

NCCC 209 Ag Bioethics Annual Meeting Minutes

Date: September 10, 2012

Time: 1:00pm EDT

Participants: Jose Peralta, Western U. (Chair); Candace Croney, Purdue U. (Vice-Chair); Julie Fagan, Rutgers U. (Secretary); David Benfield, Ohio State (Administrator); Paul Thompson, Michigan State; Ray Stricklin, U. Maryland, Janice Siegford, Michigan State; Joe Regenstein, Cornell U.; Ed Pajor, U. Calgary; Yuzhi Li, U. Minnesota; and Richard Reynnells, USDA (retired).

The discussion centered on the future of the NCCC209 program. There is an increased interest among students and others. The need for this group to continue providing leadership in discussions on ag bioethics is clear. Our group participates in the organization of bioethics sessions at different national meetings (ASAS, ADSA, etc.). Faculty members at different institutions have indicated an interest in animal bioethics. With this increasing interest in agricultural bioethics, we may be in a position to bring in new membership and new ideas into the program. We should remain active to fulfill our responsibility to the agricultural community.

The USDA Challenge Grant awarded to some members of our group was recently presented at the national ASAS meetings and it was well received. It was well received and faculty and graduate students from different institutions (University of British Columbia or Colorado State) showed interest in this and other activities of our group.

One of the problems is that bioethics is not a part of traditional agricultural training programs. Bioethicists are not encouraged to participate in these activities. Participation in useful forums, like this group, does not give faculty funding or other resources to justify their involvement.

Researchers also need bioethicists. This has been a challenge in the past because researchers have not traditionally been properly trained in bioethics. This committee needs to grow stronger and to have a better standing. Bioethics is an important topic area and leadership is going to be needed at the very top (e.g., USDA).

Right now there is no clear indication that the USDA is interested in this project. Richard Reynnells's position as the USDA representative in the project has not been filled since his retirement several months ago.

There is interest in the development of material to prepare faculty to be better prepared to teach bioethics. That is actually one of the objectives of the Challenge Grant, which includes the development of a web-based program to facilitate the access to the training to those interested and who may be concerned that they may not know the material or may feel uncomfortable leading discussions on bioethics.

It was decided to remain an active group. We are now too close to meet this year's deadline. Dave Benfield will submit on behalf of the group a request for a one-year extension on the program so that we have time to rewrite the project. If granted, we would have until Sept 15, 2013 to resubmit our proposal.

A suggestion to involve graduate students in the rewrite was made. There is increasing interest on the field of bioethics among students and under proper supervision they could assist with

some of the research for the update and also provide a “younger” perspective on the objectives of the group. This idea was well received.

Another idea that was brought up was the drafting of a one-pager that summarized what the members of the group have done for animal agriculture through the years. It could explain the impact of the group’s activities on the agricultural industries or on the development of different extension programs that incorporated bioethical issues. Dave Benfield volunteered to organize this information from the group. Please send your ideas to Dave (benfield.2@osu.edu).

The advantages of organizing a future meeting face-to-face were discussed, but the challenges in finding a venue (like a national conference) where the whole group could meet were noted. We are a diverse group that attends a variety of conferences with different emphasis, and the chances of finding one that will meet everybody’s interest are slim.

For the rewrite of the program, a subcommittee was formed by Candace Croney, Richard Reynnells, Ray Stricklin, Julie Fagan and Paul Thompson. Others who may be interested in being involved in this subcommittee are encouraged to volunteer. The subcommittee will identify a Chairperson and will share that information back with the rest of NCCC209 so that comments and assistance can be funneled through this person.

NCCC209 officers were elected for 2012-2013. Candace Croney will be the group’s Chairperson; Julie Fagan will be the Vice-Chair; and for the position of Secretary two names were suggested: Janice Siegford and Ray Anthony. They were not in on the call at the time this was discussed, so they are asked to show their interest and availability to serve in this capacity. Others interested in the Secretary position are also encouraged to volunteer.

Action points:

- Dave Benfield will ask for a one-year extension for NCCC209.
- Dave Benfield will provide the group with a list of deadlines to meet for 2013.
- Project rewrite subcommittee will meet in a few weeks to a month and will select a Subcommittee Chairperson whose name will be shared with the rest of NCCC209.
- NCCC209 members will send summaries of main activities that have an impact on animal agriculture directly to Dave Benfield so that he can draft a one-page summary.
- NCCC209 members who have not yet submitted yearly progress reports are to send them to Jose Peralta for their inclusion in the annual report.
- Jose Peralta will submit the one-year report within 50 days of the teleconference meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 2:45pm EST.