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Editorial

The Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry **Past, Present, and Future**

The *Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry* (JAFC) first appeared as Vol. 1, No. 1, on April 1, 1953. The need for such a journal was clearly expressed by its first editor, Walter J. Murphy, who, in his editorial which appeared in that issue, stated:

"No other journal published in the United States professes to cover the broad field of the chemistry of agriculture, food, and nutrition. Only the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* provides a common meeting ground for all of the scientists and technologists concerned with food, clothing, shelter, and industrial products from agriculture."

The first articles to appear were a series of papers taken from a symposium on pesticides sponsored by the Pesticides Subdivision. In addition to papers dealing with research reports, there were a number of other sections that covered such items as equipment and new products, news from Washington, new book reports, and business and financial reports. Because of this broad coverage, it was necessary to publish biweekly issues. It was later deemed desirable to restrict the journal only to the publication of research papers, a decision that led, in January 1955, to a reduction in the number of pages per issue. As a result, the journal then appeared monthly instead of biweekly.

The pressure of being editor of three other ACS journals as well as JAFC prompted Walter Murphy to resign as editor, and, in July 1956, he was replaced by Rodney N. Hader. A decision was made in 1960 to further restrict the publication to a single issue every two months. In 1965 Phil Bates was appointed editor, a position he held until July 1982, when I was selected as his successor.

At the time I assumed editorship there had been published by the end of 1982 a total of 315 manuscripts totaling 1262 pages. These numbers escalated until, in 1990, to accommodate this increase in the number of papers being published, it was decided to again publish the journal every month.

Up until 1995 all manuscripts submitted to JAFC were initially received by a Manuscript Office at the ACS headquarters in Washington before being sent to the editor for further action. In the fall of that year the decision was made to close the manuscript office in Washington and to transfer the entire operation of the editorial office to the University of Minnesota. By March of 1996 the editorial office in Minnesota was up and running.

As I leave my job as editor I can look back with satisfaction for having seen JAFC undergo a fourfold increase in the number of published papers over the past 17 years. An even greater source of pride, however, is the fact that this journal has been ranked (by the *Journal of Citation Reports*) over the past several years as 1 or 2 of 101 agricultural journals in terms of the so-called "impact factor", an index that serves as a measure of the degree to which papers in a given journal are cited by other authors. This degree of success would not have been possible without the able assistance of my two associate editors, Marsh Phillips and Wayne Ivie, and my very capable staff. I am also indebted to those of you who have been willing to participate in the peer review process by giving of your time and expertise despite your busy schedules.

As we look forward to the next millenium I believe we can expect an ever increasing number of papers dealing with such important and exciting areas of research as neutraceuticals, antioxidants, genetic engineering, and food safety. As I now pass the baton on to my successor, Jim Seiber, I am confident he will succeed in maintaining the high standard of scientific quality that has made JAFC one of the leading journals in the fields of agricultural and food chemistry. I wish him every success in this endeavor.



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