

## **Code-EFABAR – FOOD-CT-2003-506506**

### **Reactions on second draft of the Code and how they are worked out in the Code**

EFB was included in the project because of its expertise in communication with the general public, and its ability to contact them. In the first draft, the reactions of the organizations who attended the Code discussion meeting were included, and also the (few) reactions received on the letter to NGOs. In the spring of 2005, the communication's partner was asked to perform a range of interviews with key stakeholders on the Code. On their request, EFFAB has provided the communication's partner with several contact details of possible stakeholders and society organizations to contact (a wide list of over 500 addresses, and more specific lists with names of key people within a number of organizations after mutual consultation). From these a list of 16 respondents was chosen by EFB, of which 10 interviews have been made (telephone) by EFB. Please find below how the reactions have been worked out in the Code.

#### **General remarks**

- More information on how statements translate to practical rules of conduct

In the final version we have made clear distinctions between the Code, explanation in boxes, and the guide for implementation (practical guidance per species)

- Code more targeted with specific demands for breeding companies

The Code includes the issues breeding can make a difference in. We have targeted to the major areas of sustainability.

Specific demands per species are different for the different farm animals, and the type of organization (herd book, breeding). Therefore, each company has to fill this in on its web site and include that in the certification.

- What will be influence on products I buy?

The relationship with products is indirect. Indeed this is always an issue for breeding programmes: how to make it visible in the chain. Hopefully a Code is a step in the right direction. Retailers or food processors can *demand* only to work with products from breeding material produced according to the Code. There is no way to force partners in the chain, however, all expect (and some fear) that partners in the chain will demand such a trademark in the future.

- The Code should address animal welfare and health, food safety and ethics

These issues are addressed. We have put in food safety more clear now because of this reaction. There is a specific ethical guide/

- Appropriate references

Included.

**Comment Prof. Webster, UK.** Is afraid the Code only states the state of affairs of breeders, and no stimulation for improvement. To answer more to the consumer's eye, the Code should include the aim for breeding companies to go for robust animals and try to avoid infertility or diseases.

Therefore, we have included in the general statements:

- 'Breeding Organisations must use modern biosecurity methods to minimize disease transmission.'
- Breeding Organisations must ensure the health and welfare of the animals under their care.
- Breeding Organisations must treat the animals under their care with respect.

- Breeding Organisations must ensure that selection for production traits is balanced by appropriate attention to reproduction traits and health- and welfare-related traits.

**Comment Dr. Robert Remy, Test-Achats, Belgium.**

- The Code does not put an obligation on breeding companies

Therefore, the Code can be certified by official certification systems. In these cases, there are obligations and control. The adoption phase is the first phase – we have made the Code such, that organisations can ‘grow’ into this system of adoption first – practising code and certification – and then certification.

- Urgent problems are not part of these kind of Codes?

This is a very general remark, and not made specific. We have included *all issues in which breeding can make a difference (and developed and discussed in SEFABAR)* and we will update the Code every two years, to adapt to possible changing situations. A breeding organisation only gets the allowance for the Code for two years – then an update has to be obtained.

- Who should control the rules set out in the Code?

The certification organisation, and the members of EFFAB.

- The Code needs to be discussed with all stakeholders

This has been done. Stakeholders have obtained the draft, were invited to comment and attend the discussion workshop. Some were specifically visited. Extra interviews were made.

- (and Ms. Osseweijer) How do the statements translate to practical rules of conduct?

More specifically breeding principles are worked out. A guide for implementation is made with information for breeders (per species), for ethics, for certification, for communication. Available for everybody on the web.

- Penalties in case of breach

No adoption allowance for the Code.

**Remarks Ms. Blomjous, Ms. Osseweijer, Ms. Meulenbroeks, Netherlands:**

- Code is voluntary and would therefore not have a major impact

Code is voluntary, so only organisations who wish to take the trouble to follow this Code, will do so. Currently, the major breeding organisations are planning to adopt the Code. E.g. Aviagen, responsible for over 50% of world breeders, PIC and TOPIGS: together major providers of pig genetics globally. Also smaller organisations e.g. Svensk Avel, Polish cattle breeding organisation wish to *distinguish* themselves by this Code. Svensk Avel already have plans to *adapt their breeding goal due to this Code*.

- Code mainly product quality, less animal welfare

The Code is a *balance of issues (incl. animal welfare) important for sustainability*. The companies show transparently their choices for the balance (via their web site, via certification). This makes it possible for the consumer to choose.

- Code does not bring profit – the major interest of breeders would be economic.

Indeed, this was the worry of mainly small organisations. However, now a lot plan to adopt or certify the Code, although there are costs and no direct gain. Apparently breeding organisations (often owned by farmers) wish to show transparent their work, which is difficult to explain, in an understandable way to the outside world.

- Code danger for European breeders

The Code can also be adopted by breeders outside Europe. Major European companies (esp in pigs and poultry) have as large interests outside as in Europe. They have one policy for all.

- (and Dr. Sprenger, and Dr. Hough) Far away from consumers: other part of food chain - No influence on food processors or retailers – no influence on breeder's trade relationships – breeders are not visible for consumers

Indeed this is always an issue for breeding programmes: how to make it visible in the chain. Hopefully a Code is a step in the right direction. Retailers or food processors can *demand* only to work with products from breeding material produced according to the Code. There is no way to force partners in the chain, however, all expect (and some fear) that partners in the chain will demand such a trademark in the future.

- (and Dr. Sprenger) Statements are vague - No specific rules and regulations  
The specific details are the company specific details, that each company has to be transparent about.

- The implementation should receive more attention

We have made information material for policy makers/public, and for breeding organisations, in 20 languages. The Code and all the materials can be downloaded from the web site

Breeding organisations have received a training on implementation of the Code. EFFAB will follow up with guidance, updating, breeder's launch etc.

- What is the difference between breeding and reproduction?  
Therefore, at page one, a schedule is included, to explain this.

- Sustainability states something, but Technologies not.

Indeed, but we have experienced, that in all our contacts with society so far, people want to know, and have transparency, about the technologies used by breeding companies / a breeding company. Therefore, to answer this society/citizen need, technologies are included.

- Use of jargon

In the guide for implementation, a list with explanations of terms and wordings is added. Indeed it is a complicated area, and this was one of the challenges of the Code: be clear and yet understandable.

#### **Remarks from Dr. Sprenger, DG Sanco, Belgium**

- Request to put more emphasis on genetic resources/genetic diversity.

We have adapted the wording with regard to genetic resources such, that small breeds and large breeds, should each answer how they fill in genetic resources issues. How do they control inbreeding, mate favourable animals etc. This means that each organisation is obliged to give an answer, whether it is small or large.

We have made the Code such, that it can be a workable tool also for small organisations with small breeds. All breeders should be transparent about their genetic diversity policy.

#### **Remarks from Mr. Bold, ROBIN Customer solutions, Netherlands**

Was positive

#### **Remarks from Mr. Jorna, NEVEDI, Netherlands**

- Code does not go beyond existing legislation

In the final Code common best practices are included as well:

- Breeding Organisations must follow zootechnical, animal welfare and animal health legislations and relevant regulations and practices

**Remarks from Dr. Hough, FEAP, Belgium**

- There was too much self-defence in the original text.

We have worked to a better text, not self-defensive for the final Code, taking this remark to heart.

- Explanations are not part of the Code itself

They are in the Guide for implementation, and in boxes. To distinguish between the Code and explanations.

- General Statements should be in Guiding Principles. Include appropriate references

We have done this in the final version.

- Breeding side of draft is technical

Final Code less technical. Definitions in Guide for implementation, and also more specific details in Guide for implementation

**Remarks of Mr. Oosterhuis, AHOLD, Netherlands**

- Code may be too general, inclusion of the five freedoms

Specific details are in the Guide for implementation. We have tried to include the spirit of the five freedoms in the text.

29 August 2005. Anne-Marie Neeteson