

## Volume 150: Editorial

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In 2005, The Journal of Agricultural Science, Cambridge celebrated its centenary publication year. Now in 2012, because of the vagaries of Volume numbering, we have reached Volume 150. Again, something to celebrate.

The continuing purpose of The Journal of Agricultural Science, Cambridge, has always been to publish peer-reviewed scientific papers on agricultural subjects. In defining the original remit of the Journal the scope was to be wide, including biological or physical subjects, provided the question bore on an aspect of agriculture somewhere in the world. The reports were required to be of original work. The first Editorial stated that reports of ‘demonstration plots, or manurial and variety tests of an ordinary commercial character, will not be admitted, nor papers dealing with general farming as distinct from agricultural science’.

One hundred and fifty volumes later this remit still holds. The Journal of Agricultural Science, Cambridge, still maintains its breadth of scope, with papers on all aspects of science which bear on animal, crop and soil science worldwide.

Agriculture has changed since 1905. Agricultural science has changed too. New questions are posed by farmers or policy makers, and new scientific techniques for measurement have enabled new answers to be produced. The papers published in The Journal of Agricultural Science, Cambridge, reflect the changing scientific understanding and also the changing priorities for agriculture on this planet with now 7 billion mouths to feed. In recent years, we have innovated through publishing research ‘themes’, with papers on the theme often spread over a number of issues. This is because we wish to demonstrate the breadth of agricultural science in each issue of the Journal. Examples include the Centenary Reviews, The Wheat Symposium, Animal Modelling, and Climate Change and Agriculture. Articles in all of these themes, as well as standard papers, are represented in the ‘most cited’ and ‘most downloaded’ lists.

In August 2004, we moved to web-based submission via ScholarOne (go to the website at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jagricsci>). With the current volume, we change the look of the Journal by changing the page size (to A4) and the type font (to Optima).

The aim is to make the page more pleasing in appearance and, more importantly, easier to read. Regular followers of the Journal will have spotted these changes in the papers prepared for the forthcoming issues, available through The Journal of Agricultural Science, Cambridge home page as *FirstView* papers (go to <http://journals.cambridge.org/AGS>).

This evolution of the Journal does not affect our core purpose of publishing original scientific work relating to agriculture worldwide, nor our values in selecting for publication only those submissions that make an original contribution to our understanding of agricultural species or systems, or insights into how and why they behave as they do. In selecting submissions, we are crucially dependent on the international reviewers chosen by the editors. Referees give their time willingly and free, and the Journal owes a lot to them. We recognize this by publishing a list of referees who have helped the Editorial Board each year; the list for 1 October 2010 to 25 October 2011 is available as a Supplementary File (online only) to this Editorial [Suppl Mat 1]. Nevertheless, employers often only consider the number of papers published as a measure of ‘success’ of the individual or the institution, which sometimes makes individual scientists reluctant to devote their time to reviewing. But the same institutions that want their staff to publish in prestigious journals undermine the peer review system by not valuing the ‘measure of esteem’ indicated by being asked to review a submission.

In another 50 volumes there will still be farming, though it will have different priorities and operate within different constraints imposed by climate and by the human population and societies. Some of the constraints and possibilities were expounded in the Supplement to Volume 149, published in early 2011 as part of the UK Government Office for Science Foresight Project on Global Food and Farming Issues. In the future, both farmers and policy makers will need answers to technical questions and the results will still need to be disseminated. So the Journal will still be needed and intends to continue as an important primary source of knowledge and inspiration. We will continue to publish good quality papers on agricultural science. For that we are dependent on the agricultural and agriculture-related scientists who do

the work, and on the political and financial support which agricultural scientific research receives.

**Supplementary Material Reference**

Suppl Mat 1. Sage, A. M. JAS Referees Acknowledgement 2011.pdf *Journal of Agricultural Science,*

*Cambridge* 2010; Suppl. Mat1 (<http://journals.cambridge.org/AGS>).

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