

# Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry

JANUARY 1997  
VOLUME 45, NUMBER 1

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## Editorial Policy Update

As you have no doubt noticed, the editorial office of the *Journal of Agricultural Food Chemistry* has, as of March 1996, been transferred from Washington, DC, to the University of Minnesota. Since this transfer has resulted in some changes in our editorial process, the purpose of this editorial is to bring our readers up to date on some of the more significant changes that have been made since that time.

Two of the most important ways in which a scientific journal can best serve the interests of its authors and reader audience are to make sure that each paper has received a fair scientific evaluation and to minimize insofar as possible the time lag between the submission of a manuscript and its eventual publication. To this end it may be of interest to our contributors and readers to know how the editorial staff of this journal attempts to accomplish these objectives.

**1. Acknowledgment.** The receipt of a manuscript is immediately acknowledged, usually by fax or e-mail. Each manuscript is initially screened by the editor to make sure that its content falls within the scope of the journal, and an immediate rejection is sent to the authors if the paper is considered unacceptable on this basis.

**2. Assignment of Reviewers.** Each paper is screened for content by the editorial staff, and potential reviewers are selected on the basis of their expertise, availability, and past performance. All of this information can be retrieved from a computerized data base referred to as EMTS (Editorial Management and Tracking System). Areas of expertise are based on the response received from questionnaires that have been sent to over **5000** prospective reviewers. This data base is continually updated and expanded as new reviewers are added.

A preliminary letter, accompanied by the title page and the abstract, is sent to each of the selected reviewers to ascertain whether they are willing to review a particular paper. If possible, this is done by fax transmission, and a reply is requested within **24 h**. If a positive response is received, the paper is sent to at least **three** reviewers, who are requested to return their reviews within **two** weeks. International reviewers are asked to return their reviews within **three** weeks.

**3. Initial Evaluation of Reviews.** Reviewers' responses are then evaluated by the Editor or Associate Editors, and one of the following recommendations is made: (a) acceptance without further revision, (b) major or minor revision depending on the degree to which the paper should be revised, or (c) rejection. Authors are informed of the editorial decision on their paper, and, if a revision has been requested, they must return their revised manuscript with an itemized list of the changes or responses to every point raised by the reviewers. Authors are given a maximum of **two** months to resubmit their revised paper. Any revised paper submitted beyond this time will be considered to be a new paper and may be subjected to another round of reviews.

**4. Decision on Revised Papers.** Editors evaluate the adequacy of the response the authors have provided. If the editors feel that they are unable to reach a decision as to the acceptability of the revised paper, it is returned to the original reviewers for further evaluation. At this point a decision is made as to whether the paper can be accepted or rejected or, in extreme cases, may be worthy of further consideration if further revised. All accepted manuscripts are then forwarded to the Editorial Office in Columbus, OH, for final editing and page composition. A proof is then sent to the corresponding author.

Before concluding this editorial, I cannot resist the temptation to apprise our readers of the fact that this journal was ranked **number 1** of **101** agricultural journals in 1994 and number 2 in 1995 (*Journal of Citation Reports*, 1994, 1995). This ranking is based on the so-called "impact factor", which is calculated by dividing the citations of a given year to a journal's papers of the two previous years by the number of papers published in those two years. It is indeed gratifying to know that the quality of the papers published by this journal is such that they have merited this high degree of recognition by scientists working in the fields of agriculture and foods.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jim E. Simon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "J".

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