

## Preface:

### Still food for thought, but different questions

This year we celebrate 25 years of EurSafe congresses. In 1999 the first European Congress on Agricultural and Food Ethics was organised in Wageningen. That event also marked the launch of the European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics (EurSafe), which was officially founded in 2000. From the beginning, the aim of EurSafe was to stimulate an international academic and public debate on ethical issues in agriculture and food. Already from that first congress, the scope has also included the role and position of animals and environmental issues related to agriculture and food. And its approach has been interdisciplinary since 1999.

Looking at this volume of papers that have been submitted for the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress of the European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics, I think it fair to say that we have developed a valuable tradition that still builds on the ideas behind the first congress. With “Sustainable innovations for ethical food production and consumption” as its main theme, the congress includes contributions from many disciplines, from scholars with a variety of international backgrounds and on a broad range of topics that include cultural dimensions of food innovation, human–animal relationships as well as the ethical issues of novel technologies.

But this congress is much more than a confirmation that the issues and the approach of 1999 are still relevant. Food and agriculture are still food for thought and still in need of ethical reflection and discussion. However, the world has changed since then. And this is reflected in the themes of the EurSafe congresses. The early meetings focused on issues of food security, safety and quality, and the role of (bio) technology. In later years this shifted to issues of sustainability, culture and the role of professionals. And in recent years, issues of food security and safety have returned to the agenda. This is not just a return to ‘old’ issues, but a shift inspired by new challenges such as climate change, a growing world population and changes at the geopolitical level.

The search for sustainable innovations for ethical food production and consumption is therefore much more than a fashionable topic. There is an urgent need to discuss, analyse and contribute to a future of food production and consumption that takes into account the perspectives of humans, non-human animals and the environment. This volume shows the need of taking the ethical dimensions seriously in this context.

It is therefore important that this volume also indicates that there is more to celebrate than an anniversary. The papers show that EurSafe attracts scholars with inspiring and thought-provoking ideas and arguments. This shows that EurSafe is future-proof and an attractive community to discuss the still relevant ethics of agriculture and food, including animal and environmental issues. For the latter, we are pleased to join forces for this congress with the International Society for Environmental Ethics (ISEE) and have a stream dedicated to environmental ethics.

To the readers of this collection of congress papers, I hope that these extended abstracts will inspire and support your own work, and also show that science is a team effort. The individual papers are all worth reading, but it is in the context of all the papers that it becomes clear how they contribute to innovation towards sustainable agriculture and food. This is why the papers also form the basis for the presentations and discussions at the EurSafe congresses. This exchange is essential. New ideas and insights often emerge from the discussions. This applies not only to the biennial congresses, but also to EurSafe as a platform for exchange and networking. I therefore hope that this book will inspire you to follow the other activities of EurSafe and also to contribute to future activities, such as the EurSafe Congress in 2026.

On behalf of the EurSafe Board,

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