

Editorial

The recent 'regulatory noise' around the prospect of the agricultural commercialisation of cloned animals and/or their offspring as expressed in reports by the US Food and Drug Administration, the European Group on Ethics (EGE) on Science and New Technologies and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) suggests that finally the time is upon us to consider the prospect of emerging breeding technologies (EBTs) in animal production.

By 'us' one could mean not only regulatory bodies but also a wide range of academics and 'publics'. To what extent are molecular technologies such as genomics, GM and cloning the latest capitalist accumulation strategies within the industrialisation of animal production? Do they reinvent our already ambivalent relationship to farmed animals, and what effect may they have upon the experiential realities of the - typically short - lives of farmed animals? How may they refigure the relationship between breeder and animal? Can they, as their proponents suggest, really make meaningful contributions to sustainable agricultures? Or are they incredibly badly timed technologies arriving just when the cultural interest in animal welfare intensifies and the health and environmental costs of animal consumption and production are to the fore?

One thing I think is clear. Many among the community of social scientists and philosophers have got things wrong. They take the substantive and moral bifurcation between 'green' and 'red' biosciences as read, failing to see the points of interconnection between the 'agricultural' and the 'medical'. Cloning is, of course, a great example. The main US animal cloning company Viagen, which has generously supplied data to the FDA deliberation and travelled all the way to Brussels to speak to the EGE workshop, owns the IPR on the cloning techniques originally associated with the Roslin Institute research that produced Dolly the Sheep. This research was aimed at human medical applications and did not foreground agricultural applications. This is just one example of why researchers beavering away on the 'red' (or the 'green') biosciences should think more critically about this arguably false separation as it is, first, certainly a hangover from our epistemological culture/nature differentiating legacies, and, second, increasingly being rendered useless by research into such hybrid entities as biopharmed animals, xenotransplants and animal/human embryos.

Genomics, Society and Policy purposively makes itself open to a wide range of disciplines and approaches. This includes providing an outlet for papers that go beyond the red-green split, and acting as a corrective to the over-emphasis on the human medical domain – constructed as somehow sealed off hermetically from the nonhuman. In 2007, then, we have already produced a special issue on Animal Genomics, a theme that is continued in this present issue with a paper on GM animals. Also included in the issue are papers on public health genomics, aspects of the doctor-patient relationship and a focus on a recent bioethical concept of interest. We hope

that you enjoy the diversity of the issue and we look forward to more interesting submissions in 2008, as well your ideas for innovative special issues.

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