

BIOBEHAVIORAL SYSTEMS

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Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D.
Director
National Human Genome Research Institute
National Institutes of Health
Building 31, Room 4B09
31 Center Drive, MSC 2152
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20892-2152

Dear Dr. Collins,

This letter is a follow-up of my letter to you of 5 March 2003 concerning the priority you are giving to the Bovine Genome Project.

The DHHS report of 12 March 2003 has affirmed that the \$50 million Bovine Genome Project will move forward with half of this money being raised from private sources. The DHHS also quotes you as saying:

"By comparing the human genome with the genomes of different organisms, we can better understand the structure and function of human genes and thereby develop new strategies in the battle against human disease," Dr. Collins explained. "The more genomes we have, the more powerful this tool becomes."

As indicated in my prior letter to you, the greatest health problems of *homo sapiens* are depression and violence that should be illuminated by contrasting the genome of our closest genetic relative --the bonobo chimpanzee-- which is the most peaceful/harmonious primate on the planet-- with the genome of *homo sapiens*, which is the most violent primate on the planet. A further question raised was the chromosomal distribution of the 1% DNA difference between these two primate species and whether such distribution might provide some insights on the genetic contributions to peaceful or violent behaviors.

Certainly, these human health issues are of transcendent importance compared to any health benefits that can be envisioned from the bovine genome project, which raises the question as to which genome project as the highest priority, what amount of monies have been allocated to your chimpanzee genome project, and what specific health issues are being addressed by the chimpanzee genome project?

These questions become of some significance when it is recognized that State-specific commercial interests seem to be driving the bovine genome project, where the DHHS also reported:

“Richard Gibbs, Ph.D., director of Baylor College of Medicine's Human Genome Sequencing Center in Houston, said, "We are extremely excited by the level of enthusiasm for this project by the NHGRI and Governor Perry's commitment to make the Cow Genome Project a reality in Texas. This effort will have a great impact on health, agriculture and for building biotechnology in the state." (attached).

I will look forward to your clarification of these issues and to knowing the specific health priorities that you have established with respect to the human genome project and the distribution of monies that are targeted to these specific health priorities.

Sincerely,

James W. Prescott, Ph.D.