is probably the first of its kind.

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As usual and also necessary for such anthologies, various disciplines have their say: The focus is primarily on reports from the ‘inside’ of these banks. The editor has invited leading experts in biobanking in the non-human sector to present their complex work to an interested audience. To give some examples: H.M. Schumacher reports on the cryostorage of plants at ultra-low temperatures; J. Engels and L. Maggioni discuss the virtual European gene bank AEGIS; A. Graner writes on the collections of cultivated plants at IPK Gatersleben. As a special highlight, these reports are preceded by a historical document: S. Lobenhofer translated and commented on Theophrastus of Eresos, who probably provided the first description of a seed bank in western civilization.

These current reports clarify three things, namely (a) which technical procedures are necessary and available (and to what extent the technology influences what can be and is collected at all), (b) what is collected (e.g. seeds and tissues of cultivated and wild plants, cell lines of wild animals in zoos, bacterial strains and other microorganisms as isolates in pure cultures) (c) and why it is collected (usually a collection pursues several objectives such as food safety, conservation of cultural heritage, nature conservation, protection of biodiversity, drugs development, drugs research, etc.).

However, the anthology aims to represent more than ‘just’ a potpourri of descriptions of current collections: The book also aims at providing a theoretical reflection of collections of life. It is the editor herself who makes fundamental considerations about the activity of collecting (including comparisons to ‘collecting’ stickers for an album – an appropriate example in the year of a Football World Cup); the function of biobanks and the entity of what is collected (Karafyllis describes the ‘collection material’ at one point as ‘living potentials’). Among other things, she refers to a concept she coined herself years ago, namely the term ‘biofacts’ (cf. Karafyllis 2003). As a short form of ‘biotic artifacts’, the term means living beings who are mainly designed by humans, however, the cultural/technical influence cannot always be seen at first sight. Following Karafyllis, plants,

but also microbes and animals are negotiated as biofacts in the course of storage in gene banks. If one follows her argument, one could argue: A better understanding of biobanks means a better understanding of our ‘biofacts’-world, in which simple dichotomies such as nature vs. culture no longer work.

More articles about the theoretical approaches would have done the anthology good, however, this point of criticism can be decisively mitigated by the reference that also the authors from the natural sciences not only describe their own activity, but also try to put it into context and classify it in their articles.

The book contributes to the important aim that the topic ‘living collections’ no longer only occurs in dystopian scenarios; and by mentioning the practical difficulties it also prevents naïve hopes. When it comes to ‘living collections’ and ‘gene banks’, this book is a must-read for the German-speaking world (unfortunately, the book is only available in German).



Karl Albert Verlag. 2018  
ISBN-13: 978-3495489758

Hardcover: € 49,00

The book is in German.

Original title: Theorien der Lebenssammlung. Pflanzen, Mikroben und Tiere als Biofakte in Genbanken.

# Fellow Creatures

## Our obligations to the other animals

Christine M. Korsgaard

By Samuel Camenzind

Christine Korsgaard is one of the leading contemporary Kantian scholars. Besides Kantian ethics, her research interests include the human-animal-relationship from a moral point of view. *Fellow Creatures: Our Obligations to the Other Animals* is her first monograph on animal ethics. Her aim is to defend the claim that sentient animals are ‘ends in themselves’ and that we have certain duties towards them. She does so by combining Kant’s account of obligations with the Aristotelian concept of the ‘final good’. In contrast to her former work, she offers for the first time a detailed insight into what humans ought to do or ought not to do with regards to animals. Her Kantian-Aristotelian account is further of interest, because both Kant and Aristotle are usually viewed as exemplifying an anthropocentric position. For instance, Kant says that non-rational beings lack moral status, they are means and instruments to be used for whatever ends humans please.

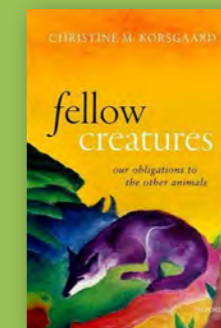
In the first chapter, Korsgaard develops her constructivist value approach and argues against both anthropocentrism and hierarchic sentientism. According to her, there is no point of view of the universe from where we can define a *scala naturae* of value for different forms of life. She rejects both objectivist value theories and the idea that animals only have instrumental value for human beings. Regarding Aristotle’s functional concept of the final good (also referred to as ‘good of its own’) she argues that the self-referential notion of animals (e.g. growing, self-maintaining, reproducing) qualifies them as ‘ends in themselves’.

Rejecting Kant’s argument of reciprocity, which states that moral relations can take place only between morally autonomous beings who have the authority to obligate themselves and others, she claims in the second chapter that ‘the animals obligate us under a law of whom each of us is, individually, the legislator: the law that obligates us to treat all beings who have a final good as ends in themselves’ (147).

In practice, this means – although it is not mentioned explicitly – that Korsgaard represents an animal rights view, which morally condemns all practices with animals that interfere with animals’ final good, e.g. eating animals, animal experimentation or hunting wild animals. What about companion animals? Korsgaard deliberates extensively about two options: abolitionism and what she calls ‘creation ethics’. The former demands the extinction of all domesticated animals, the latter defends turning all predators into herbivores. Both obviously conflict with species conservation, which raises the question about the moral relevance of ‘species’.

Concerning the concept(s) of species, a weak point is spotted that also applies to various biocentrist approaches. To define the final good of an animal, which serves as a normative standard to determine her proper functioning, Korsgaard refers to ‘the’ species norm. There are at least two problems with this. The first one is that there are many scientific definitions of species – in fact, there are not only the three that are mentioned by Korsgaard, but over twenty, many of which are not compatible with each other. The final good of an animal thus seems to be very difficult to specify in a non-arbitrary way. The second problem is that the good of a species doesn’t necessarily coincide with an individual’s own good, because well functioning (third-person-perspective norm) is not necessarily the same thing as wellbeing (first-person-perspective norm). For instance, the extensive caring of a female common octopus (*Octopus vulgaris*) for her eggs leads to flourishing offspring but ends with her death.

Besides these critical remarks, a discussion of the positions of other contemporary Kantian animal ethicists, including their critique on Korsgaard’s approach, is missing. However *Fellow creatures* is a well written and exciting read. The discussion of creation ethics, abolitionism and species conservation, as well as her analysis of Kant’s concept(s) of duty, are good reasons to have a glimpse into the book. It not only deals with contemporary questions in animal ethics, but also serves as an introduction into Korsgaard’s own ethical theory and her constructivist interpretation of Kant.



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## EurSafe executive committee update

After an inspiring and very well-organized Conference in Vienna and a welcome summer break, we are making a fresh start also as Executive Committee.

During the General Assembly we said good bye to Anna Olsson as member of the committee. She served the board for over 8 years with great enthusiasm. We thank her once again for her service! We are also extremely glad to announce that Ariane Willemsen has been elected as a new board member. Ariane is executive secretary of the Federal Ethics Committee on Non-Human Biotechnology in Switzerland and has been involved in the EurSafe community since the first conferences. We are looking forward to a fruitful collaboration.

Within a few weeks we hope to present you the new EurSafe website. As you may have noticed the current version is in need of a serious improvement and lacks the flexibility to make changes and add content easily. A sneak preview of the new website has been already presented during the General Assembly. This new design provides more opportunities and flexibility. With this step we hope to improve the communication next to regular issues of EurSafeNews. Furthermore, in the coming months the EurSafe 2019 congress will be on our agenda. The team in Tampere (Finland) will organize the next conference 19-21 September 2019. The title of the conference is: 'Sustainable governance and management of food systems: ethical perspectives'.

Later this autumn the board has one of its regular meeting. On the agenda will be – among others - the upcoming conferences, the website, and financial planning. Finally we will inform you later this year on the initiative of a members survey that we aim to start in order make EurSafe an (even) more attractive society.

If you have any questions or ideas, please do not hesitate to contact the board!

Best regards,

Franck Meijboom

On behalf of the Executive Board, August 2018

**OCTOBER 5-7, 2018**

**Minding Animals Germany Symposium**

Vienna, Austria

[mindinganimals.de/news](http://mindinganimals.de/news)

**OCTOBER 11-13, 2018**

**Animals and Us: Research, Policy and Practice Conference**

Windsor, ONCanada

[scholar.uwindsor.ca/animalsandus](http://scholar.uwindsor.ca/animalsandus)

**OCTOBER 12-14, 2018**

**Animal Law Conference**

Chicago, United States

[www.animallawconference.com](http://www.animallawconference.com)

**OCTOBER 20-22, 2018**

**22nd Annual Meeting of the International Association for Environmental Philosophy**

State College, Pennsylvania

[environmentalphilosophy.org/2018-annual-meeting](http://environmentalphilosophy.org/2018-annual-meeting)

**NOVEMBER 2-3, 2018**

**Animal Machines / Machines Animals**

Exeter, United Kingdom

[www.britishanimalstudiesnetwork.org.uk/FutureMeetings/AnimalMachines.aspx](http://www.britishanimalstudiesnetwork.org.uk/FutureMeetings/AnimalMachines.aspx)

**DECEMBER 10-11, 2018**

**New Directions in Animal Advocacy**

Sydney, Australia

[sydney.edu.au/arts/our-research/centres-institutes-and-groups/human-animal-research-network.html](http://sydney.edu.au/arts/our-research/centres-institutes-and-groups/human-animal-research-network.html)

**JANUARY 17-19, 2019**

**Fifteenth International Conference on Environmental, Cultural, Economic & Social Sustainability at UBC Robson Square**

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

[onsustainability.com/2019-conference/call-for-papers](http://onsustainability.com/2019-conference/call-for-papers)

**JUNE 26-29, 2019**

**Conference: Finding Home in the 'Wilderness'**

Association for the Study of Food and Society and the Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society

Anchorage, Alaska, USA

[www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/college-of-arts-and-sciences/programs/ASFS/index.cshtml](http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/college-of-arts-and-sciences/programs/ASFS/index.cshtml)

**JUNE 30-JULY 3, 2019**

**Decolonizing Animals: AASA 2019**

Tautahi, New Zealand

[aasa2019.org](http://aasa2019.org)

**JULY 10-19, 2019**

## Animal Rights and Animal Politics in Asia (ICAS 11)

University of Leiden, Netherlands  
[animalstudies.org.au/archives/6372](http://animalstudies.org.au/archives/6372)

**SEPTEMBER 19-21, 2019**

## EurSafe Conference 2019: Sustainable governance and management of food systems: ethical perspectives

Tampere, Finland  
[www.eursafe.org](http://www.eursafe.org)

**OCTOBER 24-25, 2019**

## Ninth International Conference on Food Studies

Kaohsiung, Taiwan  
[food-studies.com/2019-conference/call-for-papers](http://food-studies.com/2019-conference/call-for-papers)

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