From the Editor

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The current numbers has five articles and one book review. The first article is by Dane Scott. In “The Technological Fix Criticisms and the Agricultural Biotechnology Debate,” Scott addresses the problem of the role of technology in agriculture and sees fundamental philosophical differences about this role. These differences are brought to light as underlying the debate over biotechnology and the dismissal of this technology as a “technological fix,” so Scott uses this dismissal as a starting point for examining the deeper philosophical disagreements. In the first part of his essay, Scott discusses “the origins of the notion of a technological fix and distinguishes two types of technological fix criticisms, philosophical and practical. These distinctions are then applied to clarify and evaluate arguments for and against agricultural biotechnology.”

The second article is concerned with problems in regulating perennial GE crops. In “Commercialization of Perennial GE crops: Looming Challenges for Regulatory Frameworks,” authors Muthukumar V. Bagavathiannan, Armin Spök, and Rene C. Van Acker claim that while GE crops can provide operational benefits to farmers, in several cases, however, “GE crops have sparked concerns and disagreements among the stakeholders and there are incidences of court lawsuits, including a recent one on glyphosate resistant (GR) alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*, L.).” The authors focus on the US in discussing the various problems in finding a broader acceptance and market success of GE agriculture in general. The unique ecology and biology of these crops and GE alfalfa in particular makes more visible the fact “that economic risks for conventional growers and food/feed producers have not been appropriately addressed by the GE regulatory system in the United States (US). Asynchronous market approvals and the existence of a number of GE sensitive export markets create uncertainties among the exporters. Policy development in these fields may be

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helpful for ensuring a broader acceptance and market success of GE agriculture in general.”

The third article uses a poll and a cluster method to conclude that European society “ascribes great relevance to the environment for the future sustainability of the region, but they are not satisfied with the role of agriculture in producing environmental outputs.” In “Environmental Care in Agriculture: A Social Perspective,” authors Melania Salazar-Ordóñez and Samir Sayadi are concerned with evaluating the measures that the European Union’s Common Agricultural Policy added to link agriculture and the environment. These new measure were in response to the new social concern that expressed alarm over ecology, recognizing that agriculture can pollute. The authors raise two questions: has the social image of agriculture as a polluting activity changed; and does farming perform the environmental functions demanded by society? To answer the first, the authors review the environmental aspects added to the CAP. Then they use the poll to answer the second question.

The fourth article (“Social acceptance of dairy farming: The ambivalence between the two faces of modernity”), “draws on a national survey carried out in the Netherlands that aimed at gaining a deeper understanding about the acceptance of modern dairy farming in Dutch society.” Authors Birgit K. Boogaard, Bettina B. Bock, Simon J. Oosting, Johannes S.C. Wiskerke, and Akke J. van der Zijpp see people taking two dimensions into account “when evaluating different aspects of modern dairy farming: (1) the way living beings are used for production and (2) the way a dairy farm functions as a business. In both these dimensions people appeared to adopt cautious opinions: most people preferred relatively traditional and natural farms and were concerned about the use of nature and treatment of animals in modern production—although this did not imply an outright rejection of modern animal farming.” The authors conclude that the “values and convictions within modern society can help to explain why some people are greatly concerned about animal welfare while some show less concern. This diversity also helps to explain why general information campaigns are quite ineffective in allaying concerns about modern animal farming.”

In the last article (“Ethics, Narrative, and Agriculture: Transforming Agricultural Practice through Ecological Imagination,” A. Whitney Sanford says that exploring “the different discourses of agricultural systems can help us think through different modalities for human relations with the biotic community and demonstrate story’s potential role in altering practice.” To conduct this exploration, she draws “upon cognitive theory to illustrate how metaphoric and narrative language structures thought and influences practice...” She begins with a “contention that industrial agriculture relies on a discourse of mechanistic relations between humans and a passive earth, language that has naturalized the chemically intensive monocultures prevalent in much of the American Midwest.” Although many “scholars and activists have argued persuasively that we need new stories to rethink agricultural practice, however, the link—the story that does and can shape agricultural practice—has not yet been fully articulated in environmental discourse.” She concludes that “by investigating agricultural stories, the ecological imagination comes into practice as an on-going process in which we continually critique our

actions towards others in the biotic community and iteratively revise our practices and integrate these stories more deeply into self-identification. Then, we can fashion humane agricultural systems in which basic human and nonhuman needs are adequately met.”