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CONTRIBUTIONS: The *Journal of Agronomic Education* was established by the American Society of Agronomy in 1971. An Agronomic Education section formerly was carried in *Agronomy Journal.* The journal accepts reports of original studies pertaining to concepts of resident, extension, and industrial education in plant and soil sciences. Analysis and synthesis of existing knowledge or research, instructional techniques and methodology, surveys of instruction, and other studies which contribute to the development or better understanding of educational efforts are encouraged. Reviews or digests of a comprehensive and well-defined scope are acceptable. The journal also prints notes, slide set articles, book reviews, and letters to the editor. Articles may confirm and strengthen the findings of others, revise established ideas or practices, or challenge accepted theory, providing the evidence presented is significant and convincing. Manuscripts based mainly upon personal philosophy or opinion are acceptable if they conform to the above criteria.

PUBLICATION CHARGES in *Journal of Agronomic Education* are $40 per page for the first four pages and $75 for each additional half page. Authors may be charged also for the cost of illustrations or tables beyond $15 for each contribution.

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Journal of Agronomic Education Steps Up Frequency of Issue

This is the second issue of 1984, and two issues will be published in 1985.

Growing interest in the *Journal of Agronomic Education* merits publishing two issues in 1984 and 1985, decided the Board of Directors of the American Society of Agronomy. Formerly the *Journal* published a single issue a year. Increased member subscriptions and number of manuscript contributions led to their decision to step up the frequency of issue.

At this writing the journal is reviewing manuscripts for the Spring 1985 issue. Consult the "Suggestions to Contributors" on page 82 of this issue for details on submission of manuscripts.

Society Invites Authors, Readers, Subscribers

The American Society of Agronomy invites you to read, subscribe to, and contribute to the *Journal,* which is written by and for educators. Through the *Journal,* agronomy, crop, and soil science educators in extension, universities, and industry share their teaching techniques, concepts, and ideas.

Articles in the *Journal* present original findings in agronomic education, confirm and strengthen existing findings, revise established ideas and practice, and challenge accepted theory. The *Journal* publishes research papers, brief articles (Notes), letters to the editor, editorials, and book reviews. All deal with contemporary issues and problems in agronomic education.

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GUEST EDITORIAL

"Write one (again), Dom"

Domenic A. Fuccillo[1]

Ilsa (Ingrid Bergman): Play it once, Sam, for old time's sake. Play, "As Time Goes By."
Rick (Humphrey Bogart): Play it!
—From the movie *Casablanca*

Cur•ate's egg: From the story of a curate who was given a stale egg by his bishop and declared that parts of it were excellent. *Brit.*—something with both good and bad parts or qualities (this is a bit of a curate's egg, very good but spoilt by facetiousness—*Times Lit. Supp.*)
—From *Webster's 9,000 Words*

This refrain of my 1976 piece (2) isn't a nostalgic schmaltz begged/demanded of Sam (Dooley Wilson) in *Casablanca,* but an editor's strident call, "Down With the Curate's Egg"!

Many publications today contain parts written excellently but other parts "written down" or written poorly. Those of us in publishing should recognize and discard the stale parts of the egg. We are not alone. President Reagan's National Commission on Excellence in Education charged last year that textbooks were being "written down" in response to perceived market demand. Lee Mitgang, in an Associated Press series, decried the "dumbing-down" of American school books (4). The "basal readers," Mitgang claims, discourage youngsters from reading and are the main culprit in the science crisis.

Writing down is just one symptom of staleness. Other critics of language usage cringe at its corruption because language has vast potential for expressing every detail of nature as well as its breathtaking scope. They maintain that the way we use language reflects the way we are.

Are the critics right, and does our ineffective use of language reveal a shallowness in the writers?

Editors can attest to the erosion of precise communication in science. This erosion seriously affects the advancement of knowledge and our understanding of the forces that increasingly affect our lives. Motivation, training, and practice, the trio necessary to perfecting most skills, sharpen our use of language. Agronomists, among other scientists, need to improve their communicative skills (1, 3).

Maintaining excellence in scientific publications depends on improving our use of language. We can assure excellence by:

1. Professional scientific effort. Publication, an integral part of the research process, reflects that scientific effort. Put bluntly, sloppy writing to some people means that the research was sloppy.

2. Competent review by an alert, active editorial board. We need the broadest, deepest representation possible of the disciplines covered by the publication. Peer reviewers must be honest, fair, and prompt. They must insist on good writing as well as good science. Editorial boards must sustain efforts to educate reviewers, and to motivate them to approve well-written publications.

3. Appropriate distribution. The publication should reach as wide an audience as possible in a timely fashion. Good writing will assure that readers will be attracted and held, and that they will receive the message.

4. Methods of improving the system. Administrators should provide checks and balances in the preparation, submission, review, comment, and publication, to improve each part of the process. Central to such feedback is critical review and shaping of the final product—the writing. Administrators must listen sensitively to those whose business is language, both within and outside their organizations.

5. Financial stability. A healthy publication will encourage top writing performance, because writers seek the best outlets for their work—in quality of production, circulation, and other benefits.

[1] Senior managing editor, *Agronomy Journal, Crop Science,* and *Journal of Agronomic Education,* 677 South Segoe Road, Madison, WI 53711.

Finally, as individuals and collectively we should persist in our efforts to promote excellent writing. If we abandon the drive for excellence in publication or distort the process of encouraging good writing, we may create what athletes call a "catch-up game." That is, we place good communication at risk by placing ourselves at a disadvantage from which we may not recover. Then we will surely have to say, "Down With the Curate's Egg," as we swallow (read) the stale parts.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RE: Professional snobbery

Dear Editor:

I am a young assistant professor of soils, having been out of graduate school for 4 years. I have observed many of the forms of snobbery you have mentioned in your editorial (*J. Agron. Educ.* 13:1-3, 1984), but also a few you have not:

1. On-campus vs. off-campus researchers. I have observed a contempt of ivory-tower researchers for their peers (often with Ph.D.'s) who are stationed at "out-state" experiment farms. The latter group often come behind in promotion, tenure, and salary. For example, at our institution, off-campus researchers are not even eligible for tenure. The off-campus researchers also are greatly prejudiced against in the ability to get grants. The grants usually go to the "big guns" on campus, even though the off-campus scientists can usually do a better job of plot maintenance and observation because they are not cumbered with all the travel and other annoyances (committee meetings, etc.) involved with being on-campus. What surprises me about this form of snobbery is that many times when the "big guns" are stumped by a farmer problem they will refer the call to the out-state personnel.

2. Research vs. extension. The prejudice you mention of researchers against teachers also applies to extension. When I was finishing graduate work I was the leading candidate for three jobs: 1) an off-campus research-extension job at a research station; 2) a 100% teaching job at a small 4-year state-supported university, but not the land-grant institution for that state; and 3) a "typical" 80% research, 20% teaching position at a land-grant institution.

My department chairman at the time strongly advised me against the first job. His exact words were: "A career in extension is fine—if you can't find anything else." My major professor did not discourage me from interviewing for the extension-research job, but he was adamant against me considering the teaching job. "You'll just stagnate as a professional if you take the teaching job," he said. So, I took the traditional teaching/research job.

I have found, however, that the Good Book is correct when it says "a man cannot serve two masters." My university stresses research publications as the currency of promotion and tenure. Excellent teaching is not rewarded; only poor teaching counts against you. The result is mediocre teaching. I am approaching the time of consideration for promotion and tenure, so numbers of papers are critical. Given this present climate, I routinely and consciously make decisions against improving my teaching in favor of my research. For example, this past winter and spring I chose not to update the lab manual and slide set for my class. Instead, I undertook a time-consuming laboratory research project. The result? I obtained a refereed journal article, and my student evaluations fell. Would I do it again? Absolutely, because the present academic climate at my institution rewards research publications, not excellence in teaching.

Nevertheless I for one agreed with your editorial and hope that it is widely read. I have routed a copy to our staff. Keep it up!

(Editor's Note: The writer of this letter requested that the writer's name and institution be withheld.)

Dear Editor:

Although I expect you may have some who disagree with you, I heartily endorse your editorial. The only thing I disagree with is the use of the title "Dr." for the medical profession. If we have a problem with snobbery, they have a rampant epidemic. I think that, if they wish, people should call their medical doctors by their first names for all the reasons you mentioned in your editorial, even though you were talking about Ph.D. "Drs." not M.D. "Drs." Medical doctors have no more right to feel superior over others than researchers have a right to feel superior over teachers.

David Knauft
Univ. of Florida
Gainesville

Suggestions for Contributors to *Journal of Agronomic Education*

Scope of Contributions: The Editorial Board will review: (1) reports of original research pertaining to concepts of resident, extension, and industrial education in plant and soil sciences; (2) analyses and syntheses of existing knowledge or research, instructional techniques and methodology, surveys of instruction, and other studies which contribute to the development or better understanding of educational efforts; and (3) reviews or digests of a comprehensive and well-defined scope; (4) short communications and letters to the Editor, and (5) slide set articles. Articles may confirm and strengthen the findings of others, revise established ideas or practices, or challenge accepted theory, providing the evidence presented is significant and convincing. Manuscripts based chiefly upon personal philosophy or opinion are acceptable if they conform to the above criteria. The Editor solicits book reviews. The Editorial Board will also consider slide sets and computer software papers. Write the Editor for standards of acceptance before submitting such papers. The *Journal* encourages "Letters to the Editor," including comments and criticisms of published articles and editorials, suggestions for journal improvement, and other educational concerns or viewpoints.

Mailing Address. Manuscripts (three copies) should be sent to D. A. Fuccillo, Managing Editor, *Journal of Agronomic Education,* American Society of Agronomy, 677 South Segoe Road, Madison, WI 53711.

Page Charges. Page charges are assessed as follows: $40/page for the first four pages; each additional half page over four pages, $75.

Manuscript Preparation. Manuscripts must conform to the requirements set forth in the *Publications Handbook and Style Manual.* Copies of the *Publications Handbook and Style Manual* are available at the mailing address, above. Type the manuscript double-spaced on good grade bond paper, approximately 21 × 28 cm. *The lines of type must be numbered on each page. Make three copies,* also on line-numbered paper. Type each table on a separate sheet and type captions for tables and figures together on one sheet (more as needed) and place at the end of the manuscript. Include an *Abstract* and list of *Additional Index Words* at the beginning of the manuscript.

Footnotes. Number footnotes consecutively and type them at the bottom of the pages. Footnote No. 1 should contain identification of the article or research project. It includes the "date received" supplied by the Editor.

Tables. Number tables consecutively. Use the following symbols for footnotes, in this order: †, ‡, §, ¶, #, ††, etc.

When used to indicate statistical significance, * and ** have priority in this order to show 5% and 1% levels of significance.

Figures. Provide photographs for halftone reproduction as glossy prints with good dark and light contrast. Prepare drawings for graphs and charts with India ink on white drawing paper. Typewritten matter is not usually acceptable on graphs and charts.

So far as possible, use photographs and drawings which can be reduced to 1-column width (8.4 cm). A good size for a drawing is twice that desired in the printed figure. Lettering or numbers in a printed figure should not be smaller than the type size in the body of an article as printed in *Journal of Agronomic Education* or larger than the size of the main subheadings.

Label each figure with name of author, title of article, and number of figure.

Abbreviations. Standard abbreviations listed in the *CBE Style Manual* (5th Ed., 1983) and the *Publications Handbook and Style Manual* may be used without definition. Define other abbreviations at first use and place them in parentheses, both in the Abstract and the body of the manuscript. Thereafter, the abbreviation may be used without further explanation.

Nomenclature. Show the Latin binomial or trinomial and authority for all plants, insects, and pathogens at first listing in the Abstract and manuscript. Identify crop cultivars (not experimental lines and strains) by single quotation marks at first listing only; e.g., 'Ranger' alfalfa (*Medicago sativa* L.) or *Medicago sativa* L. 'Ranger.'

Units of Measure. Use SI units for all measurements. Report all yields of crops in units of weight or mass. Certain exceptions may be allowed by the Editor.

References. List all citations to published literature alphabetically by senior authors at the end of the manuscript. Citations should include names of all authors, the year, complete title, publication, volume number, and inclusive pages, as appropriate.

Lists of References may include unpublished but available reports, Agronomy Abstracts, theses, and dissertations. If available, the publication number or dissertation abstract number should be given. Authors are urged to provide enough information on unpublished items so that an experienced librarian can locate them for a requester. Unpublished data, personal communications, and unavailable mimeo reports may be included in the text in parenthesis or in footnotes.

Length of Manuscript. About three pages of manuscript will usually equal one printed page. Space for figures and tables must be estimated separately. For tables, four lines of typewritten matter require one column-centimeter of space. Allow also for rules and any spacing required between lines. If there are more than 80 characters in the lines, including necessary spaces, the table will occupy two columns, thus making two column-centimeters for each four lines.

Format. The usual format of an article is: 1) Title, 2) Authors' name and affiliation, 3) Abstract, 4) Additional index words, 5) Introduction and review, 6) Body, and 7) References.