From the Editor

Richard P. Haynes

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The current issue contains seven articles and two book reviews. The first article is by Lantz Miller. In “The Moral Philosophy of Automobiles,” Miller objects to the moral bias introduced by using the theory of the role of technology in human life in assessing morally the use of a technology. Instead he proposes a dialectical method of assessing the use of a technology and applies this to the case of using automobiles. He assumes that the moral agent is responsible for the use of a technology. Miller leaves open the final assessment of the use of automobiles but he suggests that his method “points to a way fairly to assess morally the use of technologies in terms of human betterment and environmental and health concerns, minimizing biases from assumptions of the role or nature of technologies.”

In the second article (“Are there ideological aspects to the modernization of agriculture?”), authors Egbert Hardeman and Henk Jochemsen discuss the implications of the unreflective influence of a one sided approach to efficiency and modernization of agricultural policy and farming. The authors “see a blinkered quest for efficiency in the industrialization of agriculture since the Second World War.” And this is the key factor is the “cultural mindset at the foundation of our modern society, originating from the ideas of the Enlightenment.” This makes “people vulnerable to ideologies, causing them to focus on a certain goal without considering the consequences. Due to the overemphasis on efficiency, modern industrial agriculture has never been comfortably embedded in its ecological and social context, and as a result displays the characteristics of an ideology.”

The third article is by Glenda Morais Rocha Braña, Ana Luisa Miranda-Vilela, and Cesar Koppe Grisolia. In “A study of how experts and non-experts make decisions on releasing genetically modified plants,” the authors report on their study of the decisions of members of the Brazilian Committee of Biosafety (CTNBio), a consultative and deliberative multidisciplinary collegiat that provides technical and

R. P. Haynes (✉)
Gainesville, FL, USA
e-mail: rphaynes@ufl.edu

advisory support to the Brazilian Federal Government. The aim of the study was to investigate whether commercial approvals of GMOs were associated with the profile of the CTNBio members. "Research was based on the minutes taken at CTNBio meetings carried out from 2006 up to 2009, considering law 11.105/2005 and the Constitution of 1988 as legal frameworks, to determine the number of voters in favor of or against releasing genetically modified Bt-maize, Bt-cotton, and herbicide resistant soybeans to be used in Brazilian agriculture." "Results showed that CTNBio decisions could be based on technical criteria as well as on the policy of the institution that expert-members were representing." The authors suggest an alternative method for reaching this type of decision.

The last four articles are animal welfare related. In the first ("Consumer attitudes towards alternatives to piglet castration without pain relief in organic farming: Qualitative results from Germany"), authors Astrid Heid and Ulrich Hamm explore organic consumers' attitudes towards piglet castration without pain relief and three alternative methods and examine which aspects of these alternatives are important to consumers of organic products.

In the second of these four articles ("Critical Anthropomorphism and Animal Ethics"), Fredrik Karlsson argues that avoiding anthropomorphism merely creates other morphisms, such as mechanomorphism, since recent research within human-animal studies has sophisticated the notion of anthropomorphism. Instead of avoiding anthropomorphism, Karson argues that it is a communicative strategy that should be used critically.

The third of these four article is by David Fraser. In "A 'Practical' Ethic for Animals," Fraser draws on the features of "practical philosophy" described by Toulmin (1990), to claim that a "practical" ethic for animals would be rooted in knowledge of how people affect animals, and would provide guidance on the diverse ethical concerns that arise. Fraser proposes four mid-level principles to make a plausible fit to the features of the four types of human activities and to address the major ethical concerns that arise. "The principles are: (1) to provide good lives for the animals in our care, (2) to treat suffering with compassion, (3) to be mindful of unseen harm, and (4) to protect the life-sustaining processes and balances of nature. This 'practical' approach arguably makes a better fit to the complex, real-life problems of animal ethics than the single foundational principles that have dominated much recent animal ethics philosophy."

The last article is by Ari Z. Zivotofsky. In "Government Regulations of *Shechita* (Jewish Religious Slaughter) in the Twenty-first Century: Are They Ethical?" Zivotofsky claims that Judaism is a notable exception to the fact that for the majority of time, humans have had no regulations regarding the slaughter of animals for food. Among the Jewish dietary laws is a prohibition to consume meat from an animal that dies in any manner other than through the rigorously defined method of slaughter known as *shechita*. In his article Zivotofsky presents the requisite background about *shechita* and then he analyzes the ethics of some of the recent legislation. The analysis includes a rebuttal of the assertion that *shechita* is an inhumane method of slaughter. The legislation requiring pre-slaughter stunning also has undesirable consequences for the Jewish community. This legislation, Zivotofsky argues, is unethical because it make meat unavailable for members of the Jewish community.