

## **Ethics and Pressure**

By John Fernández

A pharmaceutical company approves funds for a project to test a new drug that could improve the reproductive performance of bovines in a tropical environment. The author of the proposal, a college professor, will supervise a graduate student, who will work on the project as a part of the requirements for his doctoral degree. Two flocks were to be used: a private, commercial one, and a governmental flock from the Agricultural Experimental Station. The study would compare the effects of the recommended dose of the drug against a drug-free control group. In order for the study to acquire relevance in the commercial and competitive areas, private flocks of larger volume which belong to important clients are used; even though the workers in such place, in general, are not trained for the experimental procedures.

When all the data was gathered at the end of the experimental period, the results in the Agricultural Experimental Station's flock show a clear advantage towards the treatment with the drug, while the results in the commercial unit show no differences. When the experimentation process was concluded, the student listened to some commentaries from the employees working with the commercial flock made him believe that the treatment was not given in the proper manner. Unfortunately, he lacks the written evidence to corroborate his belief. The data of the commercial flock was absolutely necessary to achieve the objectives of the study.

The student wants to finish his thesis and graduate because he has already been offered a job. The pharmaceutical company, on the other hand, puts pressure on the professor to finish the report so that he can submit it and publish the results.

Would it be possible to finish the thesis and publish the results on time while not violating any ethical principles? Explore and explain this possibility. Why?