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## Editorial



Dear EurSafe members.

It is my pleasure and privilege to present to you the June 2014 issue of EurSafe News. The focus of this segment of the EurSafe newsletter is 'animal ethics' in the broadest sense. Thinking about our relationships with animals and their normative ramifications must continually be one of the main foci of agricultural and food ethics. The following short papers and book reviews presents a number of different but equally important aspects of human-animal studies and animal ethics.

The first paper is by Dr. Martin Huth, a senior researcher at the Messerli Research Institute in Vienna. Dr. Huth's research approaches the topic of animal ethics from a phenomenological angle and shows how this could lead to new understandings of ethical consideration of animals. In the second short paper, Professor Raymond Anthony from the University of Alaska in Anchorage presents the idea of animal agriculture as a 'public trust resource.' With this concept as a starting point he argues that animal agriculture must be understood as a collective action problem and research and policies should aim at restoring "key human-nature relationships that promote place integrity and regeneration."

There are two very interesting book reviews in the newsletter. First off, Sune Borkfelt from Aarhus University in Denmark reviews the new *Routledge Handbook of Human-Animal Studies* edited by Garry Marvin and Susan McHugh. The book is a fine example of the many varied and interdisciplinary studies into human-animal relationships. The second book review is by Dr. Henk van den Belt from Wageningen University in the Netherlands and addresses a collection of essays by the title *Synthetic Biology and Morality: Artificial Life and the Bounds of Nature* (edited by Gregory E. Kaebnick and Thomas H. Murray). This volume concerns itself with the very limits of what could

be seen as non-human life forms and the possible normative ramifications of creating these ('synthetic biology').

In addition to the short papers and the book reviews, this EurSafe News also include short lists of current publications and upcoming conferences within the field of agriculture and food ethics. Please also have a look at the update of the Executive Committee and note that the deadline for abstract submission for the upcoming EurSafe conference is September 1.

Wishing you a great summer

Jes Lynning Harfeld, issue-editor

## Short paper



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## Negative Integrity – Embodiment and Animal Ethics

In the following, I will explain the importance of the phenomenological core concept of embodiment for animal ethics. I will start with a short and rather theoretical description of the meaning of the "lived body", starting mainly from reflections by Edmund Husserl. In a second step, I will show that a concise reflection of embodiment with its vulnerability ("Negative Integrity") leads to another understanding of ethical consideration than we find in "classical approaches" (like e.g. Tom Regan's rights approach or Peter Singer's pathocentric calculation of interests). Finally, I will draw the conclusions of this approach: namely that living beings belong to a particular life world in which absolute moral claims might lead to counterintuitive, problematic moral accounts. Instead, we must deal with relationality in animal ethics that does not lead to relativism.

### 1. Embodiment – existing as a lived body

Today I have seen a young woman in the full sun waiting for the tram, accompanied by her body. (René Magritte)

René Magritte shows by this absurd statement something fundamental in the existence of living beings: *We do not have bodies* (like we own a piece of cake that we can also lose), but we *are bodies*. We are not pure minds using a body or even imprisoned in a body. On the contrary, we must be considered bodily beings, the lived body (ger.: *Leib*, fr.: *corps propre*) is the basis of any activity that is seen as an emblem of subjectivity like thinking, talking, laughing, being empathic or having ethical concerns. As Edmund Husserl, the founder of modern phenomenology, pointed out: It is the zero point of any experience (Hua IV, 158).

Such a lived body is to be considered a transshipment (Hua IV, 148) of seemingly binary oppositions like body and soul, body and mind, body and reason (see Descartes' dualism of *res cogitans* and *res extensa*) and also the dichotomy of nature and culture. How is that possible? We can reveal this fundamental phenomenon of existence by trying to set aside the prejudices that accompany us in language and collective habits. We concentrate on the experience of the *lived* body outside the concepts of body as the material and sensual and mind as the immaterial and reasonable. What is "originally given" is the source of what we know. (Hua III, 52) Husserl shows that the lived body precedes the mentioned distinctions. The objectification of body

and mind are “later” than the bodily existence and are only possible through this lived body.

The body holds itself on to its world. It is what it performs in a world, as stated in Heidegger’s concept of *being-in-the-world* (Heidegger 2001, 54). We are not substantial entities separable from our relations. We are not subjects that have to struggle for having access to the subjects and objects in our surrounding, but we are already “outside” as living beings.

## 2. The vulnerable body: Negative Integrity

We are always already outside – this means that we are in touch with all beings (human and nonhuman) we are living with, prior to any decision. Every lived body turns out to be expressive since we can be affected by gestures, movements, etc. This affectedness is not given by a conclusion by analogy. Sense and the senses are rather directly linked to each other (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1966, *passim*). This affection is based on the access to others<sup>1</sup> and our being outside, our own accessibility. That implies a kind of vulnerability, a “passive capability” which is essential for empathy or compassion.

It is important to add at this point that the body of perception is the mentioned transshipment – perception is not a natural event of collecting data (an empiricist misunderstanding), but of taking for granted at the level of *gestalts* in a naturally and culturally determined way. (Merleau-Ponty 1966, 57) We do not construct bodies and assume that they are living, but we perceive them immediately. This includes the perception of vulnerability, too. A body is inseparable from its fragility, otherwise it would be a mere object. This vulnerability concerns all our existential relations to the world and is thus not restricted to conscious suffering. This might be exemplified by the notorious blind chicken case: Breeding blind chickens to reduce suffering in certain keeping conditions is efficient from a purely pathocentric point of view. But usually this is not the way people agree with. This is understandable because of an injury on the level of lived existence. Although these animals would not have lost anything and would thus not suffer, we see that they are deprived of a dimension of existence.

Afterwards, we have to notice that vulnerability always concerns the whole existence. Blindness or other defects influence the whole existence. The concept of integrity established by Rutgers and Heeger (1998) expresses this well. Kristen Schmidt (2008) adopted and modified it. It is something that forms the lived body without being a distinct entity: “You cannot point at this integrity directly. (...) You begin to see integrity when you see how the whole informs every part.” (C. Holdrege in Schmidt 2008, 161f.) Schmidt names four fundamental characteristics of integrity: completeness and intactness of the body, interaction between body and environment, integrated completeness of the acting subject, and focused activity of the organism (Schmidt 2008, 371). A modification of the concept of integrity, which is only superficially presented here, against the background of embodiment is possible by taking vulnerability into account. Integrity turns into Negative Integrity: We are affected by the vulnerability (not the completeness) of the lived body, interaction between the lived body and its environment, *Umwelt*, the completeness of the relations of existence, and the possibility of responsiveness to own affectedness (cf. Huth 2013, 123f.).

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<sup>1</sup> This does not mean that we really know what it is like to be this Other.

### 3. Relationality: being with animals in a lifeworld

Moral consideration is not *simply* tied to certain abstract or absolute criteria or principles. Ethics is also the articulation of moral intuitions and norms in a certain socio-historical context (cf. Christoph Ammann in Diamond 2012, 322). These might also embrace e.g. the categorical imperative, but pluralism is thinkable. Since every perception, every kind of significance is culturally determined already on the level of the senses, moral considerations are not outside the relevant socio-cultural context (and thus culturally relative and anthropo-relative). There is no absolute truth or obligation that we can take for granted since any moral order we are living in is contingent and has blind spots which open it for critique and alternatives. Relativity does not equal relativism or anything goes. Affectedness is nothing we can conceal. But it is something that happens within a certain context with different significances and thus we lack universal (a priori) truth qua *fundamentum inconcussum* in ethical consideration.

In my understanding, the hypostases of certain characteristics (that often stem from the traditional description of the specificity of the human being like in Regan's subject-of-a-life-criterion or in Singer's weighing of interests according to the degree of [self-]awareness) leads to counterintuitive consequences, esp. regarding the treatment of some humans (marginal cases) – examples could be found in Singer (2011, esp. chapter 7) or in Regan's famous lifeboat case. These ethical considerations seem like foreign bodies in our lifeworld and could also lead to critique concerning the ethical consideration of animals. We should rather shift our attention to experiences, lifeworld significances and underlying practices with animals. (cf. Diamond 2012, 87) The mentioned affectedness by animal lived bodies could serve as a starting point for public negotiations. This experience might often be concealed, but it is always an option. The quote by a laboratory staff member in Acampora's Corporeal Compassion is a perfect example: "They did not like having rats in clear cages 'because the animals could look at you'." (Birke cit. in Acampora 2006, 100) Even in this highly professional setting focused on instrumentality, affectedness is still possible.

The task of the ethicist is not to prejudge the outcome of such negotiations with a certain socio-cultural relativity (but not relativism!) – such an intention would end up in moralism. Instead, she should be part or supporter of the discourse.

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## Short paper



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## Animal Agriculture as a Public Trust Resource: A North American Perspective

### *Introduction*

The industrial model of animal agriculture (e.g., intensive dairy, poultry and pork industries) places exorbitant demands on air, water, land, farmed animals and biological diversity a.k.a. the agro-ecological Commons. Further, climatic and environmental challenges, projected large increases in population growth and unsustainable practices place food in a particularly vulnerable position (see *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability IPCC Working Group II Contributions to ARS* @ <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg2/>). Arguably, given the enormity of the food system and the various environmental and biophysical threats to it, the complexities and nuances involved in the economics of animal welfare, and the ways in which power, labor and responsibilities are distributed and dispersed, the duties to benefit farmed animals either indirectly or directly are not merely a matter of ethical consumption or private duties. The overall ethical shape of animal agriculture is a collective action problem, one of shared governance and responsibility.

If we accept that the overall shape of animal agriculture is a collective action problem that is global in scope, then we should look for a viable candidate principle (or principles) that can serve to ground and motivate the moral consciousness or imperative to take action and preserve the agro-ecological Commons. Initiatives to promote the interests of farmed animals and their caretakers (e.g., through meat taxes (Cowan, 2006; Norwood and Lusk, 2011), policy and regulatory options that aim to internalize or reduce animal welfare externalities (Gallet, 2010), market-based instruments for animal welfare production (see Lusk's 2011 discussion on AWBUs), and voluntary industry animal welfare standards, must also address broader concerns regarding food, water and nutrient insecurity and global environmental challenges effectively and justly. Below, I suggest that those working in the areas of food and agricultural ethics consider the *Public Trust Doctrine* as the basis of such a principle.

### *The Public Trust Doctrine*

The Public Trust Doctrine (PTD) is inspired by Joseph Sax (1970) and Edith Brown Weiss (1984). It has been used in environmental law to defend both the atmosphere and clean water against private interests encroaching on them (Anthony, 2014). In terms of atmospheric trust litigation, PTD has been used to compel federal and state governments to be proactively citizen-focused since they have "a sovereign fiduciary obligation to prevent waste or degradation of the atmosphere from greenhouse gas pollution" (Wood, 2013). A handful of US states like Hawaii, Arizona and Louisiana are deciding how to include the atmosphere in the public trust. The state of Alaska, where I am from, has already included clean water or navigable waterways in the public trust. Currently, the Supreme Court in Alaska is hearing arguments on whether or not to include the atmosphere as a public trust resource that the State is legally obligated to protect. Plaintiffs in the case contend that the State of Alaska has a duty to protect the atmosphere since the condition of the atmosphere affects other public trust resources that are bound to the survival and wellbeing of future Alaskans. If the plaintiffs succeed and the atmosphere becomes a *public trust resource*, then "the State would have the right to manage it along side the obligation to sustainably manage all of the renewable resources within its territory" (Anthony, 2014).

PTD maintains that citizens and industries can only benefit from this resource just in case they refrain from practices that could lead to destruction or waste of the Commons. This is sometimes referred to as a *usufruct* view of the atmospheric commons. PTD is supported by the *Common Heritage of Mankind Principle* (CHMP) (1954) and has been instantiated, for example, in the *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea* (1982) and the *Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space* (Outer Space Treaty or OST, 1967) (Anthony, 2014). PTD has the consequence of limiting exploitation possibilities and curtailing property rights of self-interested parties. Rights to exploit elements of the Earth are underscored in terms of rights *in trust* for the perpetuity of humanity. Thus, all activities connected to use of the elements that make up the Commons must be addressed holistically in order to avoid gross opportunity losses for future generations and other vulnerable communities.

Presently, no specific attention has been given to the agro-ecological Commons in Alaska, but it may be a short step to raising the issue if the plaintiffs are successful and if PTD catches on in other parts of the US and the world as a way to demand more from our food system on ethical grounds.

#### *Animal Agriculture as a Site of Political Contest*

If recent ballot initiatives around the US are a good barometer, the US public has been steadily asking more from agriculture than just the production of cheap food (Lusk, 2011). They want certain assurances that speak to trust, traceability of their food from farm to fork, and transparency regarding governance in the food system. These typify questions regarding “who is minding the farm” if you will. Traceability back to the farm and knowing what food consumers are getting out of a specific price-product are active drivers of social movements around food. This situation is not unique to the US public but increasingly global in scope too (Lagerkvist, and Hess, 2011).

External threats, a vocal public and institutional inertia plague animal agriculture. Agriculture is a site of political contestation (Lang, 2005). *Regulators* must juggle obligations to both citizens and agents of industry in the food supply chain. Typically, their gaze is on mitigating food related crisis, promoting biosecurity and guarding against bioterrorism and directing commerce and trade.

*Agents in the Supply Chain* (e.g., large and medium scale producers and farmers, processing operators and retailers) are concerned about their brand name and public image, market access, curtailing risks that affect their bottom lines, and the benefits and costs associated with their response strategies to the public’s demand for value added agricultural commodities.

In confronting their duties and interests, policy makers and industry/supply chain agents must overcome the moral psychology of denial and “psychic numbing” (Lifton, 1982). The former is a systematic reluctance to confront the need to overhaul our food system since ‘no real problem exists’ from their point of view or there is no incentive to acknowledge that one exists. The latter is a tendency to withdraw attention from future threats despite acknowledging that a problem persists since doing something is perceived to have massive consequences but low probability of a successful outcome or that the benefits of acting are not clearly visible. Both lead to a fragmentation of responsibility and perpetuate the cycle of inertia, and in many cases injustices.

*The consuming public* (shoppers and households) is increasingly pushing a customer-centric culture and some quarters have been highly critical of “business as usual” when it comes to how food is produced and distributed. Some are craving for greater traceability back to the farm and want to know more about what they are getting out of specifically priced-products, and others are yearning for more food personalization.

For many, food personalization transcends price and is about ethical and social narratives that reflect an active “we eat what we are” culture. For the 46 million people in poverty in the US, on the other hand, their relationship to food is about dignity but since they often struggle with political invisibility, many who are marginalized inevitably succumb to a “you are what you eat” system. In both cases and from an ethical point of view, agriculture is not just about producing enough food. For many North Americans and citizens around the world, agriculture must also be about trustworthiness, the quality of food, ecosystem services, inclusion of marginalized peoples and worst off among us, revitalization of rural areas and laudable animal care and husbandry practices and responsible energy production and stewardship of scarce resources and obligations to future generations. These ingredients mark a public trust emphasis that is explored below.

#### *Hegemony and Counter-hegemony*

Conceptually, there are two major competing philosophies of agriculture,

- a. Pro-Productionism
- b. Public Trust Emphasis

The Pro-productionist paradigm emphasizes the industrialization and intensification of livestock production (as exemplified in vertically integrated industries of pork and poultry, for example) and it adopts an assembly line view of food production that emphasizes uniformity of product, production speed, and obedient workers.

Under this scheme, agriculture is about producing commodities or food for markets. The producing sector is mainly concerned about price and efficiency (Thompson, 2010).

Under this paradigm, public concerns are sometimes recast as optional externalities at best and emotional or knee jerk reactions to self-proclaimed exigencies within the food system. Technological solutions are the preferred way of dealing with threats and challenges. Engagement with the public over motivating visions, values and priorities has only recently been an area of focus of inquiry (Allender and Richards, 2010).

However, recent major government initiatives/strategies (the 2014 Farm Bill, the National Global Change Research Plan 2012-2021, and the 2012 Report to the President on Agricultural Preparedness and the Agriculture Research Enterprise) continue to promote a pro-productionist framework and once again miss a real opportunities to give specific attention to philosophical and ethical matters such as the (adapted from Anthony, 2012):

1. Ambiguous relationships with the agro-ecological commons
2. Differing conceptions of harm from a variety of actors in the food system
3. Divergent notions of risk and the presence of scientific uncertainty

4. Varying accounts of sustainability, and
5. Competing ethical frameworks, especially when it comes to food insecurity, population growth, global warming and resource consumption

Inadequate engagement with the values aware piece around food only results in solutions that are mired in the same consciousness that has led us to the current state of denial and psychic numbing and hence continued, inertia and fragmentation of responsibility.

The Public Trust Emphasis (PTE), on the other hand, arguably an instantiation of PTD, supports a *usufruct* view of the agro-ecological commons. In the United States, PTE can be traced back to agriculture's agrarian roots (see Thompson, 2010, for example) and is located within more recent broader societal cravings (see for example Singer and Mason, 2006). PTE embodies recognition that:

- certain natural resources like air, fresh water and oceans, and farmed animals are central to our very existence
- federal and state governments must exercise a continuing fiduciary duty to sustain the viability of those resources for use by present and future generations
- immediate private interests are subservient to the interests of society as a whole and to non-human life.
- private industries consider property rights (and profit entailed from them) in conjunction with responsible and reasonable use of natural resources (and non-human farmed animals), since these rights would be *in trust* for the perpetuity of humanity because everyone (future people included) is entitled to participate in their *enjoyment*.

Most recently the Public Trust Emphasis has reflected:

- The long range view and creating a sustainable futures for future people
- Local, healthy and affordable food
- Promoting respect of peoples, and animals
- Celebrating interdependence and inculcating an ethical sense of place
- Responsible use and management of land and water and nutrient source including protecting air quality
- Measured policies on energy, pollution control and waste

Contemporary defenders of can find support in a 1982 U.S. Supreme Court ruling, which challenges public officials to perform their duties to preserve nature as our trust (ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILWAY CO. v. ILLINOIS, Supreme Court of the United States, 1892). The essence of a trust is a fiduciary relationship and imposes on trustees a duty to act for the benefit of beneficiaries (Brown Weiss, 1984). Further support can also be sought from the CHMP, a principle of international law. Here, since the elements of the earth (including ocean floor and its subsoil) are common to humankind, they may not be monopolized for the benefit of some to the exclusion or detriment of others, but must be treated and used for the benefit of all humanity. Like PTD, PTE seeks to safe guard the agro-ecological Commons and prevent damage that might result from self-seeking exploitation.

### Implications

PTD provides an eco-systemic framework for raising questions about the status and management of natural resources and property rights, and offers judicial and legal grounds that would ensure that trustees of the Commons, industries and its citizens do not harm the future by taking something from them that it otherwise should have managed more responsibly. Any claim to the products of natural growth and



renewal marked with the duty to avoid bequeathing to the future a depleted stock.

If the agro-ecological Commons is not protected, then it deprives future generations of benefits they might otherwise have enjoyed and we will likely end up punishing our descendants by mortgaging their future or bankrupting the ecological stock on which they will depend. As reflected in CHMP, preventing destruction and promoting conservation of natural resources (and arguably our stock of farmed animals) are requirements of justice and not merely matters of moral tastes or private “green virtues” (Jamieson, 2007).

PTE reminds us that industrialized agriculture is really something very new, which happened in the last 60 years due to low relatively cheap costs, mechanization and the perception that we have an abundant supply of natural resources like arable land, good water quality. According to PTE (especially when we reflect on its agrarian roots), agriculture is a special human activity that reflects citizenship and broad social values and inculcates moral virtues of character (see also Thompson, 2010). Amidst climate change and threats to our food security, PTE urges us to innovate and be forward thinking in our vision for agriculture so that we can restore key human-nature relationships that promote place integrity and regeneration.

More specifically, PTE challenges us to consider:

- a. How social justice should motivate our agricultural policies and business models?
- b. How we should innovate our agricultural practices?
- c. What are effective solutions to mitigate risks in the food system?
- d. How to effectively make the argument and delineate criteria for assigning greater significance of public rights to resources in the agro-ecological Commons over individual use rights, including the priority to protect the interests of farming communities, farmed animals and not just agri-businesses.

Public participation in finding a governing principle for animal agriculture in a climate of PTE is essential for a strong moral and legal foundation. Tools like the Eurobarometer can help elucidate public values and perceptions ([http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm)), provide clues for mobilizing economic, political and social resources to actively address food water and nutrient insecurity and social justice issues around agriculture. An interesting model that has gained some currency is the Dreaming New Mexico Project (<http://www.dreamingnewmexico.org>). A Bioneers Collaborative Project, the Dreaming New Mexico project seeks to reconcile nature and cultures at the local state level. By surveying citizens and businesses around the state to consider what a restoration economy would look like and what “they want for themselves, the next generation and the Earth,” collaborators on this project are beginning to explore the Big Picture of the state’s food and farming and implement both values aware and evidence based research to more effectively and justly feed current and future generations, and to include those who have been previously marginalized by the conventional farm to fork market chain.

In terms of innovating for animal welfare, PTE, given its collective action commitments suggests that we should concentrate research questions and initiatives on public trust outcomes and not be limited to only maximizing animal welfare and profit driven ones. Policies aimed

at improving animal welfare should be considered within a global context of how core food system environments (e.g., governance initiatives, policies and regulations, programs, infrastructure, resources and services, economic incentives, natural and social environments, socioeconomic and demographic factors) impact main points within our food system (processing, purchasing, harvesting, transportation, distribution, consumption, research, commerce and trade, waste and storage). Doing so will enable industry agents to focus on adopting practices that consumers will be willing to pay for in the marketplace.

This abovementioned discussion is adapted from a presentation that I gave at the National Academies on May 13<sup>th</sup> 2014 on the Future of Animal Agriculture Research. It reflects scholarship I am currently preparing for publication.

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## Book Review

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**Marvin, Garry and McHugh, Susan. (Eds.). (2014). *Routledge Handbook of Human-Animal Studies*. London: Routledge.**

One is tempted to say that to all of us who work within human-animal studies, and know how the field has worked its way from the very margins of academic attention toward wider recognition over the last few decades, each new book within the field from a major press is a real cause for celebration. If that is so, then surely the publication of the *Routledge Handbook of Human-Animal Studies* is a very special occasion indeed, since this can be taken as a clear sign of just how established the field has become and how widely recognized it is within various disciplines.

At first glance on the list of contents, the book is perhaps not what many would expect from “handbook”, at least not if one expects an introduction to the field of human-animal studies or to the current status of the field within different disciplines. Rather, it attempts to show what human-animal studies *can be* at its current stage through presenting a number of new essays written by established scholars from various disciplines within the field. This necessarily means that the book demands more of its readers and cannot stand alone as an introduction to the field.

But then it is clearly not intended to do so, and neither new nor seasoned researchers within the field should let this choice on the part of the editors discourage them from digging into its contents. In fact, once you start reading, you are likely to find this approach refreshing and find that – much like the field of human-animal studies itself – the collection of essays found here will frequently challenge you to think in new ways.

It is especially in its cross-disciplinary nature that human-animal studies is so intriguing; as much as, and possibly more than, any other field of study I can think of, it breaks new ground through interdisciplinary work and exposes the relevance of different disciplines to each other. This is not just an option or a coincidence, but a necessity. As the editors write, “it is through research and creative practice that deeply and comprehensively integrate the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences that human-animal studies becomes uniquely capable of opening perspectives on the production and authorization of knowledge itself as a more-than-human activity” (p. 3). Thus, the composition of the book aims to show that the field is not only cross-disciplinary, but even meta-disciplinary, which is a major strength for book and field alike.

Readers should therefore not limit themselves to reading only the essays that seem immediately relevant to their own disciplines. Here, more than anywhere, art, philosophy, ethology, sociology, geography, literary studies, environmental studies, history, anthropology, biology (and so on) are all potentially relevant to (or even impossible to exclude from) each other, and all relevant to how we conceive of both the human and the non-human. As the historian Nigel Rothfels writes in the first essay of the book: “when scholars begin to attend to the presence of animal life in their research, their perspectives on their

fields seem to change quickly” (p. 11).

For instance, some readers might think it strange that only a few of the book’s 21 essays deal directly with animals in agricultural settings, but should not think that this renders the rest irrelevant to such a context. The book is framed by the terms wild, feral and domestic – concepts that attempt to draw distinctions categorizing other animals through their perceived attachment to humans and human societies, or lack thereof. This is a frame that makes for interesting perspectives on everything from Arabian babblers through feral or homeless cats to Sámi reindeer herders, but also one which, approached from different angles, is obviously relevant to those who, like Bernard E. Rollin in his contribution, focus their research very specifically on different forms of agriculture and the attitudes related to these. Overall, the variety of the essays gives the reader a clear notion that the categories into which we divide other animals are as arbitrary as anything and are continually challenged by human-animal relations as they actually occur in both past and present; or, as Kerry Harris and Yannis Hamilakis both observe and demonstrate in their essay on human-animal relations in Minoan Crete, “[d]omestication is ... a topic that is continually being redefined and reconceptualized today” (p. 97).

The continuing renegotiation of language and categorization in our relations with other species also points to the fact that even though human-animal studies has now become an established field of study, it will continue to break truly new ground well into the future. As our relations with other species continually change, and our own understanding of such relations changes with them, there is an incontrovertible need to try to understand not only species relations, but also to understand the ways in which we shape knowledge of such relations. The myriad of ways in which we, as a species, continue to wreak havoc amongst other species should make that obvious to anyone.

Despite the great amount of excellent work done over the last few decades, so much in human-animal studies still remains to be done. For example, as biologist Lynda Birke argues in her essay on the concepts of wildness and tameness, we still “need ... to figure out better ways in which *relationships* between humans and nonhumans, as processes of communication and interconnecting, might be studied” (p. 50).

It is fitting, therefore, that many contributors end their essays with questions or areas still in need of further research. Thus, the collection shows that, having now come of age and become established as a discipline after a few decades of existence, human-animal studies is only at the beginning of tapping into its great potential for theorizing and producing knowledge about us as humans and our understanding of our relationships – conceptual, physical, artistic, biological, economic, material, spiritual (and so on) – with other animals with whom we share our existence. As the editors write in their introduction, the field “has a future and is going somewhere”, even if we do not know exactly where that is (p. 9). Wherever it is heading, however, the *Routledge Handbook of Human-Animal Studies* is a good step on the way.

## Book review

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The Netherlands

**Kaebnick, Gregory E. and Murray, Thomas H. (Eds.). (2013). *Synthetic Biology and Morality: Artificial Life and the Bounds of Nature*. Cambridge MA: The MIT Press.**

This collection of essays is the result of a series of meetings and debates organized by the Hastings Center on the ethical issues raised by the emerging field of synthetic biology. The last of these meetings was held in May 2010 just at the time when researchers at the J. Craig Venter Institute announced that they had created a “synthetic cell” by inserting the chemically produced genome of *Mycoplasma mycoides* into the cell of the closely related bacterial species *Mycoplasma capricolum*, from which the genome had been removed. Although many commentators questioned whether the achievement of Venter’s team indeed amounted to the “creation” of “artificial life”, it nonetheless enhanced the social visibility of synthetic biology and fuelled public debate on the wider social and ethical implications of this new field. The present volume aims to contribute to a deepening of this debate. Its main focus is not on issues like human health and safety to the environment, how to guard against the possibility of intentional abuse by rogue states or terrorist groups, and the likely consequences of synthetic biology for worldwide socio-economic inequality. Such issues, sometimes dubbed “thin” issues, are the bread and butter of mainstream bioethics. The present volume tries instead to move beyond mainstream bioethics by concentrating on so-called “thick” issues or “intrinsic” concerns. As the editors explain in the introduction, synthetic biology “seems to involve a quest for a degree of control over the basic mechanisms of life that human beings have never attained before” (p. 2). Thus the new field raises questions about the relationship of humans to the natural world and about human control over living beings. The aim of the Hastings Center was not so much to definitively answer such questions as to support their articulation and examination.

Synthetic biology is not yet a widely known field among the general public. Opinion surveys often register the ambivalent reaction of ordinary citizens: it is seen as both exciting and scary (ScienceWise, *Public views on synthetic biology*, 2013, p. 7). In his contribution to the volume, environmental ethicist Christopher Preston notes that “intrinsic-value arguments” about “playing God” or “acting unnaturally” may appear soft and vague and are indeed often summarily dismissed by proponents of the new field, yet they wield considerable emotional power. He claims that such arguments “were arguably as much responsible for the social movement against genetically modified crops in Europe as were worries about actual harm to ecosystems and traditional seeds” (p. 107). Policymakers who want to increase investment in synthetic biology fear that the public might eventually respond to this new field as it did to agricultural biotechnology before (Sir David King, the former Government Chief Scientific Advisor in the UK, claims that the public rejection of GM food crops costs British business a billion pounds a year in lost revenue [ScienceWise, op. cit., p. 3, note 15]). While suggesting that public concerns about “unnaturalness” (sometimes referred to as the “yuck factor”) may actually drive social movements against new technologies, Preston also notes that bioethicists tend to argue that such concerns have no legitimate role to play in the formulation of public policy (p. 124). The latter view had indeed been defended in a previous article by the volume’s coeditor, Gregory Kaebnick, and it is also explicitly advocated in John Mandle’s contribution, which holds

that intrinsic objections to synthetic biology are to be ruled out from the domain of public policy by the restrictions on the use of public reason laid down by John Rawls. If we are to believe sociologist John Evans, who wrote the final contribution, this is exactly what we should expect of mainstream bioethics – in his view institutionalized bioethics is congenitally blind to “thick” or “intrinsic” concerns and will either simply ignore them or translate them into “thin” concerns, so as to make them more manageable for bureaucrats and policymakers.

The fact that the contribution of such an avowed critic of mainstream bioethics has been incorporated is in itself testimony that the Hastings Center cannot be accused of unduly narrowing down the range of acceptable views. Other “dissidents” who receive ample space to voice their deviant views are the Swiss bioethicist Joachim Boldt, the already-mentioned Christopher Preston and Bruce Jennings. Their views are counterpoised by the more orthodox views of Andrew Lustig, Gregory Kaebnick, Mark Bedau and Ben Larson, and John Basl and Ronald Sandler, who variously hold that the “intrinsic” concerns of the public do not represent valid objections against synthetic biology. Yet, whether orthodox or dissident, in the process of “articulating” public concerns both groups of ethicists are bound to translate such concerns into their own ethical language in order to make them rationally intelligible and assessable. An example is the middle part of the book that is devoted to a rather esoteric discussion about the moral status of natural and synthetic organisms. One wonders how much gets lost in translation.

There is something odd happening in the book. In the end even the dissidents do not succeed in making a plausible case that the “intrinsic” objections against synthetic biology should be taken seriously after all. A case in point is Preston’s contribution. Against the view that synthetic organisms possess intrinsic value by virtue of their teleological organization (or biological needs) just like natural organisms do (a view endorsed by Kaebnick, Bedau and Larson, and Basl and Sandler), Preston sets up an ingenious “Aristotelian” counter argument to claim that there is nonetheless an essential difference between the two types of organisms in this regard. Summarizing his argument we can say that a synthetic organism has a double *telos* or final cause: not just a good of its own but also a function designed by the synthetic biologist. Thus a synthetic organism remains irreducibly an artifact and its value will therefore appear diminished compared to naturally occurring organisms. After such an elaborate argument it comes as an anticlimax to read in Preston’s final paragraph: “That this whole discussion has been about bacteria may, in the final analysis, make the question of intrinsic value moot” (p. 124). After all, currently and for the foreseeable future synthetic biology works only with bacteria (and yeasts) – and who cares about the intrinsic value of bacteria, be they natural or artificial? A similar anticlimax is occurring in the contribution of Evans. Whereas Evans generally accuses mainstream bioethics of unduly ignoring “thick” concerns, the upshot of his own argument regarding “thick” claims that figure in the debate on synthetic biology (he focuses in particular on claims that this field is likely to “teach” humans to see themselves either as godlike creators or, conversely, as mere DNA) is that in this particular case these claims are rightfully dismissed. The third dissident, Jennings, is more successful in maintaining his critical stance by declaring that his worries do not pertain to particular applications of synthetic biology, but to the more broad-ranging trends and developments which it epitomizes and of which it forms a part. He denies that it can be adequately assessed according to the usual liberal criteria of benefit, risk, safety and harm. While synthetic biology may temporarily solve some *problems in our lives*, Jennings fears that it will lead to further

distortion of the *patterns of our lives* (p. 167). His contribution actually contains an implicit challenge to the neat division between “intrinsic” and “consequentialist” concerns, and the decision to focus only on the former, that formed the starting-point of the entire book.

A current controversy demonstrates that a self-imposed limitation to “intrinsic” issues, apart from consideration of possible consequences, may indeed be unhelpful. The Swiss company Evolva recently succeeded in producing a vanilla flavor in a synthetic-biological way and intends to sell the synthetic product in western markets as a “natural” flavor, a move that is countered by NGOs like the ETC Group and Friends of the Earth, which urge food companies to boycott the “vanilla grown in petri dish” (*The Guardian*, 11 November 2013). The two NGOs are concerned that the synthetic-biological vanilla product will displace the “natural” vanilla supplied by farmers in Madagascar, Mexico and the West Indies, who allegedly grow vanilla plants in an environmentally friendly practice of agroforestry. So in this case we see that claims about the alleged “unnaturalness” of a specific synthetic biology product (“vanilla in a petri dish”) are closely associated with environmental and social concerns about the risk of displacing Third World producers who at present are able to earn their livelihood in a sustainable way. It is hard to separate the intrinsic objection from the consequentialist concerns. What is more, the claims about “unnaturalness” were only raised in response to contrary claims made by Evolva about the “naturalness” of their vanilla flavor (apparently allowed by existing legislation in the US and Europe). Most bioethicists who criticize appeals to nature as an invalid form of reasoning address their criticism to the opponents of new biotechnologies. They should not forget that their critical arguments apply with equal force to the claims about “naturalness” made by the proponents.

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Kate Millar

## EurSafe Executive Committee Update

Welcome to this 2014 issue of the EurSafe newsletter. We hope you have had a productive start to this year. In the last issue we announced the next EurSafe Congress 2015 that will be held in late Spring 2015, 27-29 May 2015, in Cluj-Napoca, Romania and we are delighted to report that further details have now been released.

The theme for the 12th Congress of the European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics, Cluj-Napoca, is “Know your food! – Food Ethics and Innovation”. Further details of the call for abstracts and the full details of the Congress theme can be found at: <http://eursafe2015.usamvcluj.ro/>.

Please note the important abstract deadline of 01 September 2014. Notification will be by 30 September 2014 with extended abstracts (full papers) due on 20 November 2014.

If you have any specific questions please contact the EurSafe 2015 Secretariat at: Department of Economic Sciences (Office: +40 (264) 596384 ext. 380; Fax: +40 (264) 593792 or by e-mail: [eursafe2015@usamvcluj.ro](mailto:eursafe2015@usamvcluj.ro)).

Finally, as you will have noted as you started to read this issue we

have a guest editor for the Newsletter. As mentioned in the last issue, we are always looking for new contributions and guest editors. Dr Bernice Bovenkerk, EurSafe News Editor, welcomes suggestions and would be happy to discuss future issues / guest editorship.

Spring has truly sprung and we look forward to updating you in the autumn on some of the wider EurSafe activities, such as APSafe and new initiatives. Until then, we wish you a productive early summer and we are looking forward to reporting on the abstract submissions for the EurSafe Congress 2015.

Kate Millar on behalf of the Executive Board

## Books and Publications

### **The Oxford Handbook of Animal Ethics**

Authors: Tom L. Beauchamp, R.G. Frey  
Paperback: 984 pages  
Publisher: OUP USA; Reprint edition (February 2014)  
Language: English  
ISBN-10: 019935197X  
ISBN-13: 978-0199351978

### **Routledge Handbook of Human-Animal Studies**

Authors: Garry Marvin, Susan McHugh  
Hardcover: 332 pages  
Publisher: Routledge (April 2014)  
Language: English  
ISBN-10: 0415521408  
ISBN-13: 978-0415521406

### **The Ethics of Captivity**

Author: Lori Gruen  
Paperback: 288 pages  
Publisher: Oxford University Press (May 28, 2014)  
Language: English  
ISBN-10: 019997800X  
ISBN-13: 978-0199978007

### **Energie aus Biomasse – ein ethisches Diskussionsmodell (2nd edition)**

Authors: Michael Zichy, Christian Dürnberger, Beate Formowitz, Anne Uhl  
Paperback: 111 pages  
Publisher: Vieweg+Teubner Verlag (June 2014)  
Language: German  
ISBN 978-3-658-05219-5

### **Projektion Natur. Grüne Gentechnik im Fokus der Wissenschaften**

Authors: Annette Meyer, Stephan Schleissing  
Hardcover: 200 pages  
Publisher: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (August 2014)  
Language: German  
ISBN-10: 3525317158  
ISBN-13: 978-3525317150



## **Eating Earth: Environmental Ethics and Dietary Choice**

Author: Lisa Kemmerer  
Hardcover: 176 pages  
Publisher: Oxford University Press (October 2014)  
Language: English  
ISBN-10: 019939184X  
ISBN-13: 978-0199391844

## **Corporal Compassion: Animal Ethics and Philosophy of Body**

Author: Ralph R. Acampora  
Paperback: 224 pages  
Publisher: University of Pittsburgh Press; 1 edition (November 2014)  
Language: English  
ISBN-10: 082296323X  
ISBN-13: 978-0822963233

## **Conferences 2014**

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>June 17-18</b> | International Conference on Poverty and Sustainable Development (ICPSD)<br>Colombo, Sri Lanka<br><a href="http://povertyconferences.com">http://povertyconferences.com</a>   |
| <b>June 25-26</b> | “Energiewende” in rural areas – a benchmark test for a citizens’ project (in German)<br>Tutzing at the Starnberger See, Germany<br><a href="http://www.ttn-institut.de/tagung-energiewende">www.ttn-institut.de/tagung-energiewende</a>  |
| <b>June 25-27</b> | IAMO Forum 2014: The Rise of the „Emerging Economies“: Towards Functioning Agricultural Markets and Trade Relations?<br>Halle (Saale), Germany<br><a href="http://www.iamo.de/forum/2014#.U38T4S8iXbk">http://www.iamo.de/forum/2014#.U38T4S8iXbk</a>  |
| <b>July 2-3</b>   | 3rd BSA Food Study Group Conference: Food & Society<br>London, United Kingdom<br><a href="http://www.britsoc.co.uk/events/food">http://www.britsoc.co.uk/events/food</a>   |
| <b>July 3-4</b>   | ECSEE 2014 - The Second European Conference on Sustainability, Energy and the Environment<br>Brighton, United Kingdom<br><a href="http://ecsee.iafor.org">http://ecsee.iafor.org</a>   |
| <b>July 7-18</b>  | Humans/Animals. A Contested Boundary<br>Vienna, Austria<br><a href="http://www.univie.ac.at/ivc/VISU/">http://www.univie.ac.at/ivc/VISU/</a>   |
| <b>July 13-15</b> | 1st Global Conference: Making Sense of: The Animal and Human Bond<br>Oxford, United Kingdom<br><a href="http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/probing-the-boundaries/making-sense-of/the-animal-and-human-bond/call-for-presentations/">http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/probing-the-boundaries/making-sense-of/the-animal-and-human-bond/call-for-presentations/</a> |
| <b>July 17-20</b> | Reading Animals. An International English Studies Conference<br>Sheffield, United Kingdom<br><a href="http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/english/animal/readinganimals">http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/english/animal/readinganimals</a>   |

<b>July 19-22</b>	ISAZ 2014: Animals and Humans together: Integration in Society Vienna, Austria <a href="http://isaz2014.univie.ac.at/">http://isaz2014.univie.ac.at/</a>
<b>July 22</b>	Brute Facts and Normative Implications: Understanding Human-Animal Interactions Vienna, Austria <a href="http://isaz2014.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/k_isaz2014/Satellite_nsymposium.pdf">http://isaz2014.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/k_isaz2014/Satellite_nsymposium.pdf</a>
<b>August 1-2</b>	Savory Institute – Annual International Conference –Putting Grasslands to Work London, United Kingdom <a href="http://www.savoryinstitute.com/london-save/">http://www.savoryinstitute.com/london-save/</a>
<b>August 18-21</b>	Climate Engineering Conference 2014 Berlin, Germany <a href="http://www.ce-conference.org/">http://www.ce-conference.org/</a>
<b>August 20</b>	Norwegian Animal Ethics Conference 2014 Trondheim, Norway <a href="http://mindinganimals.no/">http://mindinganimals.no/</a>
<b>August 30-31</b>	International Conference On “Agriculture, Forestry, Horticulture, Aquaculture, Animal Sciences, Food Technology, Biodiversity and Climate Change Sustainable Approaches” New Delhi, India <a href="http://www.krishisanskriti.org/afhafbc.html">http://www.krishisanskriti.org/afhafbc.html</a>
<b>September 3-6</b>	Food and the Internet – SIEF 20th International Ethnological Food Research Conference Łódź, Poland <a href="http://www.20foodconference.uni.lodz.pl/">http://www.20foodconference.uni.lodz.pl/</a>
<b>September 8-9</b>	World Public Health Nutrition Association – Building Healthy Global Food Systems - A New imperative for Public Health Oxford, United Kingdom <a href="http://www.wphna.org/Oxford2014/">http://www.wphna.org/Oxford2014/</a>
<b>September 24</b>	Ethics of Food Security in a Changing Society - Learning from the past to shape the future Windsor Great Park, United Kingdom <a href="http://www.cumberlandlodge.ac.uk/Programme/Forthcoming%20events/Ethics%20of%20Food%20Security%20in%20a%20Changing%20Society">http://www.cumberlandlodge.ac.uk/Programme/Forthcoming%20events/Ethics%20of%20Food%20Security%20in%20a%20Changing%20Society</a>
<b>September 24-26</b>	EcoProcura 2014 Ghent, Belgium <a href="http://www.ecoprocura.eu/ghent2014/">http://www.ecoprocura.eu/ghent2014/</a>
<b>October 7-10</b>	Humidtropics Integrated Systems Conference – Systems Research for Sustainable Intensification in Smallholder Agriculture Ibadan, Nigeria <a href="http://humidtropics.cgiar.org/events/humidtropics-2014-science-conference/">http://humidtropics.cgiar.org/events/humidtropics-2014-science-conference/</a>
<b>October 8-9</b>	6th International Conference on Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility Berlin, Germany <a href="http://www.csr-hu-berlin.org/theme">http://www.csr-hu-berlin.org/theme</a>

- October 8-10** Conference on Life Cycle Assessment in the Agri-Food Sector Towards Sustainable Food Systems  
San Francisco, USA  
<http://lcafood2014.org/>
- October 20-21** International Conference on Food Studies  
Prato, Italy  
<http://food-studies.com/the-conference/>
- October 23-27** The tenth edition of Salone del Gusto and ten years of Terra Madre – an event dedicated to real food and its producers.  
<http://www.salonedelgusto.it/en/>
- November 6-7** Conference 'Finding Spaces' (Sustainable Food Planning urban agriculture)  
Leeuwarden, the Netherlands  
[http://www.aesop-planning.eu/blogs/posts/en\\_GB/sustainable-food-planning/2014/05/06/readabout/2014-conference-finding-spaces](http://www.aesop-planning.eu/blogs/posts/en_GB/sustainable-food-planning/2014/05/06/readabout/2014-conference-finding-spaces)
- November 11-14** Total Food 2014 – sustainable exploitation of agri-food co-products and related biomass  
Norwich, United Kingdom  
<http://www.ifr.ac.uk/totalfood2014/>
- December 3- 4** The 6° BCFN International Forum on food and nutrition  
Milan, Italy  
<http://www.barillacfn.com/en/forum/forum-2014/>

## Conferences 2015

- January 13-20** Minding Animals Conference 3  
New Delhi, India  
<http://mindinganimalsconf3.in/>
- May 27-29** 12th Congress of the European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics  
Cluj-Napoca, Romania  
<http://eursafe2015.usamvcluj.ro/>
- October 20-23** 12th European Nutrition Conference FENS 2015  
Berlin, Germany  
<http://www.fensnutrition.eu/index.php?p=inicio&sec=conferences>

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