

Reviews

Agricultural Ethics: Issues for the 21st Century

Peter G. Hartel, Kathryn Paxton George, and James Vorst, editors. Soil Science Society of America, Inc., American Society of Agronomy, Inc., and Crop Science Society of America, Inc., Madison, Wis. 1994. 70 pages, soft cover.

"Ethical values" are one of this year's hot political topics. In ACE, we debate ethical values in affirming our professionalism, such as the propriety of using non-member funds to pay for our activities.

But why "agricultural ethics"? These seven papers, written for a Tri-Societies symposium, present differing views of acceptable behavior by agriculturists as stewards of soil, water, and biological resources, and as providers of safe and nutritious food and fibers. They focus on three topical issues: animal rights and animal welfare, conventional vs. alternative agriculture, and world hunger.

Why is this important for agricultural communicators? First, we must have a working knowledge of ethical issues if we are to interpret accurately our institutions to their stakeholders. Second, our communication knowledge and skill are essential at the decision-makers' table when standards of ethical conduct are defined.

There is no way today's agricultural communicators can avoid being involved with matters of ethics. If the concept is new to you, this book is a great introduction. For those with more experience, it is a useful reference to key issues that will be with us well into the next century.

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