

EurSafe News

European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics



EurSafe News
Volume 9, No. 1
March 2007

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Editorial

Dear EurSafe members,

As the issue editor and on behalf of the newsletter board, I would like to welcome you to the first EurSafe News of 2007. This newsletter is the second of a newly introduced thematic series where you are invited to debate, introduce recently published or forthcoming work, announce activities, and express interest for collaborations.

The theme of the current issue is “Communicating Food Ethics”. In our times food ethics is an issue of public debate more than ever before. Environmental and health risks, animal welfare, terms of trade and mode of production are issues about which citizens across the world not only state concerns, but also demonstrate an economically significant will to consider as consumers in the market. A number of values-based labels enable foods to survive price competition from less

expensive unlabelled ones. Socially responsible producers communicate their voluntary and costly commitment to codes of ethical conduct and participatory product development.

One may see economic benefits in communicating ethical conduct, and one may see a matter of moral or political principle. Communicating ethics may be costly and may be inadequate. It may be counterproductive. Communicated information may be invalid, incredible, confusing, or deceiving. It may be uncertain. One may use information to do politics in the market, to identify with a group, to reaffirm commitment to established principles, to live within the story one wishes to live; another may ignore it. Yet another may not afford to use it. It may enable free choice, and it may oblige one to choose.

With the increase of production scale and with the increase of the physical distance between producer and consumer, communication on ethical issues depends on the existence of a credible system for tracing valid information. Speaking at a conference culminating an European project on ethical traceability, Commissioner for Agriculture M. Fischer-Boel and Head of Cabinet for Health and Consumer Protection M. Schinas linked the economic importance of high quality food production for European agriculture to the unavoidable ethical connotations of food quality perceptions ('Food Traceability and Informed choice in Food Ethical Issues' <http://www.ethic-trace.net>). In the context of the ongoing revision of the European labeling legislation, traceability requirements were also identified for clear and

meaningful labels enabling consumer choice, and for consumer trust.

In the thematic section of this issue we have welcomed interdisciplinary contributions. First, Olivia Howell Davies and Lynn Frewer from Marketing and Consumer Behavior report ongoing research on ethical traceability and transparency in the food chain, on new traceability technologies, and they explore its potential for informing purchasing decisions of consumers. Next, Tom McMillan from the Food Ethics Council starts from the planned introduction of 'carbon labels' in Tesco supermarkets, and brings to the forefront a number of technical, normative, and power issues connected to the implementation of labeling schemes. He concludes with a set of recommendations for establishing a dialogue within the food chain about values as well as about facts, and reports on the initiatives taken by the Council. Finally, Guido Nicolosi from sociology of cultural and communicative processes discusses the narratives associated to food consumption, and the appearance of the 'orthorexic' consumer in post-modern societies. He concludes by asking for an urgent reintegration of agriculture and alimentation within a social, cultural, economic and environmental framework. In the sections that follow, Stef Aerts reports from the recent Institutional Member Meeting in Utrecht, the Netherlands. Conferences, courses, publications, and funding opportunities are announced.

We hope that you will find the current issue to be a positive step towards transforming EurSafe News to a dynamic platform for exchanging

information and ideas as well as establishing links among EurSafe members.

The EurSafe News' June issue will be edited by Herwig Grimm; its theme will be “Agri-food ethics in German-speaking Europe”. All contributions, thematic or other, should be sent to herwig.grimm@elkb.de by May 15.

Kind regards on behalf of the newsletter board,

Tassos Michalopoulos, *issue editor*
Applied Philosophy & Business
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Wageningen University, the Netherlands

Thematic Section Communicating Food Ethics

Traceability systems, ethical issues and consumer perceptions

Olivia Howell Davies & Lynn Frewer

Introduction

Increasing consumer confidence through the implementation of regulatory measures has been highlighted in recent changes in the European Food Law (General Food Law – GFL), which has focused on the introduction of increased traceability in the food and feed chain (EC Regulation 178/2002). Improved food chain transparency can be facilitated through traceability systems, which also have the potential of increasing consumer confidence in food safety. In addition, traceability may provide consumers with guarantees about quality (for example, through PDO¹ and PDI² labelling). Moreover, traceability systems can provide the basis of channels of communication between different food chain actors, as well as facilitating the recall of products if a food safety incident occurs within a particular food chain, product category or product.

Consumers are also becoming more interested in other “credence attributes” of products such as *sustainable production*, the application of the *principles of fair trade* and *animal welfare-oriented production systems*. Traceability has the potential to provide reassurances to the consumer regarding these types of credence attributes, in addition to the quality and safety attributes normally discussed (van Rijswijk et al, submitted).

New traceability technologies

There are primarily two types of emerging technologies which have the potential to improve the traceability of foods and food ingredients through the food chain: (micro)electronics and analytical techniques. *(Micro)electronics and communication* (often called information and communication technology, or ICT), have the potential to provide a reliable way for traceability data to be communicated through different

¹ Protected Designation of Origin

² Product Data Interchange

communication paths, for example *via* computer-to-computer networks or mobile phone networks, dependent or independent of the Internet or private networks. Another example is Radio Frequency Identification tags (RFIDs), which enable the straightforward exchange of information at vulnerable links in the food chain.

Analytical techniques are based on molecular biology or isotope technology, and are primarily concerned with quality issues (e.g. certified chains) or establishing food authenticity. They have the potential to facilitate discrimination between foodstuffs based on geographical origin or identification of the technological processes applied using advances in chemometric techniques.

Of course, improved consumer confidence and trust are contingent on the effective implementation of, and possibly communication about, such systems. In addition, traceability systems must deliver information relevant to consumer concerns.

Sustainability

Research into consumer perceptions of sustainability is limited, primarily focusing on organically and locally grown produce. Research that is sustainability-focused indicates consumers have a positive attitude toward sustainably produced foods, but express low confidence in their ability to purchase them, due to either actual or perceived barriers such as price, availability and inconvenience. Targeting information about sustainability to those consumers who are interested in it is essential to sustainability efforts of the food

industry. Traceability could assist in increasing transparency in the food chain allowing consumers to see how food is produced, which may aid them in their purchase decisions.

Animal welfare

Food crises in meat chains may have increased concerns regarding animal welfare and it has been reported that there is a direct link between animal health, which consumers also link to food safety, and animal welfare. Of course, society also has an ethical responsibility to apply appropriate standards of animal welfare to animal husbandry systems, but systematic take-up of best practice may, in part, be contingent on consumer acquiescence regarding higher welfare standards, as well as regulatory enforcement. It has been proposed that an increase in transparency of the food production process, contingent on the implementation of effective traceability systems, would allow consumers to make more ethical choices regarding foods associated with animal production chains.

Fair Trade

Fair trade networks link smaller producers in developing countries with consumers in developed countries *via* retailers. Consumers may purchase products with a fair trade guarantee as a way of demonstrating their approval of companies who are socially responsible. Traceability and transparency of the food chain can thus be applied in this context in two ways: firstly to demonstrate to consumers who is

benefiting from fair trade practices; and secondly as a guarantee of the packaging or website information of companies selling these products.

Conclusion

Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of production issues associated with sustainability, fair trade and animal welfare, and there is some evidence consumers utilise information about these different food production systems in their food choices. If producer claims regarding sustainable production, fair trade and animal welfare production systems are to be accepted by consumers, it is important that products which seek to make fraudulent claims are not introduced into the food chain and that products with these attributes are backed up by robust traceability

systems. Improved traceability may provide additional benefits to consumers over and above improved safety and quality guarantees.

Contacts

Olivia Howell Davies & Lynn Frewer work at the Marketing and Consumer Behaviour Group group of Wageningen University. This article is an abbreviated version of a review paper currently in preparation.

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Additional information can also be found here:

Van Rijswijk, W. Frewer, L.J., Menozzi, D., and Fiaoli, G. (submitted) Consumer perceptions of traceability: A cross national comparison of associated benefits and the links with quality and safety.

Communicating food ethics: whether it likes it or not, Tesco can teach us a lesson

Tom MacMillan

Tesco, Britain's biggest supermarket and the third largest grocery chain in the world, announced in January that it would 'carbon label' its products. The company's chief executive, Sir Terry Leahy, explained that each of the 70,000 lines it sold would state how much carbon dioxide was emitted in production, transport and consumption. With Tesco accounting for £1 in every £8 of UK retail spending, this is a bold move that could help a sizeable segment of the public make better informed ethical choices about their food. Yet it also raises questions about what it means to communicate food ethics and how best to do it. What means of

communication are most effective – indeed, what are we trying to communicate and who decides what counts as success? And, of course, which ways of communicating ethics are most ethical, in the sense of allocating responsibilities most fairly?

These are not just questions for business and for the public but also for public policy. In the UK, government is right now struggling with precisely these issues: one the one hand, it wants to change public behaviour on a massive scale, particularly eating habits, in order to promote public health and sustainable development; yet, on the other hand, it

wants to do this within a policy framework that prioritises 'choice' and emphasises the personal responsibilities of individual citizens.

So, to the questions... First, what are we trying to communicate? While carbon labels sound simple, Tesco's project is ambitious – in concept as well as in scale. Having made the pledge, the company wants to pay Oxford University £5 million to think through how it might work in practice. This is not only a technical challenge but also an ethical one. Which emissions should be included and which should be left out? Where do the responsibilities of the retailer and its customers end?

Such messiness is the rule, not the exception, when it comes to communicating ethics. Bare facts – nude of normative framing – are hard to come by. Information about methods of animal husbandry, endangered species and GMOs, for example, always heavily mediated, be it by research on animal sentience, by claims about the intrinsic or instrumental value of biodiversity, or by arguments about power in food sector. This doesn't make such information any less worth communicating but it does change how we see the challenge of communicating well: it becomes less about lubricating the flow information down the food chain to consumers and more about creating a dialogue that extends from farm to fork and beyond, which actively engages citizens in the normative work of deliberating, say, where the responsibilities of Tesco for emissions start and stop. Second, Tesco's carbon labels raise the question of how far communication about food ethics can be product-specific

– what are the strengths and the limits of labelling as a means of communication? The carbon labels are different from organic and Fair Trade certification, for instance, in as much as they would apply across the board – they might attract green consumers to Tesco away from its competitors, but labelled products would not attract a premium compared with unlabelled products. Nevertheless, like-for-like, products with a smaller carbon footprint may well cost more until the costs of fossil fuels are reflected in production – one difficulty with labelling is that it can end up placing a price premium ethical behaviour, making it harder for people with lower incomes to buy what they think is right.

Another problem is that most labels encourage consumers to buy better, not to buy less. Meat is a good example – a mix of carbon and animal welfare labelling might help you choose a product that is relatively benign on both counts, yet eating less meat might be even better. In practice, will carbon labels affect consumer choices between product categories (e.g. meat versus vegetables) or only within them (e.g. beef versus chicken)? Labelling is difficult for a third reason too – it all too often puts the onus to behave responsibly on consumers. It can be a way for retailers to shed responsibilities that, in fact, they are much better placed to meet than consumers. A report last year by the Sustainable Consumption Roundtable, a UK government-sponsored initiative, made the point that relying on 'heroic green consumers' to make lifestyle changes, often in the face of perverse incentives, was not only unfair but also unlikely to reduce our environmental impact fast enough. The report argued

that government and businesses need to 'edit' the choices available to consumers so as to promote environmentally sound and healthy purchasing, creating the conditions whereby consumers can behave in the marketplace as they would like to behave as citizens.

Despite these problems, labelling does have one important hidden strength as a way of communicating ethics. Behind all the rhetoric from Tesco and others that its labels will only provide information, and that the customer is king, carbon labelling may force a fair bit of choice editing behind the scenes. Just as a new scheme to put nutritional 'traffic light' labels on processed foods in UK creates an incentive for companies to stock healthier product formulations, so too, perhaps, with carbon footprints. Labelling can promote corporate self-government.

Third, the case of carbon labels prompts us to ask who does the communication – who mediates information about our food and how it is produced? Contrast supermarket labelling – where communication from farm to fork and back depends on packaging, price signals, advertising campaigns and focus groups – with the face-to-face encounter between consumer and producer at a farmers' market. The difference is especially stark in the UK, where our food system is heavily industrialised, where 'reconnecting' consumers and producers is an explicit policy objective in the aftermath of the foot and mouth disease outbreak a few years back, and where a handful of supermarkets, Tesco's chief among them, dominate food sales.

Each stage of communication along the supermarket supply chain offers the retailer strategic opportunities. Thus, even where consumers do vote for the environment, animal welfare or workers' rights with their wallets, producers are heavily insulated from these signals. The big retailers are such powerful buyers that they can squeeze farm-gate prices *and* demand higher environmental and welfare standards of producers simultaneously, even if shop prices are on the up. This is an ethical issue in itself and one that cannot be communicated by the retailers in question. It highlights that communication about food ethics has to be about engagement – about building direct relationships that bridge the supply chain, that involve the transfer of power as well as the transfer of information.

So, in sum, communicating food ethics effectively and fairly means building a dialogue within the food chain about values as well as about facts, it needs more than labels although those can help, and it depends on concrete encounters that challenge power relationships within the food system. What does this entail in practice for industry, for government and for us?

For supermarkets and food companies, this means engaging citizens and stakeholders explicitly in 'choice editing', building a more frank dialogue about ethical issues based on the trust consumers feel for their favourite retailers and brands, instead of promoting the myth that the customer is king. While this may seem a tall order, the long term viability of the sector depends on it and pressure for such a shift may come from investors.

For government, this means fostering much more actively new direct engagement between consumers and producers. This goes beyond initiatives to promote niches for ‘reconnection’. The economic climate has to be such that shorter consumer-producer relationships can really thrive and, first and foremost, that will require regulatory intervention to ensure a more competitive retail sector that is less concentrated, more innovative and more open to new entrants.

Finally, what would this entail for the ‘food ethics’ community in academia and civil society? Well, at the Food Ethics Council we try to cover several bases. We produce reports that analyse ethical issues for policy makers, businesses and civil society groups, often highlighting opportunities for greater public engagement in ‘choice editing’. We communicate about how to

think ethically and to make ethical decisions, using tools like the Ethical Matrix. We have organised deliberative events, such as a series on *Power in the food system*, where people from different corners of the food system can make contact and exchange ideas. And, most recently, we have launched a magazine, *Food ethics*, aimed at an audience spanning specialists in ethics and members of the public, which aims to challenge accepted opinion and spark fruitful debate about key issues and developments in food and farming.

Contact

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www.foodethicscouncil.org

“Orthorexic society” and media narrations: advertising and food labelling

Guido Nicolosi

Introduction

In compliance with the matrix of the anthropological charter of human nature (in which biological, cultural, individual and social are *fused* inseparably), the *homo sapiens*’ relationship with food is complex and cannot be reduced to one-dimensional readings. There are three dimensions able to specify such complexity. Food is: substance of physical-biological maintenance; pharmacological remedy; ‘cultural object’ able to channel important symbolic meanings.

These three dimensions, in effect, are traceable to two fundamental spheres: a material (life, health, energy, etc.) and another immaterial (symbolic projection). Moreover, both may be tinted in an ambivalent way (and in a synchronic or diachronic sense) by conservative or innovative instances: protect the body (physical identity), the Self (symbolic identity) or innovate both.

The condition of food, its intimate interrelation with corporeality and the dense network of social and cultural practices connected to it, take up a key position in the definition of the

constituent characteristics of any age. Tradition and modernity, for instance, can also be deciphered through the reading of the destiny that these various socio-cultural orders reserve for food.

Tradition and modernity

In simple societies, he who eats absorbs and, at the same time, is absorbed by a complex culinary system: through incorporation one is incorporated in a collective order. In this sense, *gastronomy* is a rich system that contains a cosmological taxonomy and a broad ensemble of rules that refer directly to a precise Cultural Order. Namely, the culinary system expresses the representations, the beliefs and the practices of the subjects belonging to a certain culture (or a group within it). The culinary system, moreover, regulates the anxiety of incorporation, the risks of contamination, arbitrarily reducing the ambient of the edible (a variable ambient between cultures).

In modernity, instead, we speak of 'alimentary system' in reference to the socio-technical structures as a whole that give life to the complex food chain, from the 'harvest' stage until that of consumption, passing along the production-transformation-distribution line. The so-defined alimentary system is therefore one of the most emblematic examples of the radical transformations which we have undergone as a consequence of the most important processes of modernization: *space-time distancing*, *disembedding* and *reflexivity*.

Disembedding and the orthorexic society

Modernity has uprooted (lifted out) social relationships from their local contexts of interaction. At the same time, it has ensured their restructuring across indefinite space-time arcs. The most important examples of such disembedding processes are the so-called *expert systems*. By definition, these are abstract. The alimentary system is one of the most significant of these.

The disembedding of the expert system from the local context of interaction means that 'trust' in satisfying the expectations becomes essential for its proper working. Such confidence is both an article of 'faith' and a 'weak inductive knowledge' at the same time. This dual matrix is a very important aspect since it forms the basis of the agreed confidence in expert systems on a quasi-magical component (of symbolic nature) and on a pragmatic one (linked to observation and experience) simultaneously. We, that is, have confidence in expert systems because they are founded on specialist knowledge that is inaccessible and mysterious to us, but of which some elect few are the bearers (professionals, technicians). We consider them the highpriests (with their technical and legal apparatus and, above all, with their methods of monopolistic certification). But we also have confidence because we know by experience that generally such systems work and meet our expectations. This dual nature can cause significant dyscrasia: at times aircraft crash in spite of the engineers' reassurances; at times cows go mad despite the reassurances of medical veterinaries. These *défaillances*, also thanks to the resonance effect

caused by the increasing importance of the media (*reflexivity*), damage the confidence that is generally conceded to expert systems, creating a climate of more or less explicit anxiety that is hard to control.

I feel competent in suggesting that the socio-cultural importance of food makes the decline of confidence in the alimentary system one of the most important sources of crisis in contemporary society. This crisis in trust contributes significantly to define the characteristics of contemporary society as an 'orthorexic society'. Even if what I mean with such a concept is a very wide ranging phenomenon. Indeed, I define orthorexic society as a society obsessed by the problem of correct alimentation according to several meanings: dietetic (fitness), ethical (critical consumption), aesthetic (food-design), symbolic (slow food), psycho-pathological (alimentary disturbances), etc.

Now, the destiny of the orthorexic society is, in many respects, similar to what the neurotic subject will encounter: he is exposed to a perverse effect of an 'inflationist' nature. If, in fact, increased control reduces the effective risk, it also provokes an increase in the dread of an imagined risk, in an endless spiral.

Reembedding food? communication, information, advertising

The act of eating, founded on an action of incorporation of the external world, bears an exceptional symbolic charge. To a large extent, indeed, we are what we eat and this as true from the physical and biological point of view, as it is from the point of view of identity. If we

accept such a principle, we cannot fail to recognize that eating unknown artefacts, without a past and without social and ethical roots, as has happened with the advent of modernity, may mean losing the deepest sense of the self; and that to eat 'unnatural' foodstuffs means to symbolically de-naturalise oneself. In order to respond to such a profound feeling of alimentary uncertainty, two strategies have developed aimed at restoring an identity to food: labelling (and traceability, guarantee of origin, etc.) and brand name (advertising narration, etc). Both try to respond to human privation brought about by eating abstract objects (modern alimentary products) by realizing an artificial form of 'communicative re-embedding'.

That human beings by eating nourish themselves not only with food, but above all with signs, has been widely understood by the advertising world. For this reason, it seeks to construct communicative strategies around the produce-food based one on two specific modalities:

- the production of discursive strategies;
- brands.

Both modalities are targeted to give an identity to food so that the consumer can newly incorporate, with it, meanings.

It is interesting to find that, in the orthorexic society, advertising strategies perform a function in many respects analogous to that carried out by traceability. Both cases entail, through *narration*, giving back an identity to 'objects' that in time have become opaque and unrecognisable owing to cultural and social uprooting. Naturally, this regards various forms of narration. Traceability tries to tell an 'objective',

biographical story of a particular food. Advertising often tells a mythical or fantastic story (stories). But the research I have carried out on alimentary advertising in Italy demonstrate that the two strategies (one rational and the other symbolic) are often found together in a hybrid manner.

For example, the analysis of the weekly '*Gente*' shows that food advertising discourse centers on the invariable items (we can call it *identity* advertising). Tradition, nature, geographical and cultural origins are almost obsessively present in the texts examined. But is frequent the use of a technique that could be called 'information support'. It consists in a strategy half-way between *identity* and *informative* advertising, aimed at providing rational reassurance. Measurability, reference to concrete data, traceability, labelling, etc.

Then, diachronic analysis has showed three clear shifts. First, comparing 2000 with 1984 we conclude (a) that 'identity' advertising in 2000 is the prevailing narrative strategy, while the informative advertising is the most common in 1984 (before BSE scandal), and (b) 'hybrid' strategies pop up now and then. Secondly, comparing 2001 (after first BSE case in Italy) with 2000 we conclude (a) an important growth of the 'informative' advertising (parallel to further 'identity' growth), but (b) in a very interesting new shape: 'informative' advertising is now built more and more around the themes of *health care* or *food safety* (besides *fitness*), whereas in 1984 it referred to

the *energetic value* of products. Thirdly, comparing 2000-2001 with 1984 we found a staggering and widespread growth of *food safety branding*.

Conclusion

What, then, is to be done? Most likely, since a return to a 'pre-modern' stage is neither conceivable nor favourable, it will be necessary to learn to cohabit with new forms of negotiation between science and culture. The social sciences, in this sense, will have to carry out a fundamental role in guiding such a process of bringing the human and hard sciences closer together. This means, albeit with respecting and valorising scientific development, it is absolutely urgent to reintegrate agriculture and alimentation within a social, cultural, economic and environmental framework that might determine its sustainability in the long term.

Contact

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For a more complete argumentation of the theme interested readers should see the following text:

Nicolosi, Guido (2006) *Biotechnologies, alimentary fears and the orthorexic society*, in Tailoring Biotechnologies, Vol. 2, Issue 3, December 2006.

EurSafe update

EurSafe – Dutch Institutional Members Meeting

As a token of appreciation for its institutional members, EurSafe offers them not only a special invitation to the conferences, but also a special annual institutional members meeting. This year the Dutch meeting was held in the head offices of Rabobank Nederland, a longstanding institutional member. An international group of over 40 representatives from industry and academia gathered on January 15 for an interesting afternoon of discussions about ethics and economy.

After a short welcome by Jos Metz, representing the EurSafe board, Bart Jan Krouwel, Rabobank Director of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), extended a warm welcome to all participants and expressed his belief that CSR should be considered a necessary core business for any company that is willing to stay viable for the next decade. And – as he put it – good CSR is not idealism, but business.

The first speaker of the afternoon was prof. Michele Micheletti from Karlstad University. Her talk on Political Consumerism contained some very though-provoking elements. If corporations are getting more important than parliaments, than maybe it is indeed true that “our wallets are political”... Prof. Micheletti distinguishes three types of political consumerism (boycotting, boycotting and discursive political consumerism). These are ways in which ordinary consumers are trying to

overcome the responsibility problem in the contemporary globalised economy.

Her talk unleashed a lively debate on the economic actors' responsibility in the production chain and the consumers' behaviour, moderated by prof. Ruud Huirne from Wageningen UR.

Transparency was considered to be a key issue in the debate, within the production chain and towards the consumer, but also on the activist side.

The second speaker of the day, prof. Matthias Kaiser from the Norwegian National Committee for Research Ethics, talked about the ethical aspects of aquaculture, a topic that is almost as relevant in The Netherlands as in Norway. Not only is aquaculture interesting as such, he argued, but it is also a test case for ethics in science and technology and for sustainability management in general. Prof. Kaiser also referred to his 1993 Technology Assessment (TA) review which provides us with some very important lessons on TA. A pro-active attitude, the inclusion of a broad expertise and an explicit evaluation of values and uncertainties appear essential. With regard to aquaculture he concluded that its positive potential is certainly not realised and he urged producers to seek an open dialogue with the public.

Prof. Johan Verreth from Wageningen UR gave a quick overview of the Dutch aquaculture situation (which is even more high-tech than its Norwegian

counterpart). In his view the main bottleneck aquaculture is facing is the welfare issue because all other issues may well be solved technologically.

The discussion after these talks centered – among others – around naturalness and trust. Is there a reason why many people believe wild salmon is better than its farmed conspecifics (although 90% of “wild” salmon is escaped farmed salmon)? A – subconscious – connection between “wild” and “natural” might be the cause, but it is clear that not all natural products are necessarily safe or healthy. Moreover, why would farmed animals be less natural than others? A consensus grew that trust might be the key issue. Trust is a concept that refers to somebody's integrity. When it is possible to put responsibility with an individual (even only mentally) such as a farmer or a fisherman, than people might be more inclined to trust a product. If it is produced by a big company this individual responsibility is lost. In any case, as geographical differences seem to exist, this is something worth investigating further.

The last talk, held by Rabobank's Business Development Manager Hans Biemans, discussed the evolution and

implementation of the bank's CSR policy. He presented several real-life cases to the participants, who were then asked to comment on the ethical aspects. The group's decision was then compared to what Rabobank had decided. Very different case like the construction of marine ships, tomato greenhouses, irrigation systems and soy bean plantations were discussed. Time was short, but it quickly became apparent that taking decisions about ethical issues is quite difficult when operating in a highly competitive economic context. It is by discussing and comparing such cases, however, that one learns about the practical implementation of CSR (and ethical concerns in general).

We are certain that the discussion went on during the reception that Rabobank offered to the participants. Many interesting personal contacts have been made during this meeting, for the economic actors' representatives as well as the academics. This interesting and busy afternoon raises high expectations for next year's edition!

Stef Aerts
CWTE, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven,
Belgium

Conferences & courses

Conferences

Spring 2007

Mar 19-20

Title: What is the relationship between ethical theory and moral practice?

Organizer: Ethical Theory and Moral Practice Journal (10th Anniversary)

Place: Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Relevant information:

<http://www.integerleven.nl/>

Mar 20-23

Title: Improving Sustainability in Organic and Low Input Food Production Systems 3rd Organizer: International Congress of the European Integrated Project Quality Low Input Food (QLIF)

Place: Stuttgart, Germany

Relevant information:

<http://www.ecoweblog.elr.dk/>

Mar 27-29

Title: Globalisation: Bridging the Global Nature of Information and Communication Technology and the Local Nature of Human Beings

Organizer: ETHICOMP

Place: Tokyo (Japan)

Deadline: 1 September 2006

Relevant information:

<http://www.ccsr.cse.dmu.ac.uk/conferences/ethicomp/ethicomp2007/index2.html>

Apr 2-4

Title: 2007 BSAS Annual Conference

Organizer: British Society of Animal Science

Place: Southport, UK

Relevant information:

http://www.bsas.org.uk/Meetings_&_Workshops/

Apr 12-14

Title: Ethologie und Tierschutz - 10 Fachtagung zu Fragen von Verhaltenskunde, Tierhaltung und Tierschutz.

Place: Munich (Germany)

Relevant information: Prof. Dr. Dr. M. Erhard. e-mail:

jane.engl@tierhyg.vetmed.uni-muenchen.de

Apr 15-18

Title: Twelfth ASDA DISCOVER Conference on Food Animal Agriculture: Integrating Nutritional Management into Environmental Stewardship

Organizer: American Dairy Science Association

Place: Nashville, Indiana, USA

Relevant information:

http://www.adsa.org/discover/12th%20discover_2007.htm

Apr 22-25

Title: ECO 2007. 15th European Congress on Obesity

Organizer: European Association for the Studies of Obesity (EASO)

Place: Budapest, Hungary

Relevant information:

<http://www.eco2007.org/>

May 7-12

Title: Helsinki 2007 European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) Joint Sessions
Workshop 17: Social Justice: Ideal Theory, Non-ideal Circumstances.
Hosted by the Department of Political Science at the University of Helsinki
Organizer: European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR)
Place: Helsinki, Finland
Relevant information:

http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/events/joint_sessions/helsinki/index.aspx

May 9-11

Title: International Symposium on Functional Foods in Europe – International Developments in Science and Health Claims
Organizer: International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI)
Place: Malta

Relevant information:

<http://europe.ilsa.org/events/upcoming/functionalfoods.htm>

May 14-18

Title: ICGEB Biosafety. Introduction to Risk Assessment for the Deliberate Release of GMOs: Assisting Decision-making in a Biosafety Framework
Organizers: Biosafety Unit, ICGEB, Trieste, Italy

Place: Ca' Tron di Roncade, Italy

Relevant information:

http://www.icgeb.org/MEETINGS/CRS07/BSF1_14_18_May.pdf

May 21-25

Title: World Conference on Bioethics
Organizer: SIBI Sociedad Internacional de Bioética

Place: Gijón (Spain)

Relevant information:

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

e-mail: bioetica@sibi.org

May 24-26

Title: Earth System Governance: Theories and Strategies for Sustainability'. 7th Annual Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change
Organizer: Dept. of Environmental Policy Analysis of the Institute for Environmental Studies (IVM), Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam
Place: Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Relevant information:

<http://www.2007amsterdamconference.org/>

May 30- Jun 3

Changing Ecologies of Food and Agriculture: Building on 20 Years of Scholarship. Joint 2007 Annual Meeting of AFHVS and ASFS
Organizers: AFHVS and ASFS

Place: Victoria, British Columbia

Relevant information:

<http://www.afhvs.org/2007call.html>

Jun 1-3

Title: NanoBio - Ethische und soziale Herausforderungen der Nanobiotechnologie

Organizer: Evangelische Akademie Hofgeismar

Place: Germany

Relevant information:

<http://ekkw.de/akademie.hofgeismar/tagungen.htm#Juni>

e-mail:

Ev.Akademie.Hofgeismar@ekkw.de

Jun 11-12

Title: IX Annual Swedish Symposium on Biomedicine, Ethics and Society: Searching for the Animal of the Animal Ethics

Organizer: Centre for Bioethics at Karolinska Institutet & Uppsala University, Department of Public Health and Caring Sciences

Place: Seglarhotellet, Sandhamn (Stockholm archipelago)

Relevant information: Deadline for abstracts submission expired

<http://www.bioethics.uu.se/symposium/2007/>

e-mail: bioethics@bioethics.uu.se

Jun 11-14

Title: FELASA-ICLAS Joint Meeting 2007

Organizers: Federation of European Laboratory Animal Science Associations (FELASA) and International Council for Laboratory Animal Science (ICLAS)

Place: Cernobbio (CO) Italy

Relevant information:

<http://www.felasa-iclas2007.com/>

Jun 12-13

Title: 3rd Annual Obesity Europe Conference

Organizer: Epsilon Events Ltd

Places: Brussels, Belgium

http://www.epsilonevents.com/eps_current_event.asp?id=30&type=current

Jun 16-19

Title: ESHG 2007. European Human Genetics Conference

Organizer: European Society of Human Genetics

Place: Nice, France

Relevant information:

<http://www.eshg.org/eshg2007/index1.htm>

Summer 2007

Jul 3-6

Title: Animals and Society II.

Considering Animals

Organizers: Animals and Society Study Group (Australia) and the University of Tasmania

Place: Tasmania, Australia

Relevant information: Deadline for abstracts submission expired

<http://www.cdesign.com.au/animals2007/>

Jul 8-12

Title: American Society of Animal Science (ASAS) Joint Annual Meeting 2007 (with ADSA, PSA, AMPA)

Organizers: ASAS, ADSA, PSA, AMPA

Place: San Antonio, Texas, United States

Relevant information:

<http://adsa.psa.ampa.asas.org/meetings/2007/call.asp>

Jul 9-11

Title: The British Society for Ethical Theory 2007 Conference

Organizer: The British Society for Ethical Theory

Place: Bristol (UK)

Relevant information:

<http://www.bset.org.uk/conference.html>

Jul 10-13

Title: 10th European Nutrition Conference

Organizers: Federation of the European Nutrition Societies (FENS) and Union Française pour la Nutrition et l'Alimentation (UFNA)

Place: Paris, France

Relevant information:

<http://www.fens2007.org/04-preliminary/preliminary.asp>

Jul 23-27 and Sep 10-14

Title: Interdisciplinary Aspects of Nanobiotechnology

Organizer: Interdisciplinary institute TTN (technology theology natural sciences)

Place: Munich, Germany

Relevant information: Gernot Prütz, email gernot.pruetz@elkb.de

Call for papers: <http://www.ttn-institut.de/call.pdf>

Jul 30-Aug 3

Title: Applying Ethology to Animal and Ecosystem Management. 41st Congress of the International Society for Applied Ethology (ISAE)

Organizer: International Society for Applied Ethology (ISAE)

Place: Yucatan, Mexico

Deadline for abstracts submission expired

Relevant information:

<http://www.isae2007.com/>

Aug 12-16

Title: Transgenic Animal Research Conference V1

Organizer: UC Davis (Dept. of Animal Science and Biotechnology Program)

Place: Tahoe City, California

Deadline for submission of abstracts: 20 June 2007

Relevant information:

<http://www.cevs.ucdavis.edu/Cofred/Public/Aca/WebSec.cfm?confid=282&webid=1413>

Aug 20-24

Title: Mobilities, Vulnerabilities and Sustainabilities: New Questions and Challenges for Rural Europe. XX11 ESRS Congress

Organizer: European Society for Rural Sociology, Wageningen University

Place: Wageningen, the Netherlands

Deadline for final registration: 1 June 2007

Relevant information:

<http://www.esrs2007.nl/>

Aug 21-25

Title: 6th World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences

Deadline for submission of abstracts: 31 March 2007

Place: Tokyo, Japan

Relevant information:

<http://www.knt.co.jp/ec/2007/wc6>

Aug 26-29

Title: 58th Annual Meeting of the European Association of Animal Production (EAAP)

Organizer: European Association of Animal Production (EAAP)

Place: Dublin, Ireland

Deadline for submission of abstracts: 31 March 2007

Relevant information:

http://www.eaap2007.ie/reg_interest.htm

Sep 13-15

Title: EurSafe2007 - Sustainable Food Production and Ethics
Organiser: Department of Sustainable Agricultural Systems - University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences Vienna (BOKU), Institute of Animal Husbandry and Animal Welfare - University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna (VUW), Faculty of Life Sciences - University of Vienna, in cooperation with Austrian Scientists for Environmental Protection
Place: Biozentrum (UZA1), University of Vienna, Althanstrasse 14, A-1090 Vienna
Relevant information:
<http://www.nas.boku.ac.at/eursafe2007.html> e-mail: eursafe2007@boku.ac.at

Sep 13-15

Title: Bioethics in the Real World
Organizer: EACME
Place: Zurich (Switzerland)
Relevant information: Lehrstuhl für Biomedizinische Ethik
Ethik-Zentrum der Universität Zürich.
<http://www.ethik.unizh.ch/biomed/>
e-mail: biomed@ethik.unizh.ch

Sep 17-19

Title: 13th European Congress on Biotechnology
Organizer: European Federation of Biotechnology
Place: Barcelona, Spain
Relevant information:
<http://www.ecb13.eu/index.php/>

Sep 17-19

Title: World Conference on Research Integrity

Organizers: European Science Foundation (ESF) and US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Research Integrity (ORI)
Place: Lisbon, Portugal
Relevant information:
http://www.esf.org/esf_genericpage.php?section=10&language=0&genericpage=2575

Sep 23-26

Title: Harnessing Science for the Evolving Consumer: the Fit of Agricultural Biotechnology. The Annual Agricultural Biotechnology International Conference (ABIC)
Organizer: ABIC
Place: Alberta, Canada
Relevant information:
<http://www.abic.ca/abic2007/>

Sep 23-27

Title: 15th International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species
Organizer: ICAIS, hosted by the Institute for Inland Water Management and Waste Water Treatment (RIZA), the Netherlands
Place: Nijmegen, the Netherlands
Relevant information:
<http://www.icaais.org/>

Sep 24-28

Title: Workshop on Biosafety of GM Crops and the Evolution of Regulatory Frameworks: Issues and Challenges
Organizer: International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB)
Place: Minas Gerais, Brazil
Relevant information:
<http://www.icgeb.org/MEETINGS/CRS07/BRASept07.pdf>

Sep 27-28

Title: Expressions of Traditional Wisdom International Symposium
Organizers: Royal Academy for Overseas Sciences together with Royal Museum for Central-Africa and Royal Museums of Art and History of Belgium
Place: Brussels, Belgium
Deadline for abstracts submission expired
Relevant information:
<http://www.kaowarsom.be/>

Autumn 2007**Oct 10**

Title: 79th International Conference on Agriculture and Development (ICAD)
Organizer: ICAD steering committee, secretariat with KLV, the Netherlands
Place: Wageningen, the Netherlands
Relevant information: www.klv.nl

Oct 18-19

Title: The promises and challenges of the life sciences industry in central and Eastern Europe.
Organizer: INNOGEN and OSI in conjunction with PASOS
Place: Prague, Czech Republic
Relevant information: Farah Huzair (f.huzair@open.ac.uk), workshop organizer Peter Robbins (Innogen, the Open University, p.t.robbins@open.ac.uk), and Adrian Ionescu, OSI, Hungary (aionescu@osi.hu).

Oct 24-27

Title: Aquaculture Europe 2007: Competing Claims
Organizer: European Aquaculture Society
Place: Istanbul, Turkey
Relevant information:
<http://www.easonline.org/agenda/en/description.asp?id=384>

Courses**Spring 2007****Jun 4-8**

Title: Animal Ethics, PhD-course
Organizer: Finnish Research School for Animal Welfare and ProMidNord
Place: Helsinki, Finland

Deadline for registration:
April 20, 2007

Web-address:

http://www.mtkk.helsinki.fi/ecostudies/animal_ethics.htm

Further course information and registration: Finnish Research School for Animal Welfare, University of Helsinki, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
Anna Valros anna.valros@helsinki.fi
Satu Raussi satu.raussi@helsinki.fi

Publications

On Farm Monitoring of Pig Welfare by A. Velarde and R. Geers, (2007), Wageningen Academic Publishers), ISBN: 13-978-90-8686-025-8

Fishponds in farming systems, edited by: A.J. van der Zijpp, J.A.J. Verreth, Le Quang Tri, M.E.F. van Mensvoort, R.H. Bosma and M.C.M. Beveridge, (2007),

Wageningen Academic Publishers, ISBN: 90-8686-013-3, 978-90-8686-013-5

Intervention: Confronting the Real Risks of Genetic Engineering and Life on a Biotech Planet, by Denise Caruso, Hybrid Vigor Press, 2006, ISBN: 978-0-6151-3553-3

Funding

FP7: Seventh research framework programme

ERA-NET / ERA-NET Plus Call 2007

Identifier: FP7-ERANET-2007-RTD
Publication date: 22 December 2006
Budget: € 28 900 000
Deadline: 31 July 2007 at 17:00 (Brussels local time)
OJ Reference: [OJ C316 of 22 December 2006](#)
Specific Programme: [Cooperation]
Theme(s): [Energy] [Environment (including Climate Change)] [Coordination of Research Activities] [Health] [Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biotechnology] [Nanosciences, Nanotechnologies, Materials and new Production Technologies] [Socio-economic sciences and Humanities] [Transport (including Aeronautics)]
http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.CooperationDetailsCallPage&call_id=7

Socio-economic sciences & the humanities (SSH)

Identifier: FP7-SSH-2007-1
Publication date: 22 December 2006
Budget: € 58 500 000
Deadline(s): 10 May 2007 at 17:00 (Brussels local time)
29 November 2007 at 17:00 (Brussels local time) -
OJ Reference: [OJ C316 of 22 December 2006](#)
Specific Programme: [Cooperation]
Theme: [Socio-economic sciences and Humanities]
http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.CooperationDetailsCallPage&call_id=39

Environment (including Climate Change)

FP7-ENV-2007-1
Identifier: FP7-ENV-2007-1
Publication date: 22 December 2006
Budget: € 200 000 000
Deadline: 02 May 2007 at 17:00 (Brussels local time)
OJ Reference: [OJ C316 of 22 December 2006](#)

Specific Programme: [Cooperation]
Theme: [Environment (including
Climate Change)]

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.CooperationDetailsCallPage&call_id=6

Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biotechnology

[Preparation and Submission of Proposals](#) | [Information Package](#) | [Additional Documents](#) | [Get Support](#) | [Build Your Consortium](#)

General Call 1

Identifier: FP7-KBBE-2007-1

Publication date: 22 December 2006

Budget: € 192 090 000

Deadline: 02 May 2007 at 17:00

(Brussels local time)

OJ Reference: [OJ C316 of 22 December 2006](#)

Specific Programme: [Cooperation]

Theme: [Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biotechnology]

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.CooperationDetailsCallPage&call_id=16

Call for proposals for ERC Starting Independent Researcher Grant

Identifier: ERC-2007-StG

Publication date: 22 December 2006

Budget: € 289 500 000

Deadline(s): 25 April 2007 at 17:00

(Brussels local time)

17 September 2007 at 17:00 (Brussels local time) -

OJ Reference: [OJ C316 of 22 December 2006](#)

Specific Programme: [Ideas]

Theme: [ERC]

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.IdeasDetailsCallPage&call_id=3

Intra-European Fellowships for Career Development

Identifier: FP7-PEOPLE-2007-2-1-IEF

Publication date: 28 February 2007

Budget: € 72 000 000

Deadline: 14 August 2007 at 17:00

(Brussels local time)

OJ Reference: [OJ C045 of 28 February 2007](#)

Specific Programme: [People]

Theme: [PEOPLE]

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.PeopleDetailsCallPage&call_id=44

International Outgoing Fellowships for Career Development

Identifier: FP7-PEOPLE-2007-4-1-IOF

Publication date: 28 February 2007

Budget: € 24 000 000

Deadline: 14 August 2007 at 17:00

(Brussels local time)

OJ Reference: [OJ C045 of 28 February 2007](#)

Specific Programme: [People]

Theme: [PEOPLE]

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.PeopleDetailsCallPage&call_id=45

International Incoming Fellowships

Identifier: FP7-PEOPLE-2007-4-2-IIF

Publication date: 28 February 2007

Budget: € 24 000 000

Deadline: 14 August 2007 at 17:00

(Brussels local time)

OJ Reference: [OJ C045 of 28 February 2007](#)

Specific Programme: [People]

Theme: [PEOPLE]

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.PeopleDetailsCallPage&call_id=46

Marie Curie Industry-Academia Partnerships and Pathways

Identifier: FP7-PEOPLE-2007-3-1-IAPP

Publication date: 28 February 2007

Budget: € 38 400 000

Deadline: 31 May 2007 at 17:00

(Brussels local time)

OJ Reference: [OJ C045 of 28 February 2007](#)

Specific Programme: [People]

Theme: [PEOPLE]

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.PeopleDetailsCallPage&call_id=43

Marie Curie Initial Training Networks

Identifier: FP7-PEOPLE-2007-1-1-ITN

Publication date: 22 December 2006

Budget: € 240 000 000

Deadline(s): 07 May 2007 at 17:00

(Brussels local time)

25 September 2007 at 17:00 (Brussels local time) -

OJ Reference: [OJ C316 of 22 December 2006](#)

Specific Programme: [People]

Theme: [PEOPLE]

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.PeopleDetailsCallPage&call_id=21

European Reintegration Grants (ERG)

Identifier: FP7-PEOPLE-2007-2-2-ERG

Publication date: 22 December 2006

Budget: € 9 500 000

Deadline(s): 25 April 2007 at 17:00

(Brussels local time)

17 October 2007 at 17:00 (Brussels local time) -

OJ Reference: [OJ C316 of 22 December 2006](#)

Specific Programme: [People]

Theme: [PEOPLE]

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.PeopleDetailsCallPage&call_id=22

International Reintegration Grants (IRG)

Identifier: FP7-PEOPLE-2007-4-3-IRG

Publication date: 22 December 2006

Budget: € 14 500 000

Deadline(s): 25 April 2007 at 17:00

(Brussels local time)

17 October 2007 at 17:00 (Brussels local time) -

OJ Reference: [OJ C316 of 22 December 2006](#)

Specific Programme: [People]

Theme: [PEOPLE]

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.PeopleDetailsCallPage&call_id=23

Science in Society

Identifier: FP7-SCIENCE-IN-SOCIETY-2007-1

Publication date: 22 December 2006

Budget: € 21 798 000

Deadline: 23 May 2007 at 17:00

(Brussels local time)

OJ Reference: [OJ C316 of 22 December 2006](#)

Specific Programme: [Capacities]

Theme: [Science in Society]

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.CapacitiesDetailsCallPage&call_id=33

Regions of Knowledge: Analysis, mentoring and integration of research actors

Identifier: FP7-REGIONS-2007-1

Publication date: 22 December 2006

Budget: € 8 800 000

Deadline: 24 April 2007 at 17:00

(Brussels local time)

OJ Reference: [OJ C316 of 22 December 2006](#)

Specific Programme: [Capacities]
Theme: [Regions of Knowledge]
http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.CapacitiesDetailsCallPage&call_id=26

NordForsk funding

NordForsk will hand out more than 100 million NOK (more than 12 million Euro) in Nordic research grants over the next three years. All academic fields are eligible for funding of activities such as networks, researcher training courses and seed money.

The open calls concern funding for:

- researcher networks
- networks of national centres of excellence
- networks of national research schools
- research training courses

Deadline: 2nd April 2007. Next application deadline is 17 September 2007.

e-link:

<http://www.nordforsk.org/ennyhet.cfm?id=599&lid=3>

Contact

Executive secretariat

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Deadline for the next issue: May 15, 2007