

January 2009

Update for paragraph 9.3

SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS OVER GM ANIMALS EXPRESSED BY BOTH THE PUBLIC AND VETERINARY SCIENTISTS IN THE USA

In September 2008 the USFDA and the USDA called for draft guidance concerning requirements for developers of GM animals and on the food products from such animals. In December 2008, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) published its response to this request. It stated: 'The development and implementation of appropriate regulation of this technology has widespread applications in advancing our knowledge of diseases, food safety, environmental conservation, and efficient food and fiber production.'

But the Association also noted that in the development and delivery of GM technology there was a need to protect animal welfare. According to the AVMA, welfare concerns related to GM animals 'include, but may not be limited to, abnormalities in embryonic development and death in utero; abnormal, variable, unexpected or uncontrolled expression of inserted genes; and the large number of donor, recipient, and breeding animals involved and their ultimate disposition.' The AVMA urged all federal agencies with oversight of GM animals to work with the USDA to ensure that regulations and policies for enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act are sufficient to address GM technology—particularly because the act does not cover certain animals that are common subjects of genetic modification.

However, even as the FDA moves forward, some scientists and the general public have serious concerns over this technology. Thus, according to a 2005 survey carried out by the Pew Initiative on Food and Biotechnology, about 56 percent of Americans oppose research into genetic modification of animals. Moreover, Michael Hansen, of the Consumers Union, questioned the decision not to label food from GM animals. He argued that the food is inherently different because of the insertion of rDNA constructs, although FDA officials believe labelling is unnecessary for food from GM animals that is nutritionally equivalent to other food.

Website references:

<http://www.thecattlesite.com/news/25606/avma-comments-on-regulation-of-gm-animals>

http://greenbio.checkbiotech.org/news/genetically_engineered_animals_food_supply