Toward trusted farm data sharing practices

What role can a Code of Ethics play?

Simone van der Burg & Mark Ryan
EU Data space for farm data

• Foster development of a common data space to foster knowledge, innovation & strengthen market activity; and a set of sub-data spaces

• Overarching data space will be regulated: GDPR, for example, which protects personal data, which concerns ‘any information which is related to an identified or identifiable natural person’

• Governance framework for agricultural data space is to build on experiences with the Code of Conduct; self-regulation
EU Code: Shape trust by means of a contract

• Recognizes the right of the ‘data originator’ to control the use of the data and determine who can have access to it
• Contract should be stated in a clear language, which specifies
  • terms and definitions,
  • the purpose of collecting, sharing and processing data,
  • rights and obligations that parties have related to data,
  • information on how data are stored,
  • verification mechanisms for the data originator,
  • transparent mechanisms for adding new/future uses
Five principles

- Data ownership
- Data access/control/portability
- Data protection and transparency
- Privacy and security
- Liability and intellectual property rights
Strengths

- Serious attempt to protect personal interests, rights and freedoms
- Shaped by actors in the ecosystem; is therefore supported by them
- Helps to move towards a practical solution: a contract
What role can a code play?

Throughout 1990s: proliferation of codes

Goal: avoid business malpractice and misconduct, by fostering development of a *moral culture*

Not always effective because:

- Confusion: codes are often not clearly formulated
- Codes are not always carefully implemented and administered
- Compliance depends on alignment with values that are recognized and supported by professionals/employees targeted by the code
Alignment with other codes of ethics? (Microsoft; code for ICT professionals)
Alignment with values of stakeholders?

- Autonomy and transparency
- Fairness (data access/distribution of benefits)
- Care for the commons
- Inclusiveness
Alignment with values of stakeholders?

- Responsible research and innovation approach
- 22 focusgroups with 233 farmers, tech companies and researchers across the EU
- Enhance reflection in three stages
Four vignettes

• The ‘I choose’ vignette
  • The farmer is at the steering wheel: he/she decides about data sharing

• The data library
  • Data are stored in libraries and policy is developed to govern all data that are part of it

• The laissez-faire or market vignette
  • Development of do’s and don’t of farm data sharing are governed by the market

• The value-chain vignette
  • Data are shared among partners who do business together in the value chain
• (..) Well I think the farmers are going to want to make the ‘I choose’ model the default because they just don't trust the system (..) (Young farmers, CEJA, North EU)

• (..) you’ve control -or I’ve control- you can choose to read the terms and conditions. If you don’t agree with them then you know you don’t have to go ahead. (Ireland, older Sheep farmers)
...doubts whether contracts (always) serve it

- Feeling pushed to make a choice
  ...a lot of times you have to tick yes. (laughing) you have no choice, for otherwise you cannot use the service. (Poland, older Potato farmers)

- Difficult to understand/provide information

- Unclarity about who is to decide about what data (raw, processed, combined, interpreted)
Fairness

- Discussion about fair access and fair distribution of benefits
  - Farmers complain they don’t have access to their own data
  - Farmers suspect others will benefit from their data

- I mean, if you find only big companies collect all the data maybe they will have all the information. But (..) the farmers cannot take advantage of this data because finally they only will be in the big companies’ hands. (Young farmers, CEJA, South Europe, Group 2)
Farmers/SME’s/Researchers mention many public reasons to share data for:

- Foster food safety
- Enhance public acceptance of food production
- Support research and innovation
- Show compliance with the law
- Protect the environment

Store data in a ‘library’!

Who should be in charge of the library?

Government, companies, farmers, a combination? Inclusiveness!!
Data space is abstract

• Who can you call to complain or get info?

• So, if (...) my data end up somewhere where I do not want them, what do I do? Who do I call? When there’s a data library, at least there’s a phone number I can call and there’s someone who has to deal with my complaints or I will stop sharing my data. (Young farmers, CEJA, Mid-West EU)
Compliance depends on alignment with values of stakeholders.....?

EU Code of conduct
• Data ownership
• Data access/control/portability
• Data protection and transparency
• Privacy and security
• Liability and intellectual property rights

Stakeholders
• Autonomy and transparency
• Fairness (fair access; fair distribution of benefits)
• Care for the commons
• Inclusiveness

• .....contributes to trust
Conclusion

• Code of conduct needs enrichment (focus on more values; open up discussion about their content and correct application)

• Careful consideration should go into how the code is being implemented and administered
  • Management of organizations should support it; employees should receive training
  • Procedures should be adopted to deal with misconduct; whistle blowers should be protected

• Language of the code should be clear and concise
References


