



EurSafe News

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Dear EurSafe members,



I am delighted to introduce you to the contributors to the September 2021 issue of the newsletter. They are Dr. Teea Kortetmäki, Dr. Ari Paloviita, Prof. Tiina Silvasti, Dr. Antti Puupponen (Food systems' vulnerability to the COVID-19 pandemic), Prof. Amaia Inza-Bartolomé (Food insecurity, deepened poverty and ethics after COVID-19), Dr. Clemens Driessen (Living with animals through disastrous times), Dr. Jes Lynning Harfeld (Digital prisons and playgrounds – thinking about teaching in a post-COVID-19 world), Emnée van den Brandeler, a 2021 Vonne Lund Prize Winner (The political turn of animal ethics discourses – The need for a virtue ethical approach) and Prof. Paul B. Thompson, the 2021 EurSafe Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient. Many of the authors have been beacons to our EurSafe community and we were also fortunate to listen in on some of their presentations during the Fribourg congress.

The first four contributions were invited to respond to the theme of this issue, 'Recalibrating Disaster Imaginaries Post-Covid-19'. As the pandemic continues to disrupt lives and livelihoods across food and agriculture value chains and we try to return to some sense of nor-



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mality, the first four contributions underscore our shared vulnerability, and the need for solidarity, humanity and resilience. Dr. Teea Kortetmäki, Dr. Ari Paloviita, Prof. Tiina Silvasti, Dr. Antti Puupponen's poignant essay challenges us to consider the direct and indirect impacts of a novel pandemic on fragile food systems. The 'cornerstones for food system resilience', highlighted through their Finnish case study, lay the foundation for the labor that must be done to bring everyone along during crisis times. Prof. Amaia Inza-Bartolomé's deeply insightful essay shines a light on the relationship between the right to food, food aid resources and the responsibilities of the State during the pandemic. As she argues, "a culture that normalizes destitution and legitimizes personal generosity as responses to the great social and economic dislocation" trades on "freedom of choice and inherent human dignity."

In his timely essay, Dr. Clemens Driessen deftly explores the contours of interspecies vulnerability and solidarity through his discussion regarding the emerging field of animal disaster management, in many cases, a consequence of "normal accidents that are totally foreseeable and at least in part still preventable." He urges that we "see the systemic and interconnected nature of our food system" lest futility prevails in the wake of more calamities in the offing. Dr. Jes Harfeld's contribution is particularly inspiring for he captures what a deep commitment to our students' learning and success in times of hardship can look like. His personal and introspective journey involving novel communication technologies highlight how dedication and innovations in pedagogy can go a long way in building and sustaining community and a positive experience for our students; a window to what lies ahead in post-SARS-CoV-2 pedagogy of future EurSafe scholars and global citizens.

Rounding off the contributions for this issue are two special essays. In her essay, a 2021 Vonne Lund Prize Winner, Emnée van den Brandeler, reveals some novel blueprints and promising research trajectories to address some perennial problems concerning our relationship to animals. Her outlook is mediated by virtue ethics and she takes on more entrenched positions, citing the prowess of virtue ethics to engender much needed "reflect[ion] on our collective responsibility."

Prof. Paul Thompson's work has very likely touched our own in some way. As one of the progenitors of agricultural and food ethics, he has been a role model, mentor and friend to many of us – introducing us to new vistas of inquiry through his learned philosophical perspective. Prof. Thompson was conferred the 2021 EurSafe Lifetime Achievement Award at our Fribourg congress. In inviting us to look ahead, Prof. Thompson challenges the readership to be cognizant of and be ready to tackle 'two intellectual challenges' afoot and the 'tension' that lies between them. As in many of his writings, he reminds us once again of the special nature of agriculture and the people behind it benefiting the rest of us. He calls on us in the academy and throughout the value chain to act on a 'deeply ingrained sense of ethical responsibility and moral purpose' to lift those who are often invisible in the process of feeding the multitude.

Prof. Franck Meijboom's update on behalf of the Executive Board notes a changing of the guard in terms of Board leadership and underscores what a successful virtual conference we had thanks to the efforts of our hosts from the University of Fribourg. He invites us to look ahead to our next congress in Edinburgh, themed 'Transforming Food Systems'.

With great sadness we inform you of the passing away of former EurSafe treasurer Jos Metz on September 8. At the end of this newsletter you will find an obituary, commemorating his great service to our society.

I hope that the contributions in this issue will spur your curiosity, inspire you to reach out to the EurSafe community for both scholarly stimulation and fellowship, and propel you to engage in more impactful and excellent work, as we recalibrate our lives and remake a post-Covid-19 world together.

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Food systems' vulnerability to the COVID-19 pandemic

Dr. Teea Kortetmäki, Dr. Ari Paloviita,
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From left to right: Tiina Silvasti, Ari Paloviita, Teea Kortetmäki, and Antti Puupponen

The vulnerability of food systems needs attention by the research community and policy makers in order to secure food system functioning and food security in times of crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed these questions to the forefront due to exceptional circumstances faced by individuals, and in some cases, food system actors. In this piece, we reflect upon the impacts of the pandemic on food system vulnerability and food security in Europe, and especially in Finland. Our examination is framed our research work-based vulnerability matrix, which is an assessment tool that helps policymakers identify vulnerabilities at the different levels (e.g., local, regional, national, EU-wide) of food systems from local to EU-wide.



The main purpose of any food system is to provide food security: the possibility of all people, at all times, to access food that meets their dietary needs for an active and healthy human life including to culturally appropriate foods. Food systems are, however, vulnerable to large-scale changes and crises, such as environmental changes, governmental actions, economic trends, socio-political conflicts – and pandemics. These vulnerability drivers impact, both separately and synergistically, food system activities, supply chains, and the operating environment (ecosystems and technological and infrastructural systems) of the food system. This, in turn, impacts the prospects of various human groups to achieve food security. The vulnerability of a food system depends on the nature and extent of the harmful exposure and the given system's adaptive capacities (Paloviita et al., 2017).

To identify the drivers of food system vulnerabilities and their potential impacts, the Food system studies group in the University of Jyväskylä created and published the vulnerability matrix for food system evaluation (Paloviita et al., 2016). While the initial matrix was grounded and its application was tested in the context of the Finnish food system, its general structure makes it well suited

to address vulnerabilities in the industrialised food systems more generally. At the moment of conducting the research in 2014-2015, neither the interviewed food system experts nor the public food policy documents were able to anticipate a new kind of driver for food system disruptions: a global pandemic. The new version, updated with the pandemic-related driver, is represented here as a tool for public and private sector decision-makers to assess vulnerabilities in any food system to increase food system resilience. Below, we draw on the matrix and reflect upon the ways in which many European food systems were vulnerable to different direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic.

Global crises and food system vulnerabilities

The modern, strongly networked, global, and industrialised food system has resulted in many changes to food production, distribution, retail, and consumption; one of these changes is the more widespread and rapid spread of many crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The industrialised scale of animal production, in combination with human-wild animal encounters, increases risks for the rapid spread of diseases. While the origins of the present pandemic may

never be confirmed with certainty, most scientists focused on the matter believe it was transmitted from wild animals to humans, perhaps through one of the Chinese 'wet markets' (that at least can potentially vector several other zoonotic diseases; Xiao et al. 2021).

Global crises impact on trade quickly. The dependence of agricultural production on input imports – be they fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides and other chemicals, fossil fuels, seeds, or feed – makes primary production vulnerable to disruptions in the global trade of these goods. While the impact of the pandemic was much greater for human movement than the transport of various goods, supply chain disruptions at the sites of production test resilience throughout supply chains. The pandemic exemplified, according to our (scientifically unverified) observations about the Finnish food system actors' responses to related stresses, that sufficient diversity and occasional redundancy – instead of thorough optimisation – in supply chains are important sources of resilience to maintain the stability of supply.

The impacts of the pandemic are both direct and indirect. Direct impacts manifest when people get ill or when their quarantine prevents them from going to work; the quickly spreading pandemic can make such impacts sudden and large-scale, and particularly harmful to small-scale food industry companies and small family farms. Indirect impacts, in turn, result from the public policies that are established to restrain the spread of the pandemic. Many European countries have applied lockdown policies (with varying strictness) in one or several occasions during the pandemic. The restaurant and catering sector has turned out to be one of the most vulnerable sectors in times of COVID-19 due to the established restrictions, and the economic hardships in the business sector will have long term impacts. Even Finland, where the harshest lockdown policies have been less expansive, witnessed a drastic collapse in restaurant sales due to short-term full closures and continuous restrictions, in addition to the avoidance of restaurants by cautious consumers. These indirect impacts turned out to have further indirect impacts, when restaurants could have thrived in the rise of domestic tourism in early Summer 2021 yet a significant amount of restaurant workers

had swapped their jobs and it became difficult to find a skilful workforce to respond to increasing demand.

Other labour-intensive food system activities are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 impacts. For example, the dependence of fruit and vegetable production on a seasonal workforce made these sectors prone to harvest problems, which are further worsened by the brevity of the harvest season. This risks food security even in wealthy countries by creating instability in fresh food supply and price increase risks – in addition to which the food waste that could have been avoided with sufficient workforce is regrettable. The rapid spread of the virus, especially in small lodging facilities of low-paid seasonal workers, has made seasonal farm work highly risky for non-vaccinated people. For example, close to 60 % of the foreign seasonal berry pickers in a Finnish wild berry company were tested COVID-19 positive in August 2021 after having been in work for a few days, although all had previously tested negative in their country of departure.

The pandemic also aggravated the challenges of food insecurity prone groups and created new vulnerability to food insecurity. Low-income households relying on frequent food charity were particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in the provision of charity organisations whose operations or food resources were unexpectedly restricted by regulations, labour issues, or the risk minimising behaviour of food donors. In Finland, the status and importance of school meals also arose to public discussion. The Finnish school meal scheme offers free and nutritionally adequate warm lunch to all children in nursery school and basic education, at least in normal conditions – when school was forced to distance education, bafflement about how to meet the demands of the law about the free lunch every school day for children at home yielded a diversity of solutions in municipalities. What was learnt was that the school meal was felt really important by families who became concerned about providing well-balanced food for the adolescents (amongst all other COVID-19-related challenges and chaos). The ill and elderly in high-risk groups also suffered from an impaired access to food when simple mundane activities such as going grocery shopping be-

	Vulnerability drivers	Natural systems				Vulnerable groups				Food supply chains				Food system activities				Infrastr. systems													
Natural drivers	Hydrometeorological drivers	*		*							*			*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*									
	Loss of biodiversity and natural resources														*																
	Plant and animal diseases										*	*	*	*					*				*								
Anthropog.	Technical disruptions										*		*							*			*	*							
	Land use			*																*				*	*						
	Environmental pollution	*	*																*												
Governance	Pandemics / actions on them	To be studied																													
	Public food policy		*				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			
	Private food policy		*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*		*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			
Other socio-economic	Disruption of imports																*		*					*	*						
	Social inequality									*		*												*	*						
	Consumption patterns	*	*		*			*		*		*	*				*		*				*	*	*	*					
	War and conflict					*						*	*				*	*					*	*		*					
	Terrorism and fraud														*			*													
		Water system	Air	Biophysical system	Animal welfare	Natural environment	Farmers	SME entrepreneurs	Employees	Poor	Children	Elders	Rural population	Population in general	Milk &dairy	Meat	Commodity crop	Fruit & vegetable	Fish	Local food	Organic food	Supply chain in general	Input production	Agriculture	Processing & manufact.	Distribution	Retailing	Consumption	Food system in general	Social infrastructure	Communication system

come risky. The rapid development of alternative food retail and restaurant meal supply solutions has provided relief both for risk-prone customers and food enterprises. As an example, previously marginal online grocery shopping grew threefold in Finland in 2020. It remains to be seen, which of the innovations will endure over the state of the pandemic.

The pandemic is a test of its kind for the food systems and should be, we hope, examined from the viewpoint of vulnerability against harder-hitting crises. The vulnerability matrix can be used systematically to identify the various drivers and targets of vulnerability, including to identify the pain spots that will need attention today to make sustainable and resilient food policies for tomorrow.

The cornerstones for food system resilience

It is impossible to prevent or fully anticipate crises. Therefore, resilience is crucial for food systems to be sustainable. The resilience, ability to withstand disruptions, is important for food

security in exceptional times. Improved resilience makes food system risks more manageable and aids recovery after challenging times.

The first of the three cornerstones of food system resilience, our studies suggest, is the diversity of food systems. The COVID-19 demonstrated the advantages of a sufficiently decentralised production system: this also distributes the risks wider. Diversification in food systems can be promoted, among other means, by diversifying the agricultural systems and crops, the capacity for more versatile processing in food industry facilities, diverse supply chains and sources and by increasing the capacities of people to acquire adequate food by different means without full dependence on a single, vulnerable system (such as daily shopping or food ordering).

The second cornerstone for food system resilience relates to choices between efficiency and resilience. An efficiency-optimised supply chain that relies on punctual identical deliveries and enables minimal stocking in grocery stores is resource efficient yet highly vulnerable to external disrup-

tions. The importance of accepting some level of redundancy is demonstrated in the face of crises. This also implies that it is important to take care of the viability of primary production in a variety of locations. The cost efficiency demands from globalising markets are not good for the resilience in this sense. The need for increased resource wisdom in food systems cannot come at the cost of high vulnerability.

The third cornerstone is food justice. Crises will impact different groups and communities in highly differentiated ways that cannot be fully predicted. The distinctive vulnerabilities of people in different life situations need attention, which also draws attention back to the capacity building of individuals for a resilient food citizenship. Taking the vulnerability of food systems in industrialised countries seriously is a matter of respecting and protecting human rights: the right to safe and healthy food at all times, the right to livelihoods, and the right to adequate environment. Therefore, just policies are needed in order to meet the challenge of vulnerability.

The increasing likelihood of global environmental changes is a great challenge for our food systems. Related impacts will in many cases emerge either too slowly to be noticed, as in the case of increasing temperatures, or too quickly to be anticipated, as in the case of weather extremes. Climate change, biodiversity loss, nutrient flow disruptions, pollinator declines, and soil fertility decline will continue to test and threaten food security and even the high-tech food systems. These changes will in future test the resilience of food systems. The evident risk is that without anticipa-

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tion and the building of long-term adaptive capacities, the key function of food systems will become survival from one disruption to another: attention to short-term coping capacities begins to dominate food system adaptation planning at the cost of neglecting long-term adaptive capacities (cf. Paloviita et al., 2017). This would undermine prospects for creating more sustainable food systems. Our studies suggest that taking a more anticipatory outlook with a view to vulnerabilities is central in building future food systems and food security.

Food insecurity, deepened poverty and ethics after COVID-19

Prof. Amaia Inza-Bartolomé



There is a stark contrast if we consider that there is overproduction in advanced societies, yet surplus food is supplied to people in need through charitable resources. Part of the response to hunger due to deepened poverty after the 2008 economic

crisis has been the reinforcement of charitable food aid resources. And the context to this phenomenon has been Welfare State retrenchment and austerity measures. As a consequence, the Welfare State's operational space is reduced, as well as its capacity to respond to collective problems.

The prevalence of household food insecurity is relatively high in some developed countries, ranging from 8 to 20% of the population, and poses a serious public health concern in rich countries with developed economies (Pollard and Booth, 2019). The pandemic caused by COVID-19 has had a great impact on existing inequalities and structural weaknesses, and has greatly affected those who are already poor or at high risk of being so (EAPN, 2020).

Food aid is 'the phenomenon where non-governmental organizations provide free food to people who are living in poor social and economic situations' (Salonen et al, 2018). The growing public discourse in favour of them is normalising, rendering natural their presence and social function (Perry et al. 2016). Ronson and Caraher (2016: 81) use Seibel's (1996) 'successful failures' concept to explain the strength these resources are acquiring. There are problems that are of special interest to voluntary organizations, eager to complete spaces where



the State and the market may have failed. These organizations proliferate without anyone stressing that the results do not meet the needs of those they were intended to help, because it is believed that certain organizations do the best they can under difficult conditions, and their voluntary nature makes criticism socially unacceptable. However, it is important to underline that people who depend upon food aid lose part of their freedom of choice and inherent human dignity, because they have to accept donated food irrespective of their needs and preferences (Riches and Silvasti, 2014b: 9), and the social stigma and the sensation of impotence associated with poverty is exacerbated by that dependence (Tarasuk and MacLean, 1990: 332). For some, this can lead to feelings of embarrassment, shame, fear and humiliation (Middleton et al, 2018: 707). It must be remembered that in high income countries, as Dowler and O'Connor (2012: 45) have stated,

"Food security implies that people have sufficient money to purchase the food they want to eat, to meet social as well as health and nutritional norms; that this money is not absorbed in other expenditure demands (rent, fuel, debt repayment, etc.); that people can reach shops or markets which stock appropriate food at affordable prices, or they can grow or otherwise obtain food in ways which are dignified and in keeping with social norms."

The right to food must be understood as a legal obligation (Riches y Silvasti, 2014b, p.14), and it is based on an *a priori* commitment to the value of human dignity and makes the individual an agent of change in a way that enables him or her to hold governments accountable and to seek redress for violations of his or her rights (Mechlem, 2004: 631). Several studies (Riches, 1997; Riches and Silvasti, 2014a) have argued that hunger in high-income countries could not be caused by the lack of provision of sufficient food and nutrients, but rather is a matter of distributive justice and human rights. According to Janet Poppendieck (1999), the proliferation of charity contributes to the failure of society to deal with poverty, and creates a culture that normalizes destitution and legitimizes personal generosity as responses to the great social and economic dislocation.

According to the theories of Mitchell (2010), I defend here that food aid resources have become part of the *shadow state voluntary institutions*, helping to consolidate the original economic policies of neoliberalism in a hegemonic process. Third sector organizations are playing an important role in the production and supply of public goods, discharge public responsibilities and transform the caring role of the State in society (Evans and Shields 2000). The current focus distracts attention away from the ineffectiveness of government policies and responsibilities in addressing the social determinants of food insecurity, and depoliticises hunger (Silvasti and Riches, 2014).

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The status that charitable food aid resources have attained and the loss of responsibility by the Welfare State for the right to food undermines the latter doubly. In a first step, retrenchment and austerity reduce its operational space, which weakens it in its functions in the face of food insecurity. In a second step, the effect of charitable food aid resources undermines the idea about its redistributive function, which has been a basis for its legitimacy. The function of these resources is uncritically accepted and they help overlook the right to food for all people, as well as a decent way to get it.

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paper

Living with animals through disastrous times

Dr. Clemens Driessen



We are living in disastrous times. On top of our global pandemic, fire seasons and flood seasons seem to melt into each other; with little hope this string of disasters will abate soon, unless urgent (climate) action is taken. By now it seems innumerable disasters ago, but after last year's Australian climate fires, a lady quenching the thirst of a half-scorched Koala with bottled water was an image that stuck with me. This image highlights the human urge to care for animals who suffer from disaster, as well as the limits that this urge can achieve under existing and emerging conditions. How to think of the plight of animals in the face of disasters? I will argue in this brief essay that the various responses to caring for animals under these conditions are not just important, but also tell us more generally about human-animal relations in what starts to seem like the disastrocene. The various apparent urges to care for animals under exceptional, dire conditions also indicate the potential for more radical and systemic changes in our relations with animal lives.

Animal ethics that explores extreme situations has often been thought in terms of a hypothetical house fire or lifeboat, in which a dilemma is presented between saving a human or saving an animal, often a dog (Bailey 2009). A condition that seems designed to probe how people, 'in the end', would always be reasonable and anthropocentric. Human rights surely trump animal

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rights? But as and De Paula Vieira and Anthony (2021) explain, disasters are more messy than academic lifeboat scenarios. Framing this primarily in terms of a dilemma between humans and animals, is not just unproductive but disingenuous as a response to the situation we face. Moreover, I will argue, it doesn't reflect actual human responses to animals in disasters outside of hypothetical lifeboat scenarios.

One thing we can learn from looking at animals in disasters is that in moments of crisis perhaps surprising non-anthropocentric intuitions emerge. Whenever there is a disaster, news items show people risking their lives to save animals. For example, people improvising ways to rescue horses stuck in barbed wire during a flood, people staying home to stay with their pets or farm animals against evacuation orders, and rescue workers that hate to leave animals behind. This could be taken as still quite anthropocentric. With animal species other than pets or charismatic wildlife, there does not appear to be a dilemma or even the need to argue in terms of a state of exception. When covid-19 was found on mink farms in Denmark and the Netherlands, this resulted in instant culling for all animals.

So, what to make of human relations with (specifically those) animals that are caught up in our food

system in times of disaster? In the case of farmed animals, there also seems to be a broad intuition to care for them in exceptional situations. When a truck full of pigs or cows crashes on its way to the slaughterhouse and the news item mentions the number of pigs that survived the crash, this could be seen to reflect a kind of cognitive dissonance: if the truck did not crash, all animals would have been dead, destined to be killed by slaughter. But people generally do seem to care when faced with animals in moments of unexpected distress. The exceptional situation creates perhaps a moment of solidarity, of being a crash victim.

After the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster, a farmer was interviewed who went back into the radiation contaminated zone as he couldn't bear the thought his animals would starve and not be cared for. People care about animals in times of disaster, many farmers also deeply care for their livestock. At the same time, they are confronted with what, following Perrow (1984), we can call 'normal accidents', the expected outcomes of complicated systems with risks built into them in a way that they are bound to go awry. For instance, in the Netherlands, over the last 10 years, up to two million farmed animals died in 'barn fires'. These fires and their devastating effects are the outcome of lack of maintenance and the low-cost effectiveness of installing automated fire extin-

guishers. The economy of intensive farming prevents farmers to prepare for common accidents. Stoddard and Hovorka (2019) describe how industrial pig farms in North Carolina are operated in flood plains that are bound to be inundated. While pigs have been found to be able to rescue themselves when given the chance, even supported to survive by joining bands of feral pigs, the prohibition of letting pigs go feral requires them to be killed or to be forced to drown while confined. Their detailed account describes also the emotional toll these events have on farmers and farm workers, emphasizing the shared vulnerability and suffering of both farmers and pigs under predictable disasters.

Also in the US, there's an active struggle by veterinarians, such as Crystal Heath, who defy powerful interests by protesting against the policy of recommending 'ventilation shutdown' as a 'depopulation guideline' (www.vavsd.org) for mass killing of chickens and pigs, which involves a slow death by overheating or suffocation that can take hours. Presented as a measure of last resort, for instance, when faced with zoonosis outbreaks, the practice has become more common. These types of outcomes of economic logics of intensive farming lead to extreme suffering and death under increasingly unavoidable and predictable conditions. However, the strange thing about worrying over animals and disasters is that for many animals, everyday life has for quite some decades been a constant disaster. Rapidly growing broilers commonly unable to carry their own breast weight aren't doing totally fine when there's sprinklers installed. Intensively farmed pigs when they are not flooded are still suffering from unbearable ammonia stench.

How is it that we do care for animals in moments when we conspicuously share vulnerability in ways that produce a sense of solidarity and desire to save them. Whereas on any other day most people still seem fine with letting them suffer in the most appalling conditions, in long haul transports, when calves are separated from their mothers? So instead of extending the norms of normality to exceptional moments – could acknowledging our urge to – sometimes heroically – care for animals in extraordinary situations help to radically re-ex-

amine existing practices? The moral questions around animals in disasters are then not so much about establishing universal norms by which people generally would need to abide. Instead, we could do more to highlight the affective engagement in a moment faced with disaster and the transspecies solidarities that (potentially) emerge therewith.

With Rebecca Solnit (2010), we should not model moral responses to disasters on heroic individuals rising to the occasion as if in a disaster action movie. But instead, we can learn from the ways in which communities come together in solidarity and work collectively towards creative, locally informed responses driven by a sense of purpose and meaning, to respond to the clear moral demands of a disaster situation. Afterwards, rather than (just) celebrate individual heroic feats, we should hold people and institutions to account who failed to adequately prepare for what was long known to be coming our way. What the examples above indicate is that these experiences of meaning are not just produced in human communities coming together, but that we can see this as a more-than-human experience of shared vulnerability and sticking together.

Yes, lofty ideals, arguably drawing on broad experiences of communities in times of disaster. But how to come together on these issues in highly polarized political landscapes, in which interests compete and people's conceptions of what is at stake may widely diverge? There is one prospective occasion that seems to have generated solidarity between people across wildly different metaphysical positions, seemingly living in different worlds, while coming together in caring for animals. Ten years ago, a web platform was launched that connects Christians who believe in the second coming with non-believers who commit to saving the pets of those that have gone off to heaven, which led to the headline 'Rapture Pet Care Takes Care of Your Pets After the Apocalypse' (www.ripleys.com/weird-news/rapture-pet-care).

For only \$10 USD, the platform brings together someone from a local area that would come to take care of household animals of believers. Now we could be cynical, about people trying to profit

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from the beliefs of others, or about making fun of religious people. But what we could also take this to show is that caring about animals and the active planning for future events can make for a common ground between people of wildly different understandings of reality. In this way disasters and preparing for them can make for moments of sometimes heroic acts, for collective mourning, for the shaping of community and the sharing of affective relations. When preparing for disaster, it is important to extend our preparations beyond a limited and isolated sense of the human, thought of as in conflict with the interests of nonhuman animals.

Let's face it, through fossil fuel production, intensive farming and deforestation, we are rapidly destroying the world for both humans and animals. Why pretend the situation is as if humans and animals are opposing interests or somehow make for a 'dilemma' between who we can save, when already a deadly mix of fire/flood/drought/storms

is producing a constant state of disaster? Unless we act as if our house is on fire – requiring radical change starting today – we will not need to have dilemmas over saving either humans, or animals, but lose both.

When we realize that these are not occasional unforeseen events that require certain measures that normally we would avoid – but normal accidents that are totally foreseeable and at least in part still preventable. If you love koalas, don't just go rescue them with bottled water – itself signifying the fossil-fuel intensive commercial commodification of a public good – but tell your political representative and corporate leaders to stop pumping oil and digging coal, and work to reduce GHG emissions from livestock farming. This may be strange calls in a newsletter on agricultural and food ethics, but unless we start to see the systemic and interconnected nature of our food system and an unabating string of predictable disasters, responding to an endless stream of disasters may start to feel futile and unproductive.

This is a reworked version of a response to Andreia de Paula Vieira and Raymond Anthony's constructive and thought provoking chapter offering guidelines for mitigating harms to farm animals under disasters referred to in the reference list, and of a paper presented online at a session on animals and disasters organized by Charlotte Blattner, Kathrin Hermann and Eva Meijer (animalsclimatehealth.com/session-3).

paper

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Digital prisons and playgrounds

Thinking about teaching in a post-COVID-19 world

Dr. Jes Lynning Harfeld



On March 11, 2020, when the staff at Aalborg University were advised that they should not show up to campus the next day, none of us foresaw the immense impact on teaching that would develop during the next year and a half.

It is difficult to exaggerate the frantic and, frankly, desperate attempts at 'going online and digital' during the first part of 2020, especially for those of us who are perhaps more comfortable in front of a blackboard with a piece of chalk in our hand when it comes to teaching. The learning curve has been steep and at times, for many, simply too steep to scale in any meaningful way. However, even the most blackboard enthusiastic teachers have come away from pandemic online activities with new knowledge and new possibilities.

A few days ago, I taught in-person for the first time this fall, and this modality will, virus willing, be the norm for the rest of 2021 and going forward. So, what now? What are we to do with our new skills, our new knowledge, and our new tools? In the following I will reflect upon some approaches and a few concrete examples that I have worked with during the last year and a half. I will, especially, focus on those things that we might consider keeping – even when the pandemic does not force us to.

There are three reasons that we should all consider such questions. 1) First of all, the unstoppable tidal wave of digital and online learning tools and approaches was already upon us before the pandemic. The COVID-19 situation merely made the force of this wave much more imminent and all encompass-

ing. 2) Related to the first point, the management of universities and other teaching institutions were already working on vastly expanding the digital and online aspects of their course selections. And now, seeing the many new possibilities and experiences that have emerged during ‘pandemic teaching,’ management will want to keep as many of these new teaching methods and tools – both to ensure even higher quality teaching and learning, and to, in some instances, save time and money. 3) And this is, finally, the non-instrumental reason. There is great potential for both educators and students when we start employing digital and online tools in combination with in-person teaching.

We should as a first start thinking about synchronous and asynchronous learning and the way these two spheres are used and interact. By synchronous learning, I mean all types of learning in which the students and the teachers share the same time and space (including virtual spaces). This includes our traditional in-person classes in front of the blackboard with students in their seats, the students who visit you in your office, live online teaching of classes or meetings with individuals or groups online. One of the strengths of synchronous learning is ‘the delight of the commons’ where students and teachers can engage in living fellowship of learning. Whether we are dealing with traditional learning strategies or types of blended learning (e.g. ‘flipped classroom’), the synchronous learning activities creates a learning environment that both reinforces synergy-based creativity and supports a positive social study environment. The main strength of synchronous learning is, however, the dialogue. Being ‘live’ with students gives the teacher the possibility of supplementing his/her monologue (or entirely skipping it) and opening up the constructive dialogue elements of teaching. By asynchronous learning, I mean student-centered learning that is not locked in time or (physical) space. Asynchronous learning is mainly an online activity and the learning materials included are available for the students at different times and often continuously throughout a course. Besides preparations, asynchronous learning might not include the active participation of the teacher. Because of this, the asynchronous learning is mainly aimed at the individual student who can interact with the learning material

at their convenience, at their preferred time (or times) and preferred pace. In its most fundamental pre-pandemic form this would in my case be, for example, literature (pdf’s) or links to literature uploaded to the course platform; perhaps complemented by a few paragraphs of explanatory text from me.

Let us first look at some of the new online synchronous learning possibilities that I have been exploring:

The first rule of pandemic club is to reduce the amount of people who occupy the same physical space at the same time. No shared space, no virus spread. Meeting each other and engaging in learning activities in virtual spaces online thus played a vital role in managing the pandemic while still achieving (at least some of) our learning goals. A great number of negative things can be said about online synchronous teaching – or Zoom-teaching as I sometimes refer to it. My number 1 is the feeling of almost existential numbness of trying to engagingly address 30 black squares with names in them on a small screen. However, a few interesting and promising aspects of this type of teaching will become a mainstay of my future classes.

Inviting scholars or other relevant guests to participate in an online seminar is much less of a request than inviting these to an in-person seminar due to the lack of travel time. Typically, a guest lecturer would only be able to participate in my seminars if that person just happened to already be in town for a different event. Those who would actually travel to guest lecture typically use 3-4 times the time traveling than participating in the lecture or seminar. An example: Last semester my students and I were reading a text by a contemporary philosopher in my course ‘Philosophy of Sustainability and Technology’. I had read this text a couple of times with other students, but now, teaching via an online platform, I realize that it might be possible to invite the author for a Q&A. Although he was at the time in Brazil and we had to work with somewhat of a time difference, we successfully set up the meeting and the students got to discuss the text not only with me, but with its author. This was such a success that I will most certainly do it again now that we are allowed to meet our students in-person. And I will continue



to do these sessions an entirely online segments instead of switching to a hybrid form with me and the students in a physical room and the guest online. My anecdotal experience of hybrid guest lecturers and hybrid faculty meetings etc. is that they produce a gap of connection between the people online and those gathered in physical settings. This type of online guest lecture is obviously not a new possibility technologically speaking. However, it is in many ways a new mindset. It is one of the ways that teaching during COVID-19 has changed the way we as a profession think about teaching.

The second game changer for me, when it comes to synchronous online teaching, is the mobility of this new possibility. When planning an academic semester or year a great many things must fit together. The majority of entries in my calendar are the courses that I teach. However, meetings off campus, project seminars at home or abroad, conferences, field work, talks, media engagements and many more things also need to be planned or are expected to pop up along the way – as many of you can attest, our teaching schedule has to fit into a calendar full of other academic/semi-academic tasks. Since synchronous online teaching is based on meeting live in a virtual space and this virtual space is accessible from any physical locations with a decent internet connection, then my physical location can be almost anywhere.

During this fall semester I will, for example, be teaching in both synchronous and asynchronous modes in my applied ethics course while I am in England visiting an archive for a research project. Similarly, with the two masters’ projects that I am the advisor on this fall. Both students will receive supervision while I am on the move – or, in one case, when the student is on the move. This type of digital enabling of freedom has the potential to alter the way we think about planning course structures and academic calendars.

As a last note on synchronous online teaching, I want to recommend not treating your students from the ‘headshot in frog perspective’ when you meet them online. Put your laptop on a box or get an external camera so that your eyes are aligned with the camera. Then LOOK AT the camera because that is looking at them. If you have the option, stand up, move around, use your hands. All the body language that we use for emphasis, exemplification and attention in our normal teaching situations are severely diminished when we’re sitting at our desks in front of our laptops to teach. Investing in a tripod and a decent microphone are fundamentally necessary – and then you just got to ‘move it, move it’.

While synchronous online teaching for me is basically moving a known element into unknow

territories, asynchronous learning is an entirely new world. Indeed, looking back I can see that the entire compilation of my asynchronous learning material pre-COVID-19 consisted of uploaded course literature and, from time to time, uploaded slides. This, however, has changed. First, I have become a content creator. This means that I create audiovisual learning material directed at my courses which the students can access and re-access at any time during a given semester. My first asynchronous learning content in the spring of 2020 was a short video of me presenting a PowerPoint-presentation using the Panopto recording and distribution system used by my university. These days though, I have developed an asynchronous digital version of my beloved blackboard. I record my voice and the screen of an Android tablet while I write and draw my way through the lesson. I use the same rough manuscript of keywords that I would use if I were teaching in-person on a blackboard and this style – in contrast to voiceover PowerPoint – feels unrestricted and enables a flow in the video. I do these little videos in two parts: A longer one that is heavy on going through concepts and arguments as a preparation for the synchronous teaching – and a shorter one which I create and upload shortly after the synchronous teaching. The latter compiles and recaps the main elements that emerged from the dialogue based synchronous teaching. This is something that I would sometimes use valuable synchronous time doing at the following class session. Most of the longer videos can be (and have been) used and re-used at other times. The shorter re-cap videos are unfortunately too specific to be re-used.

I have also become a content filter and link provider. There are numerous podcasts and videos in the public sphere that can be and are used by students who study philosophy and ethics. There is, however, a great deal of material out there that is either subpar or so inaccurate that they cannot function well on their own. In the same way that we attempt to be quality gatekeepers on the matter of the literature that the students find and use, so we should become used to being gatekeepers on the audiovisual content that they use. For the ethics course this fall I have included 20 links to podcast episodes and videos that can support my teaching and the students' learning.

Before the COVID-19 shutdown, the standard institutional support on digital learning tools was scarce at my university. IT support was mainly a matter of helping teachers and researchers with basic functionalities of their computers. However, shortly before the shutdown a new center for digitally supported learning was established and this unit has been instrumental in supporting teachers (including me) with digital tools – programs and platforms – as well as pedagogical guidance on their use in the learning setting during the pandemic. The time and resources of this unit are unfortunately still not adequate and there is a fundamental problem associated with the fact that the 'old' IT Support system does not want to support questions on the pedagogical aspects of technology. Thus, we are stuck with a two-tier support system of IT support with in-depth technical knowledge that does not want to touch digital learning related questions and a much smaller pedagogical IT support with few resources and lacking personnel with deep technological skills. For me, personally, this has meant that I have had to jump back and forth between support centers even though, for me, the issue was combined. In a university setting, relying heavily on digital learning in the future, this is one of the things that need to change.

The digital world that I entered at the beginning of the pandemic was a prison. I was put there against my will and I felt locked away from my students, my proper environment, and my usual skills. Now, on the other hand, released (perhaps on parole) from the pandemic, I see the digital possibilities in my teaching as a playground for learning experiments.

If you are also playing and experimenting with the digital possibilities for your teaching – and I very much encourage you to do so – please do not hesitate to contact me in order for us to mutually benefit from each other's experiences.

paper

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2021
Vonne Lund Prize Winner

The political turn of animal ethics discourses

The need for a virtue ethical approach

Emnée van den Brandeler



Winning the Vonne Lund Prize 2021, has been an enormous honour. I am grateful for the recognition my ideas have received, and for the additional platform that the EURSAFE newsletter has to offer. Like the late Dr. Vonne Lund, I hope that my research

adds to the ongoing interdisciplinary efforts of improving our human-animal interactions. I myself, set out to do so by reflecting on our moral character, and its role within animal-politics.

The political turn in animal ethics

We can identify a new body of literature within animal ethics that shifts its focus from mere moral philosophy to political philosophy (Milligan, 2015). Perhaps most strikingly, the political turn is made distinct by its focus on justice, and 'more specifically on how our political institutions, structures and process might be transformed so as to secure just human-animal-relations' (Cochrane et al., 2018, p. 274). As such, it rightly leaves space for the belief that the relationships towards animals can indeed be improved in a morally desirable way and that abolitionism is not the solution. Given the current set-up of our political institutions, it is not surprising that most animal ethicists within this turn have focused on using rights frameworks. In this short paper, I will argue that a virtue ethical approach should likewise be a part of this political turn, and that this is crucial for a comprehensive political turn of animal ethics.

A promising virtuous turn

Briefly, virtue ethics is concerned with the moral character of human beings, and uses the language of virtue and vice to respond to moral questions. The



moral agent should lead a life in accordance with excellence or virtue, and be motivated to do so for the rights reasons. Doing so contributes intrinsically to a person's flourishing, i.e. the best state of character a person can possess (Aristotle, 2009). Three immediate benefits of virtue ethics stand out. First, the intellectual virtue of *phronesis*, or practical wisdom, takes the importance of context-specific considerations into account, and therefore provides practical guidance. Second, the notion of acquiring virtues for character building through habituation emphasises an aspect of lasting change. It will indeed require continuous effort to live virtuously, if we wish to achieve the turn's goals. Third, the language of virtues has a certain richness and diversity, which sets it apart from other approaches (van Wensveen, 1997). Its flexibility prevents harmful extremes, and carries with it the promise of moral creativity.

Political strength

In addition to these general benefits, a language of virtue carries important political strength in its balanced approach to our advocacy of animals that is neither necessarily strongly welfarist nor strong animal rights in nature. I wish to highlight two points. First, we can consider what virtuous role modelling would look like for those who hold positions in politics. Many political turn proposals require some sort of political representation on behalf of animals, to voice their interests in our

political institutions. It seems rash to assume any politician would be right for the job, or any veterinarian or animal activist for that matter. Here, virtues may offer some guidance. Namely, a politician that leads a life in accordance with virtue would embody the right character traits that we praise in people with leadership roles, e.g. care, responsibility and trustworthiness (Newstead et al., 2019). Moreover, for citizens who make up the general voting public, virtues may likewise guide them in their political decision-making. Not only would virtues such as bravery, humility and empathy guide our decision for which parties or animal representatives to vote, but it would also perpetuate the right behavioural norms that trickle down into supporting animal-friendly social norms. This brings me to the second point. The language of virtues creates a platform for discussing the role of individuals in social justice issues. Here I am suggesting it will prove useful to reflect on how virtuous behaviour and virtuous role modelling shapes our societal moral norms at the institutional level. If authors within the political turn are proposing institutional reform that will assert a more just human-animal-relationship, it is crucial we consider our current moral norms, and the virtues that enable them. Namely, our individual commitment to virtue and moral convictions *collectively* creates and maintains societal moral norms. We influence each other's behaviour and shape how we as a society are inclined to regard

our position towards animals. The political turn literature wishes to change our institutions, which we have grown used to, and whose existence is engrained into our daily habits. Given this, it becomes clear how valuable it is that the correct moral norms – that are in accordance with virtue – are perpetuated by our political role models and our general voting public.

Collective responsibility for political virtues

Thus, individual virtue and individual moral character is important within the turn. However, if we frame animal advocacy and our motivation for this only as a personal virtue, the issue of justice for animals will be dependent on those who feel inclined to support justice for animals. Indeed, there is a problematic tendency to think of these 'animal-friendly' motivations to act right as optional and personal choices, rather than necessary and socially engaged choices. Luckily, virtue ethics is also able to reflect on our collective responsibility to act according to virtue. For instance, when 'animal-friendly' virtues for the political turn, are regarded as public virtues. Their primary aim is to benefit the wellbeing of the community, and may include some benefit for the individual taking into account they are part of said community (Treanor, 2010). Similarly, we may look further into shared and collective virtues that extend the aim for individual *eudaimonia*, to the effect that virtues do not only have individual value, but also social value (Clowney, 2014). In case of the political turn, public *political* virtues that would facilitate democratic decision-making and effective collective action would especially be great candidates. In that case, the community would compose of all political agents, where value pluralism, diversity of people's life experiences and inclusivity of different perspectives should be emphasised. For instance, we can think of virtues such as political engagement, compassion, friendliness, truthfulness, open-mindedness, justice, benevolence, and hope (Treanor, 2010). These virtue approaches highlight our collective responsibility for tackling institutionalised injustices. Perhaps this even presents the possibility of framing our collective in such a way, that it includes both humans and animals, in which they share a goal of justice. Then, 'community' could refer to both humans and animals that are subject to our political institutions. By doing

so, it additionally presents the benefit of making acting according to virtue less demanding. For one, since virtue ethics recognises the different contexts the agent finds oneself in, and thus requires something else from every moral agent. In addition, aligning our collective and individual goal of flourishing will make the required changes in our lives less demanding.

Conclusion

I have shown some preliminary benefits that virtue ethics can offer the political turn literature. The success of the political turn will ultimately depend on a multitude of approaches, and intertwined efforts that complement each other. If we reconsider the role that individual and public (political) virtues play, this makes for a more comprehensive view of our role in the improvement of the human-animal-relationship. Therefore, I suggest reconsidering an additional language of virtues within the political turn of animal ethics.

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A Message from Prof. Paul B. Thompson

I want to thank the members of EURSAFE for the honor of this career achievement recognition. My participation in EURSAFE has always been rewarding, and I feel that I have taken away more than I have given. In comparison to North America, the colleagues who come to these meetings seem far more receptive to the work of philosophers, in general. At the same time, the academically trained philosophers and bioethicists who attend EURSAFE display a serious interest in food systems and how the drivers or constraints for farmers, policymakers and other decision makers shape its performance; a realism borne of closer connections to the community of agricultural, veterinary and food sciences tempers the openness to philosophical thinking. I hope this pattern will continue, for it is EURSAFE's great treasure.

As I look to the future of agriculture and food ethics, I see two intellectual challenges. First, there is the joint influence of social movement theory in sociology, geography and anthropology, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the emergence of consumer/citizens who evaluate their food purchases through an ethical lens. Food ethics becomes understood as a form of consumption ethics, and then the study of food ethics takes shape as an opportunity for developing a more general social theory. Even when scholars hope to apply the theory as an aid to the aims sought by consumer/citizens, there is precious little room for critical studies of the norms, ideals and deeper philosophical assumptions about the role and function of food systems. Work on the ethics and philosophy of agriculture and food threatens to become marginalized in this kind of cultural and academic environment.

While I hope that philosophers will remain free to undertake the types of critical and speculative inquiry that marks the best work in the discipline, the second challenge relates to ethics in an even more prosaic sense. Food sys-



tems cannot function if key actors fail to act from a deeply ingrained sense of ethical responsibility and moral purpose. We see numerous instances where the social institutions that support these norms are failing. In some cases, the invisibility of downstream individuals makes it difficult for producers along the food supply chain to understand the connection between their actions and the harm they produce. In other cases, a neoliberal philosophy supports the idea that markets never err, and actors are only responsible for bad outcomes when they are caught violating the law. This nurtures cynicism, and the call for agricultural and food ethics is meant to reinstitute a basic sense of moral responsibility within the food system. Like much of what passes today as 'research ethics', what answers this call is more likely to resemble rote training than education.

We should notice the tension between these two challenges. Consumption ethics targets the eater as the subject that must behave ethically, while the ethic of responsibility targets the producer. In the former case, ethics must mediate food purchasing behavior, while in the latter case, it must

constrain illegitimate or unprincipled opportunities for profit. While these two thrusts are not in direct opposition to one another, they do suggest different audiences and different approaches to ethics education, and to the research intended to support it. Those of us who work in the field will increasingly find ourselves asked to 'do ethics' in a manner that services one or the other of these needs. External support for ethics programs in universities and research institutes will be driven by these goals, and practitioners will need to find approaches that navigate these expectations.

I do not expect to be a major player in these new challenges for food and agricultural ethics. I wish the coming generation of EURSAFE members well in their attempts to meet them, and I hope that the work of my own generation will play some small role in helping them do so.

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2021 EurSafe Lifetime
Achievement Award Recipient

Jos Metz

1942 - 2021



With great sadness we learned that on September 8 professor emeritus Jos Metz passed away, aged 79. Jos Metz worked as professor of livestock systems at Wageningen University and Research.

During his career, he made a valuable contribution to research into the effects of technological innovations on animal behaviour and environmental aspects of livestock farming. Amongst others, he worked on the milk robot and studied the link between barn design and ammonia and dust emissions. He laid the foundations for work on sustainable barn design and livestock production farming. As treasurer during the period just after the formal establishment of EurSafe (2003-2010), Jos was highly committed to building a stable Society. His focus was not limited to financial issues, but included many initiatives in terms of process and content ranging from detailed feedback on external communication to organizing meetings for our institutional members.

He will be greatly missed by the scientific and livestock production communities. Always a reassuring presence, Jos left big shoes to fill at EurSafe. Our sympathy goes out to his family.

Bernice Bovenkerk

EurSafe Executive Committee

Update June 2021



I hope you had a good and relaxing summer. As a Board, we look back at a very successful conference. It was the first online conference in EurSafe's history. To date, it is our best online conference. All candour aside, it really was an excellent

online meeting. Ivo Wallimann and Hanna Schuebel did a wonderful job to design a really interesting program, that included a mix of inspiring keynotes and many interesting presentations in the parallel sessions.

Also, the opportunities for discussion added to the overall quality of the conference. It was also good to see that so many of us are now proficient in meeting online and that – in spite of the physical distance – there really was interaction and exchange of ideas. Of course, it remains a pity that we did not gather together in person in Fribourg, but the platform for social interaction during the breaks and the cheese or chocolate fondue on Friday night were creative ways to really meet each other.

We also held our General Assembly on Thursday 24 June. During that meeting we said good-bye to Stef Aerts, who had served the board for 6 years. We are thankful for all his work and commitment! We were also happy to welcome Per Sandin (SLU, Sweden) as a new Board member. Per was elected by the members during the meeting and has been an active member of our Society for many years. Per was instrumental in organizing the EurSafe 2013 conference. We are looking forward to working together with Per and using his ideas and experience in the coming years.

Finally, it was our great pleasure to announce the next EurSafe conference. Donald Bruce and Ann Bruce are the core of the organizing team. They have been enthusiastically preparing the EurSafe 2022 conference, which will be in Edinburgh between 7-10 September 2022. The theme of the conference is, 'Transforming Food Systems'. More information is available via www.eur-safe2022.ed.ac.uk.

If you have any items you would like to share with the Board, please send me an email!

Best regards, Franck Meijboom
On behalf of the Executive Board, 1 September 2021

Conferences, symposia and workshops

22-23 SEPTEMBER 2021

Wild animal ethics conference (online)

University of St. Andrews
[website](#)

14-15 OCTOBER 2021

Nordic Environmental ethics study circle (online)

[website](#)

17-18 FEBRUARY 2022

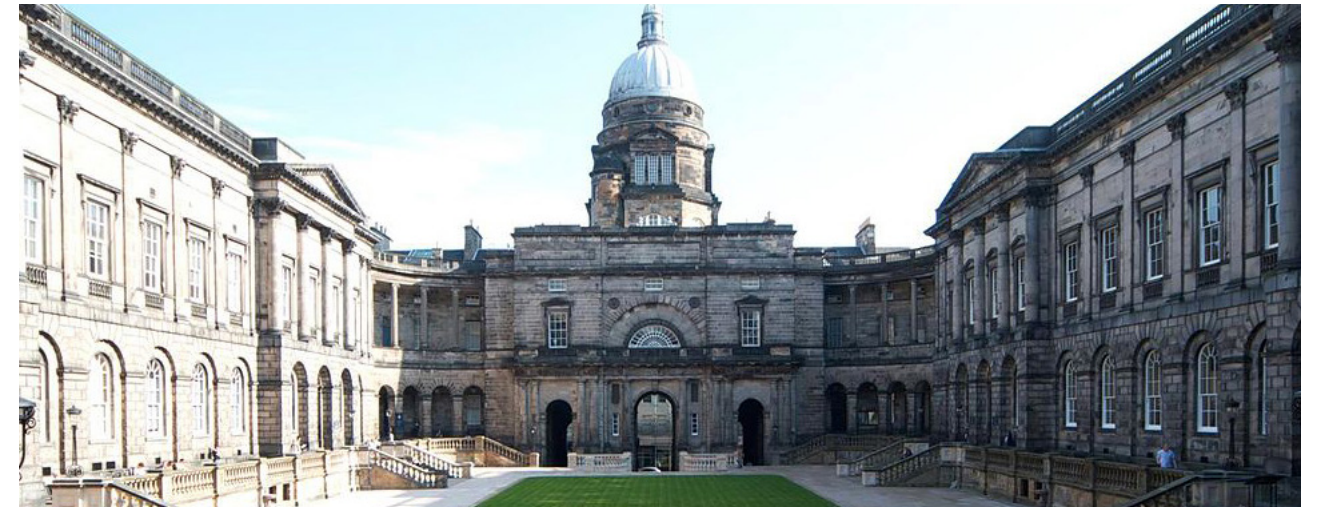
Animal Minds

University of California, San Diego
[website](#)

7-10 SEPTEMBER 2022

EurSafe conference, Transforming Food Systems, Edinburgh

[website](#)



Welcome to EURSAFE 2022

7-10 September, Edinburgh

We invite you to Transforming Food Systems, the 2022 conference of EurSafe, in Edinburgh, 7-10 September 2022, organised jointly by the School of Social and Political Science and the Global Academy of Agriculture and Food Security of the University of Edinburgh, and the ethical consultancy Edinethics Ltd.

Feeding the world's growing population in ways that are effective, ethical and socially just, and protect the natural systems on which all life depends, is one of the greatest challenges facing humanity. The vulnerability of our interlinked human systems to external impacts has been brought home by the COVID-19 pandemic. Climate change poses deeper longer term threats. Despite advances in technology, communications and much else, over a third of the global population remains affected by malnutrition. How can we transform our food systems locally and globally to meet these challenges?

The conference is planned to be in person. We invite papers and posters in the following topics:

1. Ethics and justice in food system transformation

2. Vulnerability of food systems
3. Ethics and data-driven innovation in agri-food systems
4. Food for the future
5. What role for livestock in transformed food systems
6. Current issues in Animal and Veterinary ethics
7. Planetary health ethics
8. Transforming food waste
9. Ethical issues in marine and aquaculture
10. Food from the wild
11. Any other issues withing EurSafe's scope of interest

The deadline for submission of abstracts is 15 December 2021.

Confirmed plenary speakers include Professor Lotte Holm (Copenhagen) on cultural aspects of food and Bruce Whitelaw (Roslin Institute) on animal genome editing.

For more details, information about registration, see www.eursafe2022.ed.ac.uk

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