

T-3.5 Adopted Policy on Genetic Modifications in Animals

POLICY

The WVA supports the use of modern genetic modification techniques (including recombinant DNA, gene deletions, gene reassortments and gene therapy in their various forms) as they represent a valid extension of traditional methods of genetic manipulation of micro-organisms, plants and animals (such as selection based on phenotypic traits, inbreeding, crossbreeding and various methods of mutagenesis and attenuation) but only where they are used for the benefit of human and/or animal health and welfare; and following a careful consideration of the ethical, safety and scientific issues involved.

BACKGROUND

1. The developing need to sustain human and animal health and welfare as well as the environment and biodiversity, has led to the development of new techniques of genetic modification in order to meet the demand.
2. Scientific and technical developments are integral parts of any healthy society. Biotechnologies (from rather simple to the most advanced ones) have been with us for a long time and will be so in the foreseeable future.
3. Any veterinary professional opinion on genetic modifications of living organisms should be based on the available scientific evidence.
4. Scientific data and documented history of safe use should consider the following concerns:
 - Animal welfare: e. g. altering the growth and development resulting in any suffering;
 - Animal health: e. g. incorporation of genetic material into the gut lining cells, cross- infections between organ donors and recipients ;
 - Public health: e. g. transfer of novel genetic material to human gut microflora;
 - Ethical issues: e. g. involvement of human genetic material; and
 - Environmental concerns: e. g. biodiversity threats
5. Veterinary professional opinion should help to safeguard individual choice and liberty by providing the public with up to date scientific information and should support individual consumer choice.