

## Editorial

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In our Editorial in the first issue of 2005 (Naylor & Wiseman 2005), we celebrated the Journal's achievement of 100 years of publication and introduced the Centenary Reviews. We have been gratified at the interest in the Centenary Reviews and the willingness of authors to consider writing them. This, coupled with the observation that the first volume of the *Journal of Agricultural Science* was 1905–06, has enabled us to continue the series of Centenary Reviews into the 2006 volume. We thank the various authors for their time and effort in writing these reviews. In 2006 we anticipate Centenary Reviews on international wheat breeding, crop losses, lentils, yield forecasting and grapevine evolution, amongst others.

The publishing world continues to change. The *Journal of Agricultural Science* is not immune from this and continues to evolve. Since changing over to web-based submission via Manuscript Central (go to <http://jagricsci.manuscriptcentral.com>) our number of submissions has increased by about a quarter. Despite the additional workload, the time from submission to first decision for most papers is now less than 8 weeks.

With the help of the staff at Cambridge University Press we have moved to 'continuous publishing'. A paper, once accepted by the Editorial Offices, is sent to the Press to be typeset. All the checking by editors and authors is done using .pdf files and once the proof is finally accepted, it is mounted on the web site as a 'forthcoming paper'. The time from sending from the Editorial Office to appearing on the web site as a forthcoming paper is 6 weeks. Our improved speed of publication is an advantage to authors and to readers.

We have rewritten our remit to make more explicit what we would consider for publication. This is a very broad set of topics, all concerned with the advance of agriculture and the use of land resources throughout the world. Our aim is to publish original scientific work related to strategic and applied studies in all aspects of agricultural science and exploited species, as well as reviews of scientific topics of current agricultural relevance. Specific topics of interest include (but are not confined to): crop physiology, yield formation, plant breeding, crop improvement, crop protection, management of weeds, pests and diseases, seed science and technology, engineering solutions, decision support systems, land use, environmental impact of cropping and animal systems, biotechnology, food/feed and product quality, water and fertilizer management, organic farming, sustainable

agriculture, field, orchard and plantation crops, tillage, soil physics, soil chemistry, soil management, grassland management, nutrient mining, intercropping, rotations, integrated crop management, impacts of climate change on crops, animals and agricultural systems, rural biodiversity, biological control, pollution prevention, experimental design and statistical analysis, the application of new analytical and study methods, animal metabolism and nutrition, reproduction, modelling of crop and animal responses to environmental factors, energy and nutrient requirements, crop and animal responses to climate changes, grazing behaviour and forage intake, responses to anti-nutritive factors, digestive physiology and gut health. We have not mentioned molecular studies. Our belief is that the use of molecular techniques is permitting a greater understanding of the underlying biology of the systems exploited in agriculture. The *Journal* would wish to publish the findings revealed by the application of molecular (and indeed any relevant) methods. The journals also publishes book reviews and letters.

The appraisal of research is increasingly being undertaken in order to determine the relative standing of institutions and individuals and the 'value for money' from funds allocated from various sources. In the UK, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (& Wales) (otherwise HEFCE) has at previous assessments used journal impact factors to judge the 'worth' of papers. However, HEFCE have issued guidelines for the next Research Assessment Exercise (RAE 2008), which recognizes that there are large variations between different areas of research that are not quality-related. All types of research journals will now be treated equally. We are sure this is important. Disciplines like agriculture, with a small 'constituency', necessarily have journals with smaller impact factors than journals in 'larger' disciplines, simply because there are fewer people researching in the subject area. Agriculture journals have suffered from the view (indeed the instruction from some department heads and research managers) that it is better to publish in any high impact journal than in a relevant one. We look forward to increasing numbers of high quality submissions uploaded to the JAS website.

### REFERENCE

- NAYLOR, R. E. L. & WISEMAN, J. (2005). Editorial. *Journal of Agricultural Science, Cambridge* **143**, 1–2.