

Greening the animal: the case of the enviropig

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Enviropig™ is a trademark used to designate a genetically modified line of Yorkshire pigs that produces an enzyme called phytase in the salivary glands, and secretes the enzyme in the saliva. This enzyme enables the pig to digest the high concentration of phosphorous that is present in the animal feed, and it reduces the environmental pollution caused by the high concentration of phosphorous in the pig's manure. The Enviropig research started in 1995 and was funded by various institutions, including the Canadian Farmer Organization called Ontario Pork. It was very successful and in 2006-7 obtained the Patents in USA and China.

However, in 2012, the University of Guelph, ended the Enviropig project because the Canadian 'Ontario Pork' suspended the funding as they feared a worldwide rejection of GM pork, that would affect the whole Canadian export sales. As part of this process the entire herd of Enviropigs was killed. (Clark, J., 2014).

Drawing on insights from STS this paper addresses an interest in knowledge controversies as generative of political events. Focusing on the uncertainties generated by the case of the Enviropig, it explores how such events give rise to new ways of practising relations between science and democracy (Callon et al, 2009).

This exploration starts to map the affordances of the newly created and short-lived enviropigs as they moved from being experimental animals, food animals, rescue animals and frozen semen with the aim of tracing the 'partisanship' (Whatmore, 2009) of scientific knowledge claims.

References

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