

Patenting and Other Forms of Intellectual Property Protection in the Farm Animal Sector

The issue of protecting Intellectual Property in the Animal Science and industry sector is receiving growing attention worldwide. Intellectual Property (IP) protection can take various forms: patents, designs, copyright, trademark, trade practices and secrets, domain names, appellation of origin, and others. To this date, there are numerous relevant IP protection applications around the world ranging from farm products of designated origin (for example, in Greece alone there are about 20 cheeses labeled as such) to genes and markers to diagnostic tools to the Cornell patent on bovine herd management. Certain applications have stirred a lot of discussion and controversy.

The objective of this forum is to exchange views, ideas and comments on IP protection in the farm animal science and industry, drawing on recent developments and personal experiences. The well-written and insightful article by Rothschild et al (2004) "Patenting in animal breeding and genetics" will provide the basis of our discussion.

Some additional points and questions that may stimulate this exchange follow; the list is certainly not exhaustive.

1. Which form of IP protection, if any, do you believe is applicable and useful to the various sectors of the farm animal industry (production, product technology etc) and animal science (breeding, genetics, veterinary medicine, nutrition, physiology etc)?
2. What needs to be properly addressed to ensure that IP protection becomes a stimulator of innovation, scientific progress and entrepreneurship instead of a stifler of technological applications and services?
3. There are differences in IP protection, especially patenting, across country. How may this complicate things?
4. Give examples from your respective countries with which you agree or disagree.
5. If you were an IP protection advocate, which benefits would you emphasize upon and how would you reply to caveats presented by skeptics?
6. If you were an IP protection skeptic, which caveats would you emphasize upon and how would you reply to benefits presented by its advocates?

Georgios Banos
Professor, School of Veterinary Medicine
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Greece
banos@vet.auth.gr