



EADGENE

European Animal Disease Genomics Network of Excellence for Animal Health and Food

April 2009

EDITORIAL

This is the 14th EADGENE Newsletter.

We have articles about

- Ethical workshops
- EADGENE-SABRE Industry days
- EADGENE days

The "in the Picture" guest of this issue is **Michael Watson**.

Ethical workshop

In the EADGENE project one of the work packages (WP 12.1) focuses on ethical aspects of research. The overall objectives of WP12.1 were to identify and propose improvements for ethical issues concerning the EADGENE project. Several workshops were organised to identify and discuss the ethical issues.

In these ethical reflexion workshops, three themes of ethical issues were brought forward, being 'Public Relations versus public relations', 'Openness versus confidentiality' and 'Animal welfare', and were the main focus on which ethical issues should be addressed.

The first four workshops were organised only for the scientific community, in Roslin (UK), Liege (Belgium), Wageningen (The Netherlands) and INRA, Paris (France). However, the local workshops were not completely internal to the scientific community, because the breeding industry participated which is an external perspective. The fifth workshop was held in Roslin, where not only the EADGENE partners but also selected external stakeholders (mainly from various NGOs), were invited.

It is of course interesting to compare the workshop with external stakeholders with the four internal local workshops. However, it is a difficult comparison; at least, it is difficult to draw strong conclusions from it.

The overall impression is that the presence of external stakeholder representatives did not make the outcome very different. Perhaps it made it *slightly* different in terms of stressing particularly the consumer perspective and the concern for the animals more insistently than it otherwise would have been. However, the parties clearly respected each other, and the discussions were constructive in nature.

Finally, the discussions at the fifth workshop were more general in nature than the discussions at the local workshops. This did not appear to be a problem. However, perhaps it took more time to define the subject matter in the groups, and to some extent, this resulted in a sense of slight time pressure. The perception of time pressure could also be due to the fact that more perspectives (from more stakeholder groups being present) need more time to be presented.

One of the outcomes of these workshops has been, at the request of some participants, an on-line manual for the partner institutions to make it possible to have similar local ethical matrix workshops for ethical reflection.



Hyperlinks

EADGENE

- [ORGANISATION](#)
- [INFORMATION](#)
- [PARTNERS](#)
- [NETWORK NEWS](#)
(internal newsletter)



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'I think he's got a bad case of Bluetooth Disease'

www.cartoonstock.com

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EADGENE-SABRE Industry days 2009

Rome, Italy

Cutting edge results from the SABRE and EADGENE projects, that are of interest to the animal breeding industry, will be presented at the FAO premises in **Rome**, on Wednesday afternoon **3 June 2009** and Thursday morning **4 June 2009**.

You will be informed about developments in new technologies to serve animal breeding. The second half of Wednesday afternoon will be dedicated to various animal disease developments, among others an update of the Animal Health Data Comparison initiative. The next day will continue with a session on the latest and most recently funded European projects, and will finish with the possibilities of ontology for your breeding programme work.

[More information and registration](#)





EADGENE days 2009

Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, France

The fifth and final EADGENE annual conference on Animal genomics Research will take place on 13th-15th October 2009. This venue is particularly appropriate for an animal genomics conference as 2009 is the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth, and it is also the 150th anniversary of the publication of his enormously influential book, "On the Origin of Species."

The main 2-day conference will feature a series of talks on the latest genetics and genomics research and technologies by keynote speakers and leading specialists in their fields, presentations on the results of the EADGENE project, and there will be a particular emphasis on the future of animal health genomics. The conference will be followed by two 1-day satellite workshops on mastitis and on animal health data comparison.

Tuesday 13th October

Session 1: Technologies and Approaches

- ◆ Next generation sequencing
- ◆ miRNA
- ◆ Genetic-epidemiological models
- ◆ Live stock disease resistance traits: the phenotype gap
- ◆ Microarray quality control exchange experiment
- ◆ Post-analyses of microarray data
- ◆ Systems biology in animal science

Session 2: Research Results

- ◆ Population genetics and disease genetics
- ◆ QTL mapping applied to disease resistance in salmon
- ◆ EADGENE's mastitis research
- ◆ EADGENE's technology transfer poultry projects
- ◆ Ethics
- ◆ Results of short-term stays at other partners
- ◆ Submitted short communications*

* Abstract submission for short communications opens on 1st April 2009, please see www.eadgene.info for details.

Wednesday 14th October

Session 3: Focus on Pathogens

- ◆ Pathogen genomics: approaches and applications
- ◆ Emerging and re-emerging viruses
- ◆ EADGENE's *E. coli* research
- ◆ EADGENE's Salmonella and TLR4 research
- ◆ EADGENE's mastitis pathogen research
- ◆ EADGENE's fish pathogen research
- ◆ Virulence of *Streptococcus suis*

Session 4: Breeding to improve animal health

- ◆ The scientific view of genomic selection
- ◆ Industry application of genomic selection in cattle
- ◆ Industry application of genomic selection in chickens
- ◆ Roundtable discussion

Thursday 15th October

- ◆ Mastitis Workshop: Biology and Meta-analysis
- ◆ Animal Health Data Comparison (closed meeting)

[More information and registration](#)

In the picture:

Michael Watson

I am currently head of the bioinformatics research group, in the centre for integrative biology at the Institute for Animal Health. My group focuses on analysis of genomic and post-genomics datasets, with an emphasis on novel tool and algorithm development of relevance to farm animal health. The group has enjoyed much success recently, of which I am very proud. This is my first job in academia and as you will see, I've moved around a lot!

I was born in Hexham in 1975, a small town in the far North East of England. I grew up in Newcastle, and with both of my Grandfathers being coal miners, I am a Geordie through and through. Despite this setback, I managed to secure myself a place at the University of York studying Biology from 1993 to 1996. After graduating with honours, I realised that the mathematical and computational aspect had interested me the most and so I stayed on for a Masters degree in Biological Computation.

After graduating, I joined the genetics department at GlaxoWellcome as a bioinformatician. There I worked on all aspects of expression array informatics. From there I joined Incyte Genomics, a large US biotechnology company with offices in Cambridge, and worked on their SNP detection informatics, and then moved on once again to Paradigm Therapeutics. Finally, in 2002 I moved to Compton to take up the role as Head of Informatics and Bioinformatics at the IAH, a role I still enjoy to this day.

I live with my girlfriend, Els, in Reading, a town about 30 miles West of London. I enjoy spending time with friends, and try to play football once a week with colleagues. Els and I also enjoy travelling, and have trips to both Bruges and Tuscany planned for this year – the Bruges trip planned after watching the film, In Bruges! We also enjoy live music and comedy, and we will go to Razorlight and Maximo Park (bands!) and Ross Noble (comedian!) in May.



Michael (on the right) playing football at the annual IAH science meeting, Poole, UK, 2008