



Workshop II: Social acceptance of reproductive technologies in livestock

## **Social acceptance of Reproductive Technology in livestock**

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The manipulation of animal fertility has been essential for the development of current agricultural practise. The practice of utilising reproductive performance of animals can be traced back thousands of years, and on the whole, there is widespread acceptance of the strategic use of animal fertility in modern agriculture, even if this acceptance is borne of a certain ‘rational ignorance’. Reproductive technology is a rare example of scientific research that has made immediate translational impact into society. However, it’s position in society is more broad than ‘science’ since it touches on an emotive subject – about which almost everyone has an opinion. Indeed, few other areas of biological research have captivated front page headlines in quite the same way as reproductive breakthroughs; from the birth of the first IVF baby in 1978, through to successful cloning in the mid 90s and to the current era of genomic editing. There are a number of studies that explore the societal and ethical aspects of reproductive technology in human clinical medicine, however its use in agriculture can present even more challenging topics for society. The concept of combining of reproductive technology with agricultural practices can stir evocative and powerful views in wider society. However, these views may arise from limited information, or sensationalist representation in the media and online. It therefore becomes an imperative to take a proactive approach to defining and describing the use of reproductive technologies in a responsible and considered manner in livestock. Terms that are familiar to practitioners and researchers may be unclear and, even alarming to individuals with less understanding. The AETE seeks to embark on a journey to critically reflect on the real and perceived impacts of modern assisted reproductive practices on animal welfare and to consider the potential perception by the wider public. Moreover, this workshop will seek to consider the representation and appearance of reproductive technologies as they are used in livestock management and will run a workshop at the upcoming annual meeting. The aspiration from this workshop is to improve the readiness of the AETE to become involved in playing a wider role in informing public opinion.