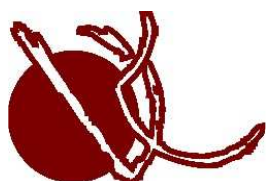


EurSafe News

European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics



EurSafe News
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Editorial

Dear EurSafe Members,

I have the pleasure of presenting you the Spring issue of EurSafe News, co-edited by Kate Millar and myself.

This issue's theme is Veterinary Ethics. It has three contributions, two of which deal with the inclusion of veterinary and animal ethics in veterinary curricula. Two different methods are presented that might be of use for many of you. The last article tries to shed some light on the issue of tail docking in horses, a theme that is still vibrantly actual in Belgium.

Next to the classic conferences and funding section, you will find two messages from the EurSafe board. Kate Millar gives an update on the preparations of the upcoming conference in Nottingham. The EurSafe's secretary, Franck Meijboom, gives you a first glimpse of some other interesting novelties that will mark the start of our Society's second decade.

As this the next issue will probably be out at the EurSafe 2009 conference,

I take this opportunity to wish you all a

wonderful conference. I hope to see you all in July!

Stef Aerts

Thematic Section – ‘Veterinary Ethics’

Frameworks for Teaching Animal Ethics in a Veterinary Curriculum

Alison Hanlon, Anne Algers, Trine Dich, Tina Hansen, Hillar Loor and Peter Sandøe

Bioethics is a core component of the veterinary curriculum within Europe (European directives 78/1026 and 78/1027). However, the AFANet programme identified inconsistencies in the provision and coverage of courses on bioethics amongst European veterinary schools (Edwards, 2002; Gandini and Monaghé, 2002; von Borrell, 2002). A lack of expertise and staff training in bioethics within the veterinary schools may be contributory factors for this inconsistency. The provision of peer-reviewed teaching resources and concept frameworks are likely to support the development of new courses on bioethics. The on-line programme Animal Ethics Dilemma (AED) (www.aedilemma.net) is one example of an established framework that is widely used to support the teaching of bioethics, with a total of 10,783 registered users (2 March 2009). The programme is based on five case studies (the blind hens; ANDi the GM monkey; Euthanasia of a healthy dog; Animal Slaughter; Wildlife rehabilitation), each presented from a range of ethical perspectives: utilitarianism, contractarianism, animal rights, relational and respect for nature. Sandøe and Christiansen (2008) have published a text book to further explain and apply the ethical framework presented in AED.

The learning objectives of AED are to promote student understanding of animal ethics, illustrate ethical dilemmas that arise in animal use, broaden the moral imagination and enable students to

differentiate between types of ethical arguments. It is a computer-supported learning tool, developed primarily for veterinary undergraduates, but widely applicable to other courses of study such as animal science. The programme is intended to complement existing lectures and tutorials on animal ethics, and not as a stand-alone course.

Special consideration has been given to enhance the pedagogic value of the programme. Every case has been written as a narrative, which has been divided into four levels. Within each level, the student is presented with a statement, an ethical dilemma, followed by four or five responses. Both the statements and responses correspond to different ethical perspectives. The narrative or storyline changes depending on the ethical choices selected by the student, and are intended to challenge their perspective. Narrative twists are used as the student progresses through the levels, with the final level giving an outcome to their choices.

Students can control their learning by selecting a variety of ways to explore the programme. For example, they can navigate the programme using the ‘assist me’ option, which explains the basis of the ethical arguments. Reality text and a glossary of terminology are available for the students to explore.

On first entering the programme, the student is required to answer a set of 12 multiple-

choice questions, based on ethical perspectives listed above. Once completed, their choices are used to generate a personal profile, to illustrate the proportion of their choices, which are characteristic of a contractarian, utilitarian, animal rights etc. This is represented as a bar chart, and is updated as the students progress through the programme, to reflect changes in their ethical choices.

Following registration, the student can begin to explore the case studies. Cases can be explored in a number of ways, for example, by using their personal profile or by adopting a particular ethical perspective. This selection will determine the first dilemma that the student is presented with, so that if they decide to navigate the programme using a personal profile, which shows a high preference for contractarianism, the first statement will be written from an animal rights perspective.

Terminology used in the case studies appears as highlighted text, enabling the user to click and learn more about the term, if they so choose. Terminology is also listed in a glossary, which can be viewed separately. In addition, explanations of the theories used are also available for the student to explore, by clicking on headings in the main menu.

The programme is currently available in five languages: English, Danish, Swedish, Dutch and Spanish. It continues to be developed in the form of a case template. The template

will enable both students and teachers to develop their own case studies.

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Teaching animal ethics as part of science and veterinary degrees

Kate Millar, Pru Hobson-West and Liz Mossop

European veterinary schools and science faculties appear to be increasingly encouraging the inclusion of an explicit animal ethics component within veterinary medicine and animal science degree courses. Across Europe, courses are now taught

either as stand alone modules or as identifiable integrated courses, and a number of these are now core (compulsory) degree components.

All forms of university teaching are challenging and require constant review and refinement. However, it could be claimed that delivering animal ethics courses raises a number of specific challenges that relate to staffing, teaching approach and level of inclusion (which academic year, and how much?). In terms of delivering animal ethics modules within science faculties, even though this teaching area is increasingly supported and viewed as important, anecdotal evidence appears to indicate that only a small number of staff are involved in course design and teaching. Often courses are developed and delivered by only one or two lecturers rather than the teaching groups that might be seen within science faculties for the more “traditional” subjects, e.g. reproductive physiology or neuroscience. The teaching approaches applied in animal ethics courses are also often quite different in structure and delivery method to science and medicine modules. Therefore the ability to share new teaching approaches and assessment methods is particularly important for these courses.

For traditional science subjects there are number of well established teaching networks. In order to share teaching experience in animal / veterinary ethics which can aid reflection on course content and methods of delivery, course managers must seek out fellow lecturers in other institutions that deliver similar modules. In many cases this is currently occurring through existing collaborations and special lectureship positions.

It may be interesting to reflect on UK experiences and in particular on the experience of the UK’s first new veterinary school in more than 50 years. The University of Nottingham’s School of Veterinary Medicine and Science welcomed its first undergraduate veterinary students in 2006. The inclusion of veterinary ethics teaching is seen as an important part of the veterinary degree course. In addition, the school’s ethos is to encourage new and innovative teaching approaches and the integration of a number of key subject areas

across the entire degree course. To that end, rather than delivering a single module the ethics, welfare and law teaching is embedded throughout the five year course. Key components are explicitly delivered within a number of prominent modules such as the Personal and Professional Skills (PPS) module in the second year of the course. Additional aspects of the ethics, welfare and law teaching are included as an integral part of other clinical and science modules.

The ethics teaching begins in the first year with a problem solving exercise, based on a series of case studies, that are relevant to the students’ extra-mural practical experience. The majority of formal teaching is delivered in the second year through a series of lectures and ethics clinical relevance case studies. The cases provide an open forum for discussion of difficult ethical dilemmas in small groups, facilitated by a faculty member. It should be noted that these cases are deliberately linked to the parallel body systems teaching that is running at same point during the year, in order to achieve horizontal integration of the curriculum. Team teaching is used for many of the sessions, involving a bioethicist and an experienced veterinary practitioner. In addition to the explicit component, ethical issues are raised and discussed in Year 1 and 2 clinical relevance (problem-based learning) sessions, with teaching support provided by both bioethics and clinical academic staff. The Faculty has identified ‘Ethical reasoning and assessment of animal welfare’ as a core skill. This designation places a responsibility on module conveners to integrate this area of teaching into all aspects of their courses when appropriate. Consequently, it is intended that years 3, 4 and 5 will see teaching in this important subject area further developed in a clinical setting based on the foundations established in the first two years of the course. Three members of staff (two veterinarians and a bioethicist) are responsible for delivering and integrating these elements within the curriculum and in order to enhance learning and expose the student to different views a

number of guest lecturers, both veterinarians and animal ethicists, are invited to run targeted ethics sessions.

In order to enhance teaching practice exchange many lecturers, including those at Nottingham, actively seek out fellow 'teachers' at other institutions. A number of valuable UK associations and societies, such as the Animal Welfare Science, Ethics and Law (AWSELVA) and British Sociological Association (BSA) Animal/Human Studies Group, provide much needed opportunities to discuss both research activities and teaching issues. These associations can provide networking opportunities for those responsible for animal ethics and welfare teaching, particularly for those who are reflecting on course development. For example, the most recent AWSELVA conference focused on animal welfare, veterinary teaching and ethics. However, even with these valuable opportunities to exchange information, it could be argued that there still appears to be a need for more a specialised forum that brings together lecturers who are delivering animal ethics

courses (in Veterinary Schools and Science Faculties).

In the field of 'veterinary communication skills' a specific UK group meets regularly to explicitly discuss teaching development and good practice. It appears that there is a growing need for a similar focal point for animal ethics teaching at both a national and European level. It would be interesting to hear about experiences and views of other individuals' from across Europe, particularly as organisations such as EurSafe may be one of the associations that could provide a more specific forum for 'teaching dialogue' within this subject area.

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Tail docking in horses

Dirk Lips and Stef Aerts

Introduction

Belgium is one of the few countries where all interventions on an animal are prohibited except when explicitly allowed by law. This legislation was passed in 2001 (B.S. 2001-07-04). In practice, the exception list includes nearly all common interventions, but tail docking of horses is not included, thereby implicitly prohibiting it. Before this list was published, there was already considerable discussion on this topic, but in 2004 a proposition to (re)allow tail docking ignited a fierce debate on the issue.

The prohibition came about as a result of the growing pressure on policy makers from the Belgium animal welfare (and animal rights)

movements, backed up by an increasing social awareness of animal welfare. This forced a radical change of practices in the breeding of the Belgian draft horse, where tail docking has 'always' been a normative practice.

There are other countries where tail docking of horses is prohibited: e.g. The

Netherlands, Germany, and the United Kingdom. The major difference between the Belgian and for example the Dutch legislation is that in Belgium horses docked after 2001 are not allowed to enter competitions, even if they were legally docked (in France or elsewhere) without veterinary reasons. This should quite

effectively force Belgian draft horse breeders to abandon docking. But in practice we now see that most horses are docked for 'veterinary' reasons and that these practices are not verbalised at draft horse shows.

Why prohibiting tail docking?

Most, if not all, arguments that are used in favour of tail docking prohibition are welfare considerations. It is believed that the procedure causes (acute and/or chronic) pain to the animal and that it leaves the animal without protection against insects.

All in all, the pain argument seems to be scientifically valid as far as the comparison with tail docking in lambs is valid. Unfortunately, tail docking in the Belgian draft horse is done by other techniques (mainly a surgical technique that involves covering the wound with skin). It is therefore difficult to determine the extent of acute or chronic pain due to tail docking in horses. With regard to the function of the tail as protection against insects, this evidently appears to be convincing. Tail docking does on the other hand not mean that the horse loses every protection as it is still able to shake specific parts of its skin in order to deter insects. This is in fact the only way of protecting the frontal part of its body, even undocked. In general we could state that the welfare argument against tail docking has at least some merit.

These arguments are of high ethical importance. It is clear that both pain and protection against insects are highly relevant to animal welfare. As it is possible that tail docking causes pain and will have some impact on the ability of an animal to protect itself from insects, this at least needs addressing when arguing for tail docking.

Why not?

Arguments in favour of tail docking in horses are more diverse in nature; they also

cover welfare issues, but are dominated by references to cultural traditions, practical constraints and economic benefits. Often it is stated that tail docking is necessary to prevent injury (by the coarse hairs on the strong tail of the mare) to the stud while mounting. A second welfare argument is that docking ensures that the back of the horse stays clean, preventing insect infestation etc.

It seems that – if these claims are valid – these problems would not be restricted to draft horse breeds, which would supposedly then drive breeders of other breeds to resort to tail docking. It might on the other hand be that these problems – if they are genuine – are caused by a change in breeding goals. As Belgian draft horses are almost exclusively bred for shows (and not as work horses) there is a growing emphasis on heavier bones and more haircover at the extremities, which includes a heavier tail. This has already caused leg problems. As any animal welfare argument, this is in any case a potentially important line of argument.

A second line of argument appeals to the tradition of this practice with claims such as 'tail docking has been done for centuries', and 'it is typical for the breed'. Although the historical evidence is fragmented and often anecdotal, the former seems to be correct as in 1974 Gudrun Bär was able to trace the practice to Roman times. The second argument is that this claim is not historically correct, at least for the Belgian Draft Horse. For instance, the horse winning the first prize at the Paris (1878), London (1879) and Brussels (1880) draft horse show was not docked. Whatever the case, these claims can not be regarded as strong ethical arguments in favour of tail docking. Although cultural traditions have their value, they are weak when compared to ethically more fundamental issues such as integrity, welfare, and pain.

Practical constraints are also often-cited arguments in favour of tail docking. For example, it is stated that a docked tail will

never get caught in the line, which would make the horse uncontrollable. Apart from the obvious existence of satisfactory alternatives such as proper training and plaiting, appealing to convenience to justify this permanent and quite radical intervention seems rather weak. These arguments should be considered of low ethical importance.

The last of the range of pro-docking arguments that we will discuss, is the economical argument. Undocked horses are said to be 'worthless' as there supposedly is no local and international market for undocked horses of this breed ('export will collapse'). These may well be genuine objections to the current legislation (there are no hard data to substantiate this) which merit attention. As draft horses are currently of little economic value (at least in Western Europe), it seems easy to wave aside this economic reasoning entirely, but that might indirectly give too much weight to such reasoning if it results in a substantial decline (or disappearance) of the draft horse. On an ethical level it is doubtful that the low economic benefits can counterbalance this surgical intervention.

General evaluation

Analysing the arguments we have discussed above, it is clear that there is a difference in the types of arguments pro and contra tail docking. The arguments against docking typically start from (what is considered to be) the animal's viewpoint while arguments in favour are mainly – but not exclusively – based on human constructions. This closely relates to the different ethical positions about the standing of animals in relation to humans.

Starting from an anthropocentric approach tail docking is clearly no problem and from their arguments it seems that proponents of the procedure hold strong anthropocentric

views. In zoocentric ethics (which puts emphasis on animal welfare and integrity) tail docking is evidently wrong and counterarguments are indeed of a rather zoocentric nature. This shows that – as is often the case in animal ethics – more attention should be given to the ethical assumptions that underlie the discussion between proponents and opponents rather than to a reiteration of the already-known arguments pro and contra.

A moderate anthropocentric approach only allows an infringement of an animal's interests when it is counterbalanced by a substantial gain (e.g. for humans). We have taken this approach to evaluate the ethical importance of the different arguments in the previous part of this paper. We hope to have demonstrated by that analysis that even in a moderate anthropocentric ethic tail docking of draft horses is unacceptable.

In general it seems clear that most of the difficulties caused by the changing Belgian legislation are not a direct consequence of this legislation, but of a reluctance to accept this new reality by the breeders. As most (if not all) of the Belgian draft horse sector is non-professional (hobby), it is indeed extraordinary that the length of the tail makes so much of a difference. Instead of looking back to the great history of the Belgian draft horse, a change of mind and a willingness to look for new possibilities seems to us a greater guarantee for a successful future than a short tail.

Contact

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EurSafe Executive Committee update

EurSafe 2009

Providing a forum that allows members to share knowledge of teaching methods and discuss experiences of using new approaches is an important role for EurSafe. This is an area of activity that a number of members would like to see further developed and to that end this issue focuses on aspects of Animal Ethics and Veterinary Ethics teaching. In addition to this, the EurSafe Board would like to identify members of the society who are actively involved in undergraduate and postgraduate teaching with the aim of establishing a sub-group within EurSafe that may act as a focal point for the exchange of teaching approaches and methods.

In order to support this discussion and the potential establishment of this sub-group, the EurSafe 2009 Congress will explicitly include sessions on Animal Ethics Teaching. It is hoped that this will be of interest to all members, but particularly those who are involved in developing and running university ethics programmes.

Following on from this the Organising Committee is delighted to announce the further development of the EurSafe 2009 Congress programme (2-4 July 2009). A stimulating array of keynote presentations, a keynote panel discussion on “the ethics of bioenergy” and notable special sessions are included in the programme.

Confirmed keynote presenters, panellist and special session speakers taking part in the Congress include Professor Paul Thompson (W.K. Kellogg Chair in Agricultural, Food and Community Ethics Michigan State University), Professor Peter Sandøe (University of Copenhagen), Professor Julian Kinderlerer (University of Cape Town, South Africa and Delft University of

Technology), Professor Lynn Fewer (Wageningen University), Professor Tjard de Cock Buning (VU University Amsterdam), Professor Ben Mepham (University of Nottingham), to name but a few.

Participants from 19 countries will take part in the Congress, presenting over eighty oral papers. The Congress proceedings are published by Wageningen Academic Publishers and will be available at the Congress.

The full programme will be released at the end of April and further details of the themed sessions, keynote speakers, accommodation and registration can be found on the Congress website at www.eursafe2009.co.uk. If you are interested in exhibition space please do not hesitate to contact the organisers at: eursafe2009@nottingham.ac.uk

We are looking forward to ‘Celebrating 10 years of EurSafe’ with you at the 8th EurSafe Congress held at the University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK (2-4 July 2009).

We wish you all a bright and flourishing Spring.

Kate Millar on behalf of the Executive

EurSafe 2010 and more

While the organisers of EurSafe 2009 are extremely busy to prepare a successful conference in Nottingham celebrating the 10th Anniversary of our society, the board is making the first preliminary steps towards the EurSafe 2010 conference. We are happy

to inform you that we have been successful in finding an excellent candidate for the organisation of the 9th EurSafe conference. In the coming months the theme, place and dates will be decided. In Nottingham, the conference will be presented and the organisation will be launched.

Furthermore, we hope to present you EurSafe's new logo during the conference in July. After ten years, the old logo appeared not be as clear and strong as we wished to. Therefore, the Executive Committee decided to start the process of designing a new logo and housestyle. The new style will, among

others, serve for the e-version of EurSafeNews and a new version of the internet site eursafe.org.

Finally, the board is preparing the General Assembly in Nottingham, which is scheduled for 4 July 2009. In a separate email you will be invited for this Assembly and informed on its agenda.

Franck Meijboom
Secretary

Conferences & Symposia

Spring 2009

May 17-20, 2009

International Conference on Ethics Committees: The Division of Ethics of Science and Technology Sector for Social and Human Sciences; UNESCO Zefat; Israel
www.isas.co.il/bioethics2009

May 18-20, 2009

1st Nordic Organic Conference: Towards increased sustainability in the food chain. "The aim of the Nordic Organic Conference (NOC) is to create a Nordic forum with the focus on organic food and sustainable food production and consumption. Through mutual exchanges of knowledge between researchers and other stakeholders, development towards increased sustainability in the food supply chain can be promoted."
Gothenburg, Sweden
<http://www.nordicorganic.org>

May 21-24, 2009

4th International Symposium on Environment
Athens Institute for Education and Research
Athens, Greece

<http://www.atiner.gr/docs/Environment.htm>

May 25-30, 2009

Interdisziplinäre Tagung: Sciences and Values.
Zentrum für interdisziplinäre Forschung (Zif), Sections: Science in the Social Arena; Influence of Politics on Science; Influence of Science on Politics; Science and Societal Risks; Democratization of Science
Bielefeld, Germany
<http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/philosophie/conference/index.html>

May 26-29, 2009

19th EUCARPIA Conference Genetic Resources Sections
Ljubljana, Slovenia
<http://www.eucarpia.kis.si/doku.php>

Summer 2009

June 1-15, 2009

2nd International e-Conference on Agricultural Biosciences

To register send an email to secretary@e-conference.elewa.org with copy to sarah@elewa.org
<http://www.e-conference.elewa.org/agriculture/>

June 12-13, 2009

International Symposium 'Developing Countries facing Global Warming: a Post-Kyoto Assessment'
The Royal Academy for Overseas Sciences and The United Nations
Brussels, Belgium
<http://www.kaowarsom.be/>

June 18-20, 2009

13th ICABR Conference 'The Emerging Bio-economy'
International Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology Research (ICABR) and the: CEIS - University of Rome "Tor Vergata", Rutgers University, University of California, Berkeley, Centre for European Economic Research (ZEW), Katholieke University Leuven, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), University of Missouri, University of Saskatchewan, Wageningen University Ravello, Italy
<http://www.economia.uniroma2.it/icabr/index.php?p=5>

June 23-26, 2009

International Conference: Shaping Europe in a Globalized World? Protest Movements and the Rise of a Transnational civil Society
Zurich, Switzerland
www.protest-research.eu

August 19-22, 2009

23rd European Conference of Philosophy of Medicine and Healthcare: Sources and Perspectives of Bioethics
Tübingen, Germany
<http://www.espmh.cm-uj.krakow.pl/>

Autumn 2009

September 14-18, 2009

International ISHS-ProMusa Symposium: Global Perspectives on Asian Challenges
Guan Dong, China
http://www.promusa.org/symposium_2009/home.html

October 2009

URBAN International Conference: Poverty in Medium and Small Cities of Developing Countries

Funding

EU Funding

PEOPLE Calls

Marie Curie Reintegration Grants (RG)

Identifier: FP7-PEOPLE-2009-RG
Deadline: 31 December 2009 at 17:00:00 (Brussels local time)
http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.PeopleDetailsCallPage&call_id=168

Marie Curie International Research Staff Exchange Scheme (IRSES)

Identifier: FP7-PEOPLE-2009-IRSES
Deadline: 27 March 2009 at 17:00:00 (Brussels local time)
http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7DetailsCallPage&call_id=174

Identifier: FP7-PEOPLE-2009-IRSES
Deadline: 27 March 2009 at 17:00:00 (Brussels local time)

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.PeopleDetailsCallPage&call_id=174

Identifier: FP7-PEOPLE-2009-RG
Deadline: 31 December 2009 at 17:00:00
(Brussels local time)
http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.PeopleDetailsCallPage&call_id=168

Identifier: FP7-PEOPLE-2009-NIGHT
Deadline: 14 January 2009 at 17:00:00
(Brussels local time)
http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.PeopleDetailsCallPage&call_id=157

Identifier: FP7-PEOPLE-COFUND-2008
Deadline: 19 February 2009 at 17:00:00
(Brussels local time)
http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7DetailsCallPage&call_id=173

ERC Calls

Environment (including Climate Change), Health, Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biotechnology, Nanosciences, Nanotechnologies, Materials and new Production Technologies, Socio-economic sciences and Humanities

Identifier: FP7-ERANET-2009-RTD

Deadline: 21 April 2009 at 17:00:00
(Brussels local time)
http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.CooperationDetailsCallPage&call_id=183

Advanced Investigators Grant 2009

Identifier: ERC-2009-AdG_20090506
Deadline: 06 May 2009 at 17:00:00
(Brussels local time)
-ERC-2009-AdG_20090415 for the domain Social Sciences and Humanities (SH), with deadline 15 April 2009, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time),
-ERC-2009-AdG_20090506 for the domain Life Sciences (LS), with deadline 6 May 2009, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time).
http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7DetailsCallPage&call_id=188

Advanced Investigators Grant 2009

Identifier: ERC-2009-AdG_20090415
Deadline: 15 April 2009 at 17:00:00
(Brussels local time)
-ERC-2009-AdG_20090415 for the domain Social Sciences and Humanities (SH), with deadline 15 April 2009, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time),
-ERC-2009-AdG_20090506 for the domain Life Sciences (LS), with deadline 6 May 2009, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time).
http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7DetailsCallPage&call_id=187

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Editors and themes for next issues

Editor and theme for next issue:

Issue-editor June 2009: Mattias Pasquali, "Ethical merits of agriculture types"

Deadline for the next issue: May 15, 2009

You are kindly invited to send any relevant contributions, conference calls, publication reviews, etc. to the editors.