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Scholarly progression

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Editorial

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In 2015 the Journal of Dairy Research created its 'Our JDR' Community site, building a network of dairy researchers that now numbers almost 4000. As part of its service to contributors, the Journal started to operate its own purpose-built Submission and Peer Review system through that site, replacing a completely ad-hoc process of submission by personal email to the Editor. One of our objectives when we devised the process was to maintain that personal touch, and it is still the case that I, as Editor, see every manuscript that is submitted to the Journal. It has been an enjoyable task, but one of fairly considerable magnitude: in those intervening years we have received and evaluated around 3000 manuscripts, so we can claim to have a certain amount of experience! Another reason for creating an online submission and evaluation portal was to keep abreast of the times, and that remains an important objective. Research is (or should be) a dynamic and evolving process, one that continuously breaks new ground. The new ground that this Journal has helped to break is to be found all over the world, but especially in South America, the Indian sub-continent, the Middle East and Asia. It is a source of considerable satisfaction to me that we are helping a new generation of dairy researchers to establish themselves in geographical areas that only a few decades ago would have been stony ground for research. During my time at Copenhagen the Department adopted a 'lighthouse' strategy, the idea being that the light would shine a route to the future. I was somewhat amused by the notion that a lighthouse, whose true purpose was to keep ships away from treacherous areas rather than guide them to safe harbour, was to be used to illuminate our research path. I would have preferred the metaphor of a searchlight, and I believe that we owe it to these young and able researchers to illuminate the path to new and ever more exciting discovery. So we cannot afford to stand still. At some point in the not too distant future, new and fresh blood should take over the running of the Journal, bringing novel ideas and insight to the task. For that to happen, our 'Heath Robinson' submission and Peer Review system needs to be replaced. The Community site software has many virtues, not least its adaptability and, I believe, user-friendliness. However, it only remains fit for purpose by virtue of its creator (me!) being there to oil, grease and generally maintain the mechanisms. Change is needed. Over the last few months we have been working quietly behind the scenes with our colleagues at Cambridge University Press (CUP) to put in place the 'Our JDR' Scholar One software. Those who have published with us recently will be aware that a restricted version of this has been in use for some time, and may have wondered why their Submitted, Peer Reviewed, Revised and already Accepted manuscript had then to be 'submitted' again, to that new system. I can reveal the answer! For us (me, primarily!) it represented a gentle slope on an otherwise steep learning curve of gaining familiarity with a proprietary software of which I previously had only limited experience. For CUP, it allowed an easier passage of the manuscript through into their systems from ours. Having shown that it would work, CUP then developed a full-function test site and some of our Editorial Board members (EBM) have been busy pushing dummy manuscripts through that system. The testing has completed and we have now adopted the new system. The complete set of functionalities, some of which have been specifically developed for us, have been transferred to the Our JDR site on Scholar One (https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/our-jdr). All submissions and peer reviewing is now done through Scholar One. So, you may ask, *How will this affect me?* Many authors will already be familiar with Scholar One, perhaps through its alternative name of Manuscript Central. Whether you find it easier or less easy than the Community site system is very much a frame of mind issue: personally I hate the time involved in learning a new software but usually enjoy the process of doing so, and that is the case here. Setting up a personal profile takes a little time but is a one-off process, although regrettably Scholar One does not yet have a way of transferring profiles from Journal to Journal, so you will need to create an account with us. You will use the same account for submitting your own manuscripts and evaluating others for us as a referee. *How will it affect my manuscript?* Previously, submitted manuscripts were Validated by the Editor and, if found suitable, assigned to an EBM for a general scientific assessment (Progression). Articles that passed this stage then went to External Peer Review. If that review was favourable, there was usually some revision to be done, after which (and assuming the revision was satisfactory) the EBM made a Recommendation to publish. The Final Decision to do so was taken by the Editor. These exact same steps of Validation, Progression, Peer Review, Recommendation and Final Decision (shown in Fig. 1) are replicated in the Scholar One process, the only differences

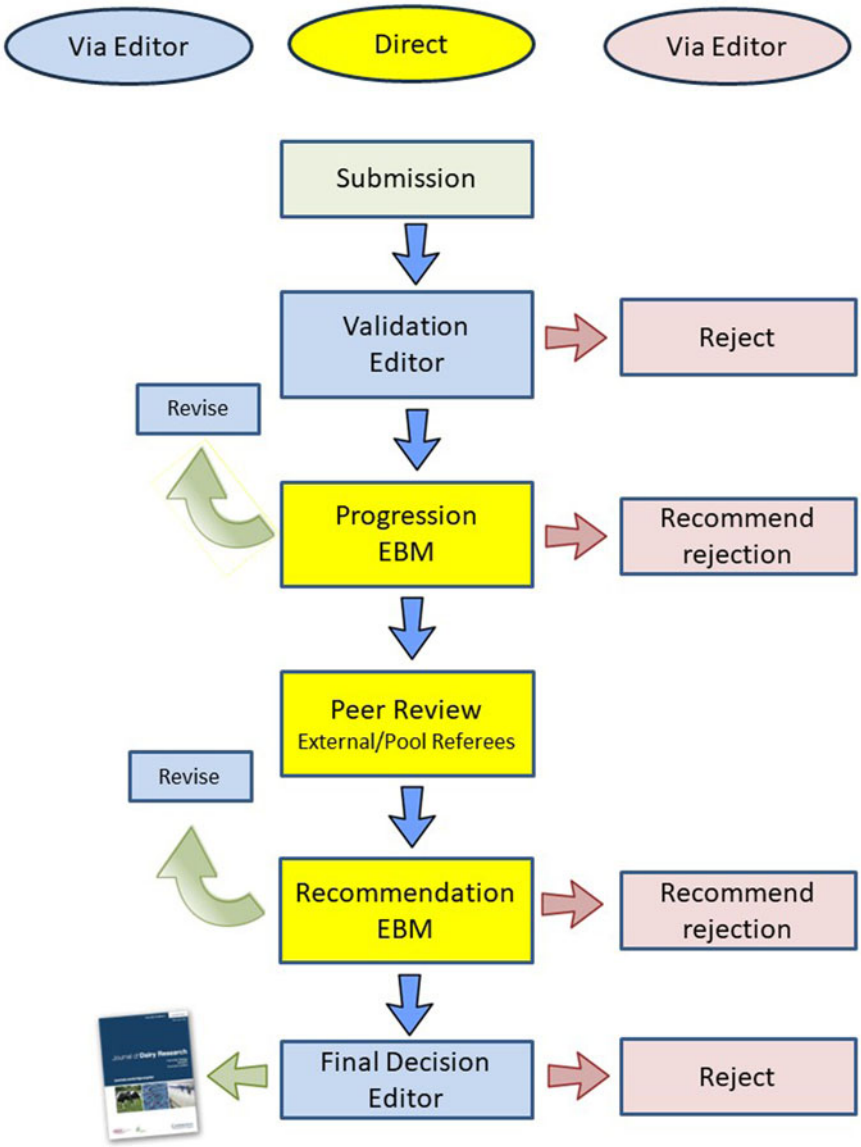


Figure 1. Schematic to show the steps involved in Peer Review of submitted manuscripts. The colour coding depicts responsibilities of Editor and Editorial Board Member in the Our JDR Scholar One process.

being who does what. In the past, all communication with authors was via our Editorial Office. Now, there will be direct communication between EBM and author during the external peer review. As your manuscript passes through this procedure you will receive updates and be able to track it online on Scholar One, much as you previously did on the Community site. Our 'free to publish' policy will remain in force, and we will continue to offer the hybrid option of Open Access either at no cost (if your Institution has a read and publish agreement with CUP) or on payment of a fee. *So will I notice any difference?* Our familiar two cows will still be keeping an eye on you from the top of the Our JDR Scholar One webpage, but in all other respects it will look very different. In addition, you will be dealing more directly with the EBM responsible for your manuscript. Don't worry, you'll soon get used to it, and we will be here to help as always. *Will this affect my 'in progress' submission?* No: all manuscripts submitted to the Community site system before the Scholar One launch will progress through that system as normal. *Will I have the option of still submitting to the old system after the Scholar One launch?* No, we have transferred all of the procedures to Scholar One. *What will happen to the Our JDR Community site?* In the short term, nothing, apart from the removal of pages associated with Submission and, later, Peer Review. The Community will remain and hopefully continue to grow in size and strength. In the longer term it will find a new platform, but that is a story for another Editorial. So, all that remains for now is one last question. *What can I do now?* If you are not yet ready to submit a manuscript you can still, if you wish to, go ahead and create your Profile on the Our JDR Scholar One site, which is https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/our-jdr We particularly encourage members of the Peer Review Pool and others wishing to referee for us to do this, as the information you enter will automatically be entered into our keyword database that EBM search when allocating manuscripts to referees.

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