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Editorial for *Weed Science*, Volume 74

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This editorial will come after another interesting year for the journal *Weed Science*. The journal has been Open Access for a year now. Submissions have been on a bit of a roller-coaster the past few years (submissions were down in 2023 and way up in 2024 with 2025 somewhere in between) which probably comes from underlying uncertainty in the agriculture sector. It is expected that submissions decline after a journal transition to fully open access. From October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025, there were 192 submissions to *Weed Science*. I see a continued trend of more reviews being submitted to *Weed Science* this past year.

Weed Science has many goals as a journal. The primary goal is to publish high-quality research from authors. Another goal is to make the publication process as efficient as possible, and that includes constant efforts to reduce the time from submission to publication, as these are career-defining points for authors. For the year before October 1, 2025, it took an average of 6.5 days from submission to reviewers being invited to review, and 16.5 days for reviews to be completed. The time from submission to first decision was 43.2 days. The time from submission to publication is favorable when compared with other society-based publications. The acceptance rate for the past year was 46%.

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I also know the impact factor for journals is important to many authors. For 2024, *Weed Science* impact factor increased from 2.1 to 2.5. The 5-year impact factor was 2.6 for 2024. I believe that as more the journal's content is Open Access, the impact factor will continue to increase.

I see a lot of great content as the Editor-in-Chief of the journal. If you look at articles published 10-15 years ago, it is amazing how much the technical quality and detailed quality of manuscripts has changed. The switch to online publishing allowed an increased use of visuals and photos that have improved the presentation of material in manuscripts. I want to take this opportunity to lay out some thoughts on publication graphics, particularly charts. When choosing charts, it is best to use appropriate chart types such as using bar charts for categorical data, scatter plots to show relationships from ordered data such as time or herbicide doses. Pie charts and 3-D charts should only be used when necessary as they are difficult to interpret. It is best to use color wisely and keep in mind probably 10% of males are colorblind. I see some odd color schemes in manuscript charts; clarity is always the best option, not boldness. It is best to use legible fonts and keep the font size greater than 8 pt. Only use gridlines and other chart elements if they are necessary to interpret the chart. There are many software packages that can produce charts for scientific articles. I am not going to attempt to list them here. Do note that Microsoft Excel and Powerpoint need to be modified a great deal to produce journal quality graphics. In the past few years, many authors have been using R and associated R packages to generate charts for their manuscripts. When using R, it is best not to use the default graphics from base R. I would like to make you aware of some R packages that can improve charts generated from R. There are packages such as *ggplot2* that make generated charts that are easier to read and interpret. Within *ggplot2*, there have been some packages introduced in the past couple of years that can improve charts made from *ggplot2*. This is not an exhaustive list but some packages I have found to be useful. The package *ggsci* can create overlays that resemble other large graphics in other scientific publications such as *Nature* or *Science; cowplot* and *patchwork* can arrange multiple graphics within one chart; and *ggpubr* is useful to improve the presentation of graphics.

For the year preceding October 1, 2025, the journal depended on 182 unique reviewers. The excellent reputation of the journal would not be possible without the cutting-edge research submitted by authors and the diligent work of the editorial board and the hundreds of referred

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reviews that are submitted annually. I wish to thank the members of the editorial board and reviewers for 2025.

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