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The vegetarian meal plan

Note: The following describes a real case.

A professor at a major state university has received federal funding for a program on ethics which life sciences professors from around the country will attend. The professor is a vegetarian on moral grounds. In making arrangements for the five-day program, he specifies that all of the (optional) lunches will be lacto-ovo vegetarian. Several of the participants are outraged. In fact, one sends a long, angry email message to professors across the country and to highly placed personnel in federal agencies, including the National Science Foundation, which funded the program.

Questions:

1. Why do you think some of the participants were outraged?

2. Was the professor wrong to design the lunches this way?

3. Should funding for future programs be rescinded because of the meal plan?

4. Suppose the professor in question had believed, on moral grounds, that every meal should include some broccoli and he had insisted that the lunches all do so. Would this have angered participants? What if the professor believed, on moral grounds, that people should consume some animal flesh at each meal and had designed the menus accordingly?