

# ENGINEERING AND CARING FOR LIVESTOCK FUTURES IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

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## Abstract:

The effects of climate change, deforestation, pollution and over-hunting fundamentally reshape multispecies relations across the globe. This panel will engage with the effects of these processes on various communities' relations with farm animals or livestock.

While sustainability discourses typically enact wildlife as a precious, vulnerable resources worth cherishing, farm animals, in the Anthropocene, tend to emerge as deeply problematic, polluting nature-culture hybrids or even monsters (Anneberg et al., 2013; Tsing et al., 2017).

And yet, environmental concerns spur changes in animal husbandry practices, business models, farming techniques and forms of life. As the effects of cattle "flatulence" (Govindrajan, 2016) are felt around the globe, scientists, engineers and farmers experiment with food rations, and other interventions on cows' bodies to limit their emissions, including innovations in livestock genomics that attend to the future animal's environmental impact. Meanwhile, livestock's impact and dependance on water reserves and soil quality evoke changes in global trade networks of livestock breeds, reconfiguring landscapes and livelihoods.

Such developments spur complex ethical and political questions. Farm animals emerge at the heart of troublesome "more-than-human" biopolitical projects (Asdal et al., 2017); involving situated assessments of who/what deserves protection and what is considered expendable for the greater good. In this panel, we explore the practices, technologies, politics and ethics of experiments in multispecies cohabitation involving (but not exclusively) humans and livestock; beings whose conditions of possibility are, in complicated ways, enclosed in each other's existence (Mol, 2021).

We ask: How do climate change and agricultural transformations shape each other? How to practices aimed at creating more sustainable food systems impact the lives of farm animals and their keepers? How does the practice, governance and commercialization of livestock production incorporate, negotiate, resist or displace concerns with pollution, deforestation, biodiversity loss and other planetary threats? Rather than answering such questions in general terms, we invite contributors to tease out the situated ethics of particular multispecies entanglements. What are the "histories, imagined futures, ecologies and configurations of life and death" (Van Dooren, 2019) animating situated sites and situations? What do these teach us about how relations between humans, farm animals and their environments could be otherwise?

We welcome ethnographic papers that address a range of topics and places; as well as theoretical or methodological contributions, historical examinations or notes from the field.

## References

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**Key words:**

Livestock; Anthropocene; Multispecies Ethnography.