

Farm Animal Industrial Platform (FAIP)

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Farm Animal Genomics in the Framework Programme 2002-2006

FAIP has taken note of and welcomes in general the European Commission Proposal for the Framework Programme 2002-2006 aimed at contributing towards the creation of the 'European Research Area' of 21 February 2001. The two priority thematic areas "Genomics and biotechnology for health" and "Food safety and health risks" are of direct relevance to FAIP and particularly welcome.

However we miss in the actions envisaged in the proposal for these two thematic areas clear statements with regard to the important issues of genomics in relation to farm animal breeding and of the social responsibility for human and animal health in relation to the quality of animal and aquaculture products in Europe. We recommend therefore:

1. in thematic area 1.1.1., inclusion of farm animal/aquaculture genomics and biotechnology for animal health as an important area to be funded
2. in thematic area 1.1.5., inclusion of farm animals and aquaculture in order to be able to tackle the technological, socio-economic and integration issues related to their food safety and health risks.

Having the recent problems in animal and human health in mind, and taking into account the enormous investments in new breeding methods overseas, the development of improved disease resistance in farm animal/aquaculture production, and safer quality animal/aquaculture products is of vital importance for *both* health and food safety.

The international developments in genomics are such that joint efforts in farm animal/aquaculture genomics in Europe must be undertaken *now* in order to maintain Europe's competitiveness in this area. The aim will be to identify desirable genes already present in the animals. Transgenesis in animal production is economically not feasible, is not accepted by society and therefore will not be employed. Consequently, the main use of genomics in livestock will be for the provision of genetic markers in selective breeding (Marker Assisted Selection).

The European animal breeding and reproduction sector is now leading at the global level. Their continuing basis in Europe for the long term is the best guarantee of the health security of European farm animal and aquaculture and animal products. Researchers are able and willing to integrate new genomic and reproduction technologies into traditional breeding techniques and seek new sustainable ways of breeding carried out in dialogue with representative society organisations.

FAIP text suggestions for EC FP6 draft of 21 February 2001

Genomics and biotechnology should be developed for the benefit of European biotechnology and applied industries, not for biotechnology industries only, and preferably *European* industries. (Page 2 6th alinea).

[I am not sure what is meant here]

Thematic area 1.1.1 Genomics and biotechnology for health (page 17 and 18)

New knowledge in genomics and biotechnology should become available for the sectors that produce and process human food. If this thematic area is focused on human 'medical' health only, this knowledge will not become easily available to the food producing sectors so that they can integrate the knowledge into balanced / sustainable European food production. For these sectors contacts with medical research are not easy, as they tend to be concentrated in the medical sector. This thematic area, with its centres of excellence, integrated projects and integration of national research efforts would provide the opportunity for Europe to make this link that does not come naturally. This could be done by stimulating both projects on farm animals/aquaculture for human health and farm animals/aquaculture for animal health, and promoting integration with the other 'medical' projects.

- The word 'model' should be deleted (Justification... page 17, 1st alinea)/
- The actions envisaged are solely addressed in terms of medical health. They should include human, animal and plant health.
- Application of knowledge in technological platforms should include also research, centres of excellence and integrated projects for the development of improved animal health, including genomics and biotechnology for improved disease resistance and *food quality*.
- Support for innovative research in genomics in companies should also include companies and cooperatives with emerging genomics applications.

Thematic area 1.1.5. Food safety and health risks (page 23 and 24)

Health risks where genomics or biotechnology are at stake should be included in thematic area 1.1.1. also, because of the necessary interaction with other research and industry players in genomics and biotechnology.

- Traceability should include the whole chain, not GMO only or GMO particularly.[not clear – traceability of what, if not GM] In the case of farm animals for food production genetic modification will not be used until and if consumer acceptance allows it.
- Development of farm-to-fork systems and products. These new products can restore consumer trust and become an instrument for the development of new products. This possibility should become available for SMEs and several parties in the food chain should be encouraged to develop these type of farm-to-fork products.
- Development of cheap and reliable DNA identification systems to support the above-mentioned systems.

Thematic area 1.1.6. Sustainable development and global change

Inclusion of agriculture and aquaculture as important sectors for the development of sustainable food and a viably sustainable countryside.

Thematic area 1.2. Anticipating the EU's scientific and technological needs

Inclusion of research supporting the aims of the Common Agricultural and the Common Fisheries Policy as a major part of the thematic area.