The Journal of Agricultural Science

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Editorial

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Editorial

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It has been become a tradition to reflect on the accomplishment of the prior year in the Editorial of the first issue of a new Volume. Unfortunately, the year 2020 was very unusual due to the impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic that forced most of us to work from home. For those conducting experiments under field, greenhouse, or laboratory conditions, all agricultural research had to be stopped, although animals still had to be cared for. The termination of research especially affected young scientists and graduate students who have limited opportunities to complete their studies due to funding and time constraints. In Hoogenboom (2020), we highlighted the importance of data stewardship and data sharing, especially for these types of situations when no other sources of data are available. As we prepare this editorial, research has not fully recovered, but many scientists have been able to continue or restart their research projects.

The Covid-19 also has personally impacted many people across the globe. Dr Terry Aveling, Professor in the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, sadly passed away on December 18, 2020 due to complications of a Covid-19 infection. Terry had been a member of the Editorial Board of *The Journal of Agricultural Science Cambridge* since 2006 and contributed in the area of seed science, pathology and mycology. An obituary can be found in issue 8-9 (Hoogenboom *et al*., 2020*b*).

Several editors retired from the Editorial Board in 2020: Dr Mike Casler, Dairy Forage Research Center, USDA-ARS, Madison, USA, who served as an editor from January 2002 to December 2020; Dr Bhagirath Chauhan, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia, who served as an editor from July 2017 to December 2020; Dr Warshi Dandeniya, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, who served as an editor from January 2015 to December 2020, and Dr Peter Lund, Aarhus University, Tjele, Denmark, who served as an editor from May 2016 to December 2020. We really appreciate their long-term service as an Editorial Board member and we wish them well for their future endeavours. We have welcomed several new members to the Editorial Board in 2020: Dr Sandeep Kumar, South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota, USA; Dr Lucie Büchi, University of Greenwich, Greenwich, United Kingdom; Dr Jennifer MacAdam, Utah State University, Logan, Utah, USA; Dr Cormac O'Shea, University of Nottingham, Sutton Bonington, UK; and Dr Marianne Johansen, Aarhus University, Tjele, Denmark. The tireless work and commitment of all former and current Editorial Board members are also duly recognized. As we have stated previously, while the role of an editor for an academic journal is very rewarding, it can also be challenging, particularly finding suitable reviewers who are willing to review a manuscript in a timely manner.

We really appreciate the effort provided by the many reviewers listed in the supplementary material (available from https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-agricultural-science). Without independent reviews, it is impossible to maintain a high-quality peer-reviewed journal such as *The Journal of Agricultural Science*. We strive to have each paper reviewed by at least two external reviewers, in addition to initial and final reviews conducted by the Editor and Editor-in-Chief.

In terms of administration, Ms Katie Henderson has recently taken over from Mr. Chris McEntee as the in-house Commissioning Editor for the Journal, within Cambridge University Press. Katie manages a number of journals in the Press's Life Sciences collection and brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the table as well as great enthusiasm. We welcome her to the team and very much look forward to working with her to improve *The Journal of Agricultural Science*.

We are also trying to make the process for submitting papers easier for authors. We have changed the review process from double-blind to single-blind, which will allow authors to include all relevant information upon submission and upload one single document. We have also introduced format-neutral submission for original submissions only. This will mean that references do not have to be in journal style and that Tables and Figures can be presented within the text instead of being separated out. Papers must still be line-numbered, as this helps the referees, and should be readable and easy to follow. However, revised papers will be required to follow the full formatting standards of the journal upon submission. See the Instructions for Authors for further information. To reduce the number of days from submission to final publication, we have also changed the time allowed for reviews and for submission of revised papers.

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The landscape of publishing is changing rapidly and it is challenging for many authors to find a journal that does not charge publication costs while also providing opportunities for Open Access at a minimal cost. We want to emphasize again that there are NO publication charges associated with submitting a standard manuscript for publication in *The Journal of Agricultural Science* (with the rare exception of figures that must be physically printed in colour), compared to similar named journals as discussed by Hoogenboom *et al.* (2020*a*). However, as a hybrid journal, *The Journal of Agricultural Science* does allow authors to publish their work as Gold Open Access upon payment of an article processing charge (APC) if they wish. *The Journal of Agricultural Science* has signed up to Transformative Agreement status with cOAlitionS, signalling our active commitment to transitioning to open access by gradually increasing the amount of open access content we publish while avoiding any double payments. You can find out more information here: https://www.coalition-s.org/transformative-journals-faq/

A very recent and exciting development is the increase in 'Read and Publish' agreements signed between institutions and Cambridge University Press, the publisher of *The Journal of Agricultural Science*. These agreements allow authors to publish their original research as Gold Open Access in both hybrid and gold OA journals at no cost or at a discounted rate.

The list of institutions covered by a Read and Publish deal continues to grow and we recommend that potential authors use the checker tool available on the Cambridge University Press Open Access Waivers and Discounts web page to find out if they are covered: https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/open-access-policies/read-and-publish-agreements. The *Journal*'s home page also has a link to this checker.

The Journal of Agricultural Science is very receptive to publishing Guest Editorials. Recent editorials include Charles (2020), in which he provides a historical review of the analysis, interpretation and exploitation of existing research data. In an earlier Guest Editorial, Charles (2019) discussed the historical perspective about the sustainability of agricultural systems. We encourage authors interested in writing a Guest Editorial to contact the Editors-in-Chief of the journal: contact details can be found at https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-agricultural-science/information/editorial-board.

Finally, we would like to emphasize the scope of *The Journal of Agricultural Science*. The journal publishes papers concerned with the advance of agriculture and the use of land resources throughout the world. It publishes original scientific work related to strategic, applied and interdisciplinary 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 limited to: all aspects of crop and animal physiology; modelling of crop, animal, and integrated crop–livestock systems; the scientific underpinning of agronomy and husbandry; animal welfare and behaviour; soil science and soil health; plant and animal product quality; plant and animal nutrition; engineering solutions; decision support systems; land use; environmental impacts of agriculture; agricultural systems and forestry as it relates to agriculture; impacts of climate change; climate change adaptation and mitigation; climate–smart agriculture; carbon sequestration; rural biodiversity; experimental design and statistical analysis; and the application of new analytical and study methods including genetic diversity and molecular biology approaches.

In many regions across the globe, integrated crop-livestock systems are very common. As *The Journal of Agricultural Science* publishes papers on cropping systems as well as animal systems, the editorial team is very interested in publishing articles that discuss the integration of both systems. For instance, livestock relies on feed that is grown in a cropping system, while the manure produced by livestock can be used as an organic fertilizer. Recent papers that integrate both crop and livestock include Da Silva *et al.* (2019), who studied the impact of grazing on forage production and quality of *Panicum maximum*, and a study on an integrated crop-livestock system by Dias *et al.* (2020). Pedersen *et al.* (2020) reported on the value of animal slurries as a fertilizer. The journal also welcomes submissions specializing in molecular biology that include an element of agriculture or agricultural application. The paper by Li *et al.* (2020) describes the variation of *PLIN2* as it relates to milk traits such as fat composition, while the paper by Li *et al.* (2019) describes a study on QTLs that are associated with oil and protein in soybean seeds. Modelling papers that are based on a robust model evaluation and a potential application are also encouraged. For instance, Issue 10 of Volume 158 was dedicated to the iCROPM 2020 Symposium titled 'Crop Modeling for the Future' (Hoogenboom *et al.*, 2020*c*).

The Journal of Agricultural Science strives to make research more easily publishable and to disseminate the research information to as wide an audience as possible. We are always looking for new ideas for content to publish, so please do not hesitate to contact us with suggestions for a potential review paper, an editorial, or a themed or special issue.

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