

The National Academy of Sciences put several nonscientists on the Committee on Gene Drive Research in Non-Human Organisms: Recommendations for Responsible Conduct. That decision suggests an interest in thinking about the relationship between science and the moral questions it raises in a broader way than is sometimes the case. The report that emerged from the committee's work is interesting for at least three broad kinds of claims it made about values. First, the report holds that decisions about research on gene drives (when to go forward, how to go forward, how to think about risks and outcomes generally, why start doing the science in the first place) turn fundamentally on questions about values. Second, in thinking about these values, the report takes a broader view of what kinds of values should be allowed to come into play than has often been the case with high-level committees charged with offering recommendations about genetic science. Third, the report endorses a version of a precautionary stance in deciding how to go forward with the research—a stance that allows the science to proceed but in stages and with opportunities to rethink and reevaluate.