

## From the Editor

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The current issue features seven articles and three book reviews.

The first article is by P. C. Phondani, R. K. Maikhuri, and N. S. Bisht. In “Endorsement of Ethnomedicinal Knowledge Towards Conservation in the Context of Changing Socio-Economic and Cultural Values of Traditional Communities around Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary in Uttarakhand, India,” the authors argue that it is important to study this relationship because culture is not only the ethical imperative for development, it is also the condition of its sustainability because there exists a symbiotic relationship between habitats and cultures. The authors document “the Ethnomedicinal uses of 54 medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs) along with their botanical and vernacular names, family, habit, habitat, threat status, collection season, purpose of collection, quantity, conservation practices, market potential and part(s) used in traditional health care system.” Their study, they conclude “emphasizes the potentials of the ethnomedicinal research, conservation practices, socio-cultural and religious ethics for promoting traditional plants based treatments and also the need to document the indigenous knowledge for scientific validation before its industrial application.”

The second article is by Bénédicte Brahic and Susie Jacobs. In “Empowering women: a labor rights-based approach-Case studies from East African horticultural farms,” the authors argue that “strategies such as action research, education, organization and advocacy focusing on labor rights are effective in gendered empowerment and can bring positive change to women’s working lives on African farms, and beyond.” The focus of previous discussions of women’s empowerment has tended to be on individual actors rather than collective strategies.

In the third article (“Genetically Modified Organisms-An Indian Ethical Dilemma”), Amanpreet Kaur, R.K. Kohli and P.S. Jaswal attempt to dissect and

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analyze the ethical and moral repercussions of Genetic Engineering with special reference to Indian scenario. As we know, this new technology, “which tampers with the nature at the DNA level and has the prowess to shuffle genes between distantly or even non-related organisms is bound to have gravid moral implications.”

The next two articles focus on the implications of meat production. In the first of these (“Meeting heterogeneity in consumer demand for animal welfare: A reflection on existing knowledge and implications for the meat sector”), authors Janneke de Jonge and Hans C. M. van Trijpaim “identify conflicting interests that stakeholders in the meat supply chain experience in order to increase understanding of why heterogeneous consumer preferences are not met by a more differentiated supply of meat products produced at different levels of animal welfare standards.” The current meat supply caters only “for the extremes of morality concerns (i.e., conventional vs. organic meat products). The authors identify “characteristics of the supply chain that contribute to the existence of high exit barriers and difficulty to shift to more animal-friendly production systems are identified. Following the analysis of conflicting interests among stakeholders and factors that contribute to difficulty to transform the existing dominant regime, different routes are discussed that may help and motivate stakeholders to overcome these barriers and stimulate the creation of new markets.”

The second of these two articles is by Henrik Lerner, Bo Algers, Stefan Gunnarsson, and Anders Nordgren. In “Stakeholders on meat production, meat consumption and mitigation of climate change: Sweden as a case,” the authors “analyze and discuss the views of Swedish stakeholders on how to mitigate climate change to the extent it is caused by meat production. The stakeholders include meat producer organizations, governmental agencies with direct influence on meat production, political parties as well as non-governmental organizations.” They interviewed representatives of twelve organizations. They found disagreement of a number of issues but agreement on others. “Most disagreement was found regarding political steering. We find many of the stakeholders’ mitigation proposals regarding meat production and consumption acceptable. However, we are to some extent critical of their defense of Swedish beef production. We also point out certain problems with the suggestion to reduce consumption of imported meat but not of domestically produced meat.”

The next article is by Ing. Josef Maroušek. In “Study on agriculture decision-makers behavior on sustainable energy utilization.” The author notes that phytomass cultivation for energy use is increasingly popular in Europe for high profits guaranteed by subsidy. The author notes the direct combustion is still preferred even though scholars have been warning about formations of hazardous compounds for a long-time. It has been shown that in a commercial scale that an alternative phytomass energy utilizing technology consisting of steam explosion and subsequent anaerobic fermentation may be run solely on the waste heat without any further addition of chemicals. The author claims that “behavior analysis of present and future agriculture decision-makers showed that none of the farmers who visited the facility cared about ecological consequences. On the other hand, most students from the Faculty of Agriculture and the Faculty of the Economy answered the

questionnaire with higher environmental responsibility.” The author assumes “this is caused by high average age of farmers in Czech Republic who are more aware of the ongoing economical difficulties and perceive differently the risk of higher acquisition costs.”

The last article (“Telos and the Ethics of Animal Farming”) is by Jes Harfield. In this article the author addresses the contemporary philosophical and ethical analysis of animals based upon this Aristotelian idea (Rollin 2006b). He employs the idea of telos to illustrate the dimensions of what matters in welfare assessment and ethical evaluation. “The second half of the article addresses some of the welfare problems in modern animal agriculture and how they relate to the telos concept. Two main examples are dealt with: Boredom (Wemelsfelder 2005) is argued as being the suffering of choicelessness in animals that are inherently beings that choose—and loneliness is the suffering of social isolation in animals for whom standing in active relations to others is part of what they are.”