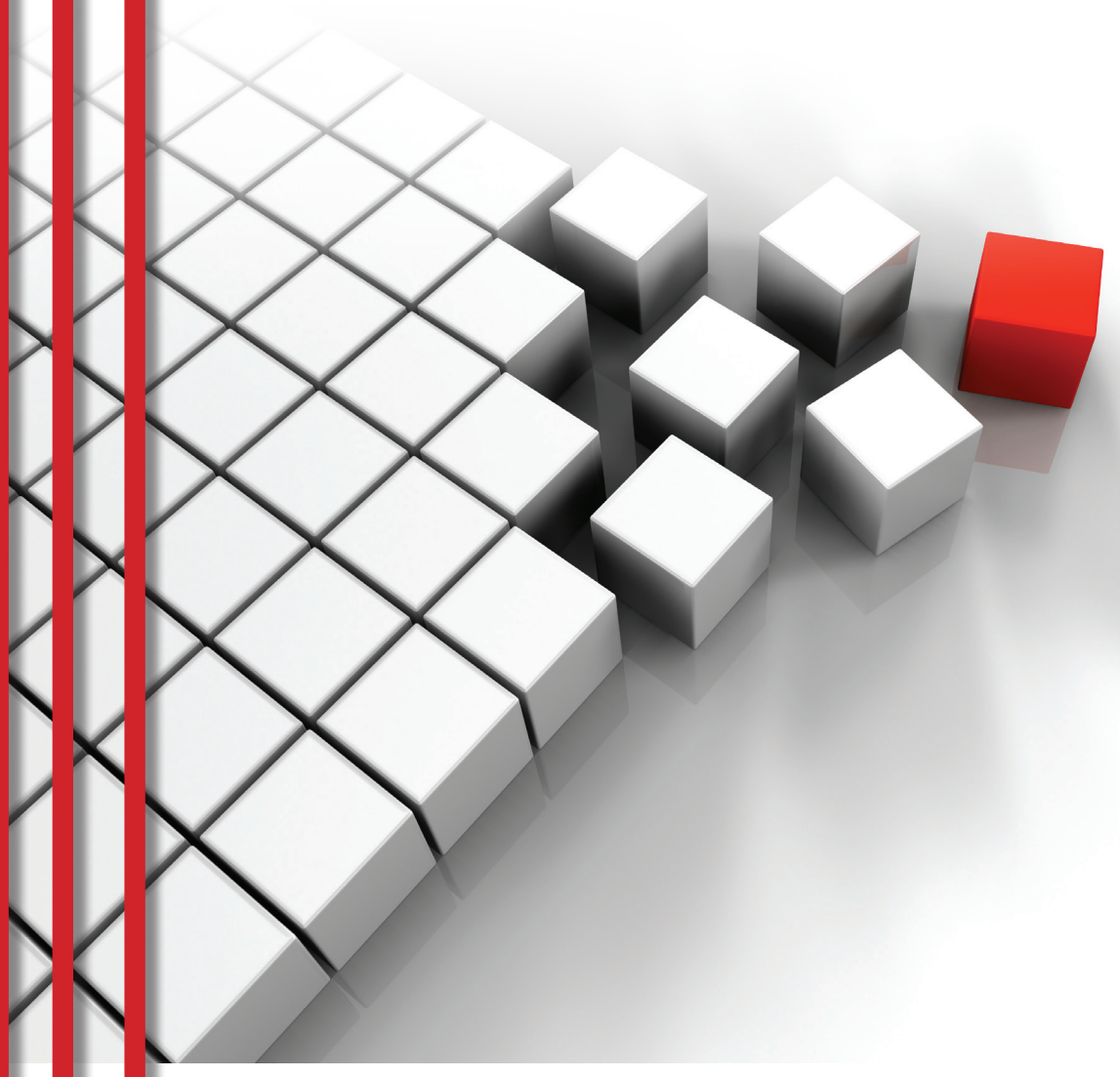
Editors' Handbook



American Society of Agronomy | Crop Science Society of America | Soil Science Society of America

Editors' Handbook

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American Society of Agronomy, Inc.
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Chapter 1

Editorial Responsibilities

The editing of all scientific papers published by ASA, CSSA, and SSSA is a two-step process. First, the journal editor together with other members of the editorial board, usually technical editors (referred to as co-editors in *Vadose Zone Journal*) and associate editors, determine whether a scientific paper represents a significant addition to the literature. If so, one or more of those editors work with the author to make certain the paper is complete and scientifically accurate.

After one of the editors (journal, technical, or associate depending on the journal) accepts a paper for publication, managing editors employed by ASA, CSSA, and SSSA oversee copyediting and typesetting of the paper to ensure its adherence to ASA, CSSA, SSSA and other recognized rules regarding style, grammar, and quality and consistency of presentation.

In cases of possible disagreement among editors, the journal editors have the final say regarding matters of scientific content and style, and the managing editors have the final say regarding matters of grammar and presentation style.

Editors-in-Chief

Each society has an editor-in-chief, nominated by the president and confirmed by the board of directors. Each editor-in-chief serves a three-year term and may be reappointed for one additional term. These persons have overall responsibility for all publications of the respective societies. The editor-in-chief of a society serves in an ex officio capacity on that society's board of directors, on the editorial boards of all journals sponsored or cosponsored by that society, and on the intersociety Editorial Policy Coordination Committee. Chairship of this committee rotates annually among the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA editors-in-chief.

Each editor-in-chief makes recommendations to that society's president about appointment and reappointment of editors of journals and other publications. The editor-in-chief also, on behalf of the president and after consultation with the editor, appoints the persons to fill the technical editor posts created by the executive committee of the sponsoring society. New technical editor positions may not be created without the approval of the sponsoring society's board of directors.

Initial appeals are handled by the journal editor; if the situation is not resolved, an author may then appeal to the editor-in-chief, whose decision is final. The editor-in-chief of each society is responsible for appeals of manuscript releases from the journals.

Editors-in-chief may also be called on by their society's board of directors to handle special projects or problems and to perform other editorial duties.

Editors

The editor, who serves as chair of the editorial board, is nominated by the president of the sponsoring societies and confirmed by the board of directors. The editor serves for a three-year term and may be reappointed for one additional term.

The editor is responsible for the overall quality of the journal's content and implements policy decisions approved by the board of directors. The editor and editorial board oversee procedures for manuscript submission, acceptance, release, and publication, as well as the criteria for review and referee of papers. The editor delegates editorial duties to other members of the editorial board and takes an active part in defining the journal's aims, scope, policies, and editorial coverage. The editor prepares an annual report for the sponsoring society describing the journal status and recommendations for changes. The editor also prepares or approves the minutes of the annual board meeting published each year.

The editors of most ASA, CSSA, and SSSA journals receive manuscripts, assign the papers to technical editors or associate editors, and maintain records of the status of manuscripts in review through the online submission system. The editor handles the initial appeals procedure for manuscripts that are rejected.

The editor may write editorials or solicit manuscripts on special topics. Letters to the editor are approved by the editor, who seeks advice from the editorial board and others as needed.

The specific duties of a journal editor vary somewhat with each journal and are described in more detail in Chapter 3.

Technical Editors (Co-Editors)

As with the duties of editor, the duties of technical editors (referred to as co-editors for *Vadose Zone Journal* or senior editors for *Agrosystems, Geosciences & Environment*) vary from journal to journal. Some journals have no technical editors. Most technical editors are responsible for releasing manuscripts, and some also hold the authority to approve manuscripts for publication. A technical editor's term is three years, and no more than two consecutive terms may be held.

For those journals that have them, technical editors work under the direction of the journal editor and are responsible for the technical and intellectual content of the journal in their assigned areas. They direct the work of assigned associate editors in reviewing and evaluating the manuscripts submitted to the journal.

The specific duties of a technical editor can vary with each journal and are described in more detail in Chapter 3.

Technical editors maintain the overall responsibility for determining that in-depth and timely reviews are obtained from knowledgeable scientists.

Technical editors also are responsible for taking an active interest in assisting the editor to define the journal's aims, policies, and editorial coverage and in recruiting members for the editorial board.

Associate Editors

Associate editors for each scientific journal are appointed by that journal's editor on behalf of the president of the respective society. Associate editors serve three-year terms and may be reappointed for one additional term.

Associate editors are responsible for obtaining reviews of each manuscript and for evaluating in a timely manner the technical and intellectual content and suitability of manuscripts assigned to them.

If so delegated by the editor or technical editor, the associate editor works with the authors to obtain the required changes in manuscripts that are likely to be acceptable after revision.

Associate editors recommend to the editor or technical editor (depending on the structure of a particular editorial board) when manuscripts should be released. Depending on the structure of the board, associate editors may or may not be authorized to accept papers for publication. If not, the associate editor recommends acceptance to the editor or technical editor.

Associate editors also assist the editor in defining the journal's aims, policies, and editorial coverage, as well as in recruiting members for the editorial board.

The specific duties of a associate editor can vary with each journal and are described in more detail in Chapter 3.

Managing Editors

The managing editor of each journal is assigned by the publications director. The managing editor oversees copyediting of papers approved for publication, typesetting, and transmittal of proofs to authors. The publications director, together with the managing editor, makes contract arrangements for production of the journal. The managing editor works closely with the editor and editor-in-chief to maintain the quality of the journal.

The publications director may assign one or more assistant or associate production editors to aid the managing editor in the production of the journal.

Accepting or Rejecting a Paper

The policy of ASA, CSSA, and SSSA is that no scientific paper may be published in any of their journals, books, or other scholarly publications unless at least two unbiased professional scientists agree that the paper is acceptable. Similarly, once the formal review has begun, no scientific paper may be rejected by one of the scholarly publications unless at least two unbiased professional scientists agree to that rejection. All editorial board members are expected to exercise professional judgment, not simply follow the conclusion of the volunteer reviewers. Specific procedures for implementing this policy are detailed in Chapter 2.

Editorial Misconduct

The following statement on editorial misconduct was approved by the ASA, CSSA, SSSA Executive Committees in their respective March 1997 meetings.

Allegations of editorial misconduct by members of the Editorial Boards or by reviewers of any ASA, CSSA, or SSSA publication are serious and deserve attention and resolution by a fair and impartial process. Procedures to investigate alleged editorial misconduct are designed to provide all parties to the dispute an opportunity to confidentially present and discuss the facts, and to avoid potential discredit to any party involved. Equitable resolution of the matter is the goal of this policy. All parties in the dispute are urged to seek the opinion of legal counsel.

Definition: Editorial misconduct is any action by a participant in the editorial and review procedure of an ASA, CSSA, or SSSA publication that disadvantages the scholarship of the authors of an unpublished document in the scientific community. Examples of editorial misconduct include plagiarism, copying unpublished scholarly documents without authorization of the authors, or use of documents submitted to Societies' publications for unethical scientific, academic, or scholarly advantage.

1. Allegations of editorial misconduct must be submitted in writing and signed by the complainant. The complainant will submit the written complaint to the Editor of the publication responsible for managing the review of the complainant's unpublished document.
2. The Editor will endeavor to secure from the complainant all materials pertaining to the alleged misconduct. The Editor will summarize the facts of the allegation and communicate them in writing to the alleged perpetrator of the misconduct, hereafter called the respondent. The Editor will advise the President of the appropriate Society and the appropriate Society Editor-in-Chief of the allegations. The Editor-in-Chief will manage the inquire into the alleged editorial misconduct.
3. The Editor-in-Chief will appoint an ad hoc committee of three Society members to investigate the allegations and to obtain additional information from any parties to the dispute.
4. The ad hoc committee will conduct its investigations and deliberations in confidence. At the conclusion of the investigation, the committee will submit its findings in writing to the Editor-in-Chief, and return to that officer all materials used in the conduct of their duties.
5. The Editor-in-Chief will communicate the findings of the ad hoc committee to the complainant and to the respondent. If the committee finds for the complainant, the Editor-in-Chief will determine and implement the action to be taken against the respondent. If the committee finds the allegations to be without merit, the Editor-in-Chief will send a letter of no-finding to the respondent and the complainant, and dismiss the inquiry.
6. Either party to the dispute has the right to appeal the findings of the investigation. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Society President within 90 days of the date of the Editor-in-Chief's findings. The Society President will determine the merits of the appeal. The Society President will determine the process and venue for resolving the appeal and communicate its findings in writing to the complainant and respondent.
7. After resolution of the allegation, the Editor responsible for managing the review of the document involved in the dispute will summarize the matter for the Editor-in-Chief and President and propose modifications of editorial policy or practice to reduce the likelihood of a recurrence of the alleged misconduct.

Record Retention

The review process should be managed entirely through the online system; thus, record retention for a manuscript is automatic. Headquarters retains records of the production process of approved manuscripts for about three months after their publication.

Stipend Policy

The three societies provide an allowance to journal editors and technical editors. Those entitled to a stipend are informed at the beginning of their term of the policies regarding reimbursement and are updated annually on the allowed maximum amounts for the coming year.

Chapter 2

The Review–Editing Process

The process of converting a manuscript into a published technical paper is complex, involving numerous people with various areas of expertise. The dual goal of all these people is to maintain the high standard of the publication and to help authors present their information clearly, succinctly, and conforming to style.

Before the Review Begins

As noted in Chapter 1, no paper may be accepted for publication in an ASA, CSSA, or SSSA scholarly publication unless at least two unbiased, professional scientists independently agree that the paper merits publication. Also, no paper that has been entered into the formal review process may be released by an ASA, CSSA, or SSSA scholarly publication unless at least two unbiased professional scientists independently agree that the paper is unacceptable for publication.

The first responsibility of the journal editor is to determine if the paper is ready for review. Potential problems with papers may be nonscientific or problems of content. Potential problems may be recognized by the technical or associate editor as well.

Nonscientific Problems

Nonscientific problems render a paper "not ready for review" and require action before the paper is entered into the review process.

Structural Problems

Structural problems include, but are not limited to, such things as lack of line numbering, page numbering, or double spacing, major format flaws, or unreadable graphics. For those journals that use a double-blind review, lack of conformity to the particular needs of that review process fall into this category. Somewhat more serious problems include such things as the lack of a major component, such as an abstract.

Problems with English as a Second Language

Manuscripts from authors whose first language is not English may present difficulties. Currently we do not provide translation services for papers. Any manuscript with poor English that impedes understanding should be returned and the authors instructed to contact professional translators.

The challenge comes with those papers in which language problems make it difficult to assess the quality of the science. Judgment and tact are necessary for the editorial board member who has been sent such a paper.

Problems of Content

Scientific

Scientific problems include serious flaws in the work itself, such as the design of the experiment, lack of necessary replication, or inadequate statistical treatment that make it impossible to draw the stated conclusions from the data. These are the sort of flaws referred to in Cases 1 and 2 below.

The associate editor should study each assigned paper carefully to see if it has one of these intrinsic problems before moving the paper to the formal review stage. If such a problem exists, the associate editor should discuss the paper with the technical editor or editor to discuss whether it should be released immediately for those problems rather than waste the time of reviewers. (Such a release is possible because two editors—two scientists—agree to it.)

Suitability

It is possible that a manuscript submitted to one journal might be better suited for another of the ASA, CSSA, SSSA journals. The editorial board member who receives the manuscript should consider contacting the author and ask if the author would consider a transfer to that journal. If the author and the editor of the journal to which it might be transferred agree, the manuscript may then be released from the first journal and submitted to the second journal.

If the author disagrees, the manuscript will be reviewed by the editorial board of the journal the author chooses.

Once the editor and technical editor determine that it is ready for a review, the paper is assigned to an associate editor.

Reviewers

Locating Reviewers

Finding reviewers for manuscripts can be one of the most frustrating jobs for the person assigned this task. The current online submission management system used for ASA, CSSA, SSSA journals has a Reviewer Locator feature that uses metadata to link paper topics with authors from Web of Science in similar fields. Other strategies includ using the reference list of the manuscript as a start for identifying reviewers. One can also search ASA, CSSA, and SSSA journals for related papers using key topics or words in the title or abstract. Annual meetings abstracts show who is recently working on a topic. Note that reviewers do not need to be members of ASA, CSSA, or SSSA.

In addition to well-known researchers in the area of the manuscript, one can also seek out reviewers from under-represented groups, such as international scientists, early career scientists, and Ph.D. students. Asking for leads from those who turn down the opportunity to review the paper is another strategy.

Ensuring Unbiased Reviews

If there is a concern that a potential reviewer may have an actual (or even the strong appearance of a) conflict of interest with one or more of the authors, the associate editor should select another reviewer. Similarly, they should heed the wishes of a reviewer who asks to be excused from reviewing a paper for a similar reason. The following list (adapted from USDA-ARS guidelines) is by no means exhaustive, but a positive response to any of the following (or similar) questions is a sufficient reason to select a different reviewer.

- Have you had significant and acrimonious disagreements with the authors in the past?
- Are you and the authors co-investigators on a current research project?
- Have you and the authors jointly published an article in the past five years?
- Are you close friends with one or more of the authors?
- Are you working in the same area of research with the authors so that you might be considered to be a competitor or gain an advantage by reviewing the manuscript?
- Are you at the same location as the authors?
- Did you review and approve the manuscript as a peer reviewer prior to its submission to the journal?

Obtaining Anonymous Reviews

The policy of ASA, CSSA, and SSSA journals it to keep the reviewers anonymous from authors and from each other. Some of the journals also keep the names of the authors anonymous from the reviewers (double-blind review).

If a reviewer inserts their name into their review comments, the policy is to edit out the reviewer's name from the review. There is, of course, no way to prevent a reviewer from contacting an author after a paper is published.

Obtaining Timely Reviews

All scientists want fair reviews of their papers, but they also want them as soon as possible. Initially assigning more reviewers prevents delays if the first reviews received do not agree. The downside to assigning a large number of reviewers to a single manuscript is increased difficulty in finding new reviewers for other assigned manuscripts.

Specifically, all three societies recommend that the associate editor serve as one of the reviewers unless the subject matter is too far outside their area of expertise. If there is no substantial disagreement between the first two reviews (complete agreement is rare), associate editors do not need to wait for a third review before they begin summarizing the key comments of the reviewers. If another review arrives before work on the paper is completed and if that review contains valuable information overlooked by the other two reviewers, that information can also be passed on to the author. If not enough reviews have been submitted to make a decision, the

associate editor should contact delayed reviewers and encourage completion of their review.

It makes good practice for associate editors to contact potential reviewers by phone or email before assigning a manuscript. This will determine (i) if the person still has the same email and other contact information, (ii) if the person will be available to review a paper in a timely fashion, and (iii) if the person has a potential conflict of interest (as outlined above) that might preclude reviewing that paper.

An associate editor should review the paper within the recommended time (which differs per journal) before the outside reviews are uploaded. This will both speed the process and eliminate the possibility that the associate editor's own review will be biased by reading the other reviews.

Obtaining Sufficient Reviews

When a paper is deemed to be suitable for review, the task of the editorial board is to then determine if the paper is suitable for publication. Such a decision can be reached only upon the agreement of at least two unbiased, professional scientists.

Thus, the first task of an editorial board is to obtain those two recommendations for acceptance or release. Editorial board members are expected to exercise professional judgment in reviewing a paper and not simply tally up "yeas" and "nays" and act accordingly. If a reviewer has recommended acceptance without change for a paper that has a major flaw, or recommended release of an excellent paper, the associate editor has the obligation to discount that review and, if necessary, obtain another.

A few hypothetical cases are below, all of which take place within the editorial board of a journal whose structure calls for a technical editor to receive a manuscript and assign it to an associate editor who is to handle the review process.

Case 1. A technical or co-editor receives a manuscript, studies it, and notes a serious flaw that by itself could preclude publication. The technical or co-editor contacts an associate editor before assigning the manuscript and says, "Read this carefully before you assign reviewers. I do not believe it is suitable for publication." The associate editor reads the paper and agrees with the technical or co-editor's assessment. These two agreements allow the release of the manuscript without additional input.

Case 2. The technical or co-editor is assigned several manuscripts on the same day and, so as not to delay review, assigns them to the associate editors without studying them thoroughly. An associate editor who is assigned one of the papers notices a serious flaw in it and, before assigning it to reviewers, contacts the technical or co-editor to discuss the paper. The technical or co-editor reads the manuscript thoroughly, agrees with the associate editor, and the two agree to release the paper.

Case 3. The associate editor assigns a paper to three volunteer reviewers, then

reads it while awaiting the return of the three additional reviews. The associate editor finds serious enough problems with the manuscript to believe it should not be published. Two of the outside reviews within two or three days recommend "accept as submitted" with no further comments. The associate editor instead waits for the third outside review. This third reviewer has written a thoughtful series of comments pointing out not only the problems that the associate editor had noted but several others as well. The associate editor now has recommendations from two independent professional scientists who read the manuscript thoroughly and agree the manuscript should not be published. The associate editor releases the manuscript, even though two reviewers recommended acceptance and two reviewers recommended release.

Case 4. The associate editor and another scientist believe they have read an excellent paper, but three other scientists, all of whom had the same major professor in college, say the paper should be released. After studying the three release recommendations, the associate editor determines that the reasons given for release are personal rather than scientific. Again, two independent scientists who have carefully studied the paper agree it is suitable for publishing, allowing publishing to proceed.

If examples such as those given in Cases 3 and 4 were to happen—and we have no evidence that they ever have—the associate editor would be wise to thoroughly document the reasons for the action, whether it be acceptance or rejection. It would also be a good idea to consult the technical or co-editor and perhaps the editor as well, so that at least four scientists have agreed to the chosen action, regardless of the number of responses the other way.

Agreement of Reviewers

The matter of agreement is at least as subjective as it is objective. While unanimous agreement for acceptance or release of a paper is always theoretically possible, it rarely happens. More likely, there will be at least some disagreement. The following is one fairly common set of reviewer recommendations:

- Reviewer 1: accept with minor alterations
- Reviewer 2: accept with major alterations
- Reviewer 3: reject

Note that the exact wording of the recommendations may vary among journals.

The associate editor who receives recommendations like these must exercise judgment. Was Reviewer 1 unduly lenient, or was Reviewer 3 unduly harsh? Once that question is answered, the comments of Reviewer 2 could be used to bolster the remaining recommendation.

Revisions

Another consideration is how often to seek further revisions of the manuscript. Rather than allowing a manuscript to go back and forth several times between author–reviewer–associate editor, it could be appropriate to recommend release for a borderline manuscript and encourage resubmission.

The associate editor or technical editor should keep in contact with the author if there are delays with the author uploading the revised manuscript or for the author's inadequate response to reviewers comments. Once the revised manuscript is uploaded, the associate editor should attempt the review of the second revision alone without assigning outside reviewers again. This would still count as two scientists recommending acceptance if one reviewer had previously recommended minor revision (i.e., accept after incorporating reviewers comments) or if the technical editor or editor looks at the manuscript before making the final accept decision. If the changes are extensive or the area is too far out of the associate editor's background, the associate editor might review what they can and send it to one reviewer. The associate editor should try to prevent numerous cycling with the authors; one should not demand unnecessary changes, but it is appropriate to insist that authors correct scientific flaws or a presentation that would prevent readers from understanding the manuscript. The associate editor should get back-up support from the technical editor or editor, if necessary.

Types of Papers Reviewed

By far the most common type of paper to appear in ASA, CSSA, and SSSA journals is the standard research paper, and the greatest portion of this section is devoted to the review of those papers. Our journals also publish other paper types, which are outlined first.

Review and Analysis Papers

Most ASA, CSSA, and SSSA journals accept invited and volunteered review papers, which are usually less formal than research articles. They may not be presented in the common form for research papers (introduction, methods, results, and discussion). They also typically do not present the results of a single research project. Such papers should not be penalized for following a less traditional format.

Good review papers provide a synthesis of existing knowledge and give new insights or concepts not previously presented in the literature, or at least not with the same level of detail. One should consider rejecting papers that fail in these areas.

Review articles are not to be considered exhaustive reviews of the literature but should include enough literature review to provide a basis for discussion and interpretation of the topic under consideration.

A good review is often one of the most important ways to advance an area of science. Readers expect a review paper to

- deal with an important subject that needs a scholarly review,
- cover the entire spectrum of the subject, not just the segment the author of the review paper has published papers about,
- present a balanced coverage that is fair to all the work it reviews, and
- add a perspective to the entire subject; contribute significantly to understanding.

Opinion Papers

Opinion papers may be called perspectives, forums, or issues papers, depending on the journal. They give a broader and often more personal perspective on a subject than a review paper. They may discuss contemporary issues from a combination of scientific, political, legislative, and regulatory perspectives. These papers often have more of a philosophical bent to them but must still be based on a foundation of good science. They may be invited or volunteered.

The intent of these papers is to stimulate discussion and possibly a rethinking of current views. They can be provocative and controversial. A reviewer or editor who does not agree with a paper's content should not use that as a reason to recommend its rejection but instead should include constructive comments regarding the logic and arguments used to convey the ideas presented. In addition, the reviewer should evaluate the quality of the writing and make comments as appropriate.

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor may contain comments on articles appearing in the journal or general discussions about agronomic, crop, soil, or other pertinent research, according to the nature of the journal. The suggested length of a Letter to the Editor is one page or less. The letter must be approved by the journal editor and may be peer-reviewed. If a letter discusses a published paper, the author of that paper will be invited to submit a response to the comments, which will generally be published with the letter.

Notes and Short Communications

The name of this category varies from journal to journal. In *Agronomy Journal* they are called Notes and Unique Phenomena, in *Journal of Environmental Quality* they are called Short Communications, and in other journals they are called Notes.

Regardless of their designation, these are a separate category of scientific manuscripts that describe research techniques, apparatus, and observations of unique (usually unrepeatable, such as hail or frost damage) phenomena. These papers also are usually shorter than research papers. For the suggested length of these papers, authors should check the specific journal's instructions to authors.

Occasionally, an editor may believe a paper submitted as a regular research paper will better fit this category, or vice versa. If the author agrees, the manuscript can be transferred to or from this category of papers.

Book Reviews

Several of the journals publish book reviews; these journals generally have one person appointed to the editorial board specifically to handle book reviews. Headquarters staff will forward appropriate review copies or online links received from publishers to these book review editors.

The book review editor selects books suitable for review in the journal and a scientist who is competent to review the book and sends the book copy to that scientist. The book review editor examines the reviews upon its receipt from the reviewer. Reviewers are allowed to keep the copy of the book they reviewed as compensation for their efforts.

The Review

The purpose of scientific editing and review is to determine if the research project written about in the paper sought information that either was previously not known or not completely understood; that the research was properly designed, accurately conducted, and accurately recorded; and that the results were correctly interpreted and presented completely and accurately.

Scientific Accuracy

Although the primary responsibility for accuracy and completeness of the paper rests with the author(s), the technical editor, associate editor, and reviewers can often provide valuable assistance in the presentation of that information. For example, authors certainly know their material but may be too close to the situation to present—in a way others can follow—the logic used in approaching the problem.

Errors and ambiguities can be grouped into two general categories: (i) scientific and technical and (ii) grammatical. Although there is substantial overlap in duties, problems in the first category are the basic responsibility of technical and associate editors and reviewers and those in the second category are the basic responsibility of the headquarters staff. Editors, technical editors, associate editors, and reviewers cannot ignore grammatical problems, however. If an author who is unfamiliar with writing in English submits a manuscript that is nearly unintelligible, editors should not hesitate to send the manuscript back to the author for improvements before beginning serious scientific review.

Once a manuscript is readable, scientific editors and reviewers should give it a thorough review. Specific aspects of this are outlined in the checklist at the end of this chapter.

Style

The manuscript should follow the ASA, CSSA, SSSA style. Refer to the ASA, CSSA, SSSA Publications Handbook and Style Manual (https://www.agronomy.org/publications/journals/author-resources/style-manual) for information about specific parts of a manuscript, specialized terminology, statistics, mathematics, tables, and figures.

Supplemental Information

Supplemental material must undergo peer review and should be submitted along with the original manuscript. A one- or two-sentence description of the supplemental material should be included in the main manuscript right before the acknowledgment section. Supplemental tables and figures should be cited in order in the main manuscript.

The Paper's Language

Editorial board members often ask for guidelines as to when it is okay to leave writing problems in an otherwise acceptable manuscript to be addressed at the copyediting stage and when they should insist that the author repair the problem before accepting the paper. It is difficult to provide unequivocal guidelines. Without question, awkward writing is difficult, if not impossible, to interpret. But many scientific reviewers and editors are willing to overlook flawed writing in a manuscript in the interest of publishing the important scientific information expressed in the paper.

There are different degrees of errors in writing. Some can be corrected fairly easily by a professional copyeditor; others require the guidance of the author or a scientific editor.

The location of the error within the paper will often influence the severity of the problems caused by that error. Ambiguity or opacity of language in the introduction damages the effectiveness of a paper because this is where the authors orient their study to similar studies and place their investigation within the context of established knowledge. The same can often be true for the Materials and Methods section. Poor language presentation may cause fewer problems in the Results and Discussion sections, where context has already been established. Similarly, the study's conclusions must be stated clearly, unambiguously, and in a way that is consistent with the preceding sections because this is where the authors are attempting to justify both the performance of the research and the publication of the study. Without a clear presentation here, readers may miss the significance of the study's findings.

When in doubt, determine whether the key concepts and arguments of the study have been adequately expressed. Are the key statements free from ambiguity and vagueness in their meanings? Be less concerned if they are clear but merely not fluent.

Headquarters staff use software to check citation/reference matching. It is not necessary for editors and reviewers to spend a lot of time checking this. Of course, if a key reference is omitted, it is good to mention that to the author.

Errors That Require Consulting the Author

Serious defects in scientific writing are those of vagueness, missing information, and missing indications of relationships between pieces of information. The headquarters staff is not qualified to correct these sorts of errors without input from authors or scientific editors. Scientific editors are expected to resolve all problems in this category before accepting the paper. The following examples fall into this category.

Vague statement/poor word choice. "Also SOC concentration is more a function of residue and roots (Hanes et al., 1990) after harvest than actual grain yield since virtually no yield can be obtained (corn in dry years, corn after sunflower), yet biomass and residue are produced."

The above statement is unclear as to when or under what conditions no yield can be obtained. With the author's help, this sentence was revised to read: "Also, SOC concentration is more a function of residue and roots (Hanes et al., 1990) remaining after harvest since, at times, little or virtually no yield is obtained (of corn in very dry years, or of corn after sunflower has dried out the soil profile), yet leaf and stem biomass and residue are produced."

Excessively long strings of compound modifiers; adjectival nouns modifying a head noun. "...mixed bed exchange resins..." Does the author mean "mixed-bed exchange resins," or "mixed bed-exchange resins?"

Incomplete comparisons. "It seems reasonable to conclude that the fallow plot should be capable of dissipating nitrate more rapidly." More rapidly than what? Under what conditions?

Topic shift from sentence to sentence. In the following example the reader cannot tell which exposure of soils is being referred to. "Denitrification rates under ambient C conditions were higher in the surface 10 cm of the first test plot compared with the control soil but not in the second test plot. Exposure of soil to agricultural runoff has a significant impact on the soil microbial community."

Errors That Headquarters Editors Routinely Correct

Writing problems are annoying and can make interpretation of statements laborious but can usually be fixed relatively easily by the copyeditor. These errors can be more significant when they occur in orienting statements and concluding claims, however. Awkward sentences in non-key areas and minor ambiguities even in key areas can be left in the hands of the professional editing staff.

Checklist for Detailed Comments

Scientific Content

_____ *Duplication*. Does the manuscript unnecessarily repeat already published work?

_____ *Review of Literature*. Is due credit given to relevant contributions? Is the author's contribution placed in its proper perspective in relation to the state of knowledge? Is the number of references adequate, too small, or excessive?

_____ *Objectives*. Is the statement of objectives adequate and appropriate?

_____ *Methods*. Are the methods appropriate? Have suitable measurements been performed? Have proper control measurements been made? Have the methods been presented in sufficient detail (not just what reagents were used, but in what manner and for how long, for instance) to allow a competent

scientist-reader to repeat the work? If not, are the sources cited where sufficient detail is available?

_____ *Calculations*. Randomly select a few instances and verify the calculations made by the author.

_____ *Effectiveness of Data Presentation*. Would data presented in tables be better presented in figures, or vice versa?

_____ *Tables and Figures*. Are tables and figures understandable and complete apart from the text? Are they scientifically accurate? Are figure parts labeled sufficiently? Are they identified with the manuscript number?

_____ *Table Row and Column Headings*. Is the interpretation clear, unequivocal, and in SI units?

_____ *Table and Figure Captions*. Do the captions accurately and completely state the content, or could they be improved?

_____ *Conclusions*. Are they adequate and supported by the data?

_____ *Conjecture*. Does the author clearly distinguish between fact and conjecture? Is the amount of conjecture excessive, or too little? As long as they are properly identified, speculation and extrapolation are encouraged.

_____ *Appropriate Units*. Is SI used throughout? (At their discretion, authors may also use other units as well as the SI—usually parenthetically—in text, tables, and figures.)

Scientific Presentation

_____ *Title*. Does the title adequately describe the subject of the manuscript and contain 12 or fewer words (not including conjunctions and prepositions)? Can the wording be improved, particularly so it does not begin with weak words such as "effects of"?

_____ *Abstract*. Abstracts are the most widely read section of any paper, often being seen without the paper itself. Does the abstract briefly (≤250 words for a full paper, ≤150 words for a Note) tell what was done and what was found? More information about abstracts can be found at the end of this list.

_____ *Clarity*. Does the author present the information in a relatively simple, straightforward manner that can be understood by a reasonably competent scientist-reader?

_____ *Organization*. Does the manuscript develop the subject logically and effectively?

_____ *Duplication*. Can the manuscript be shortened without loss of content? Are all figures needed if the same data are also given in tabular form? Is there unnecessary duplication in the text or between the text and tables and figures?

_____ *Correspondence of Text with Tables and Figures*. Are all tables and figures referred to in the text? Do statements in the text correspond with the content of tables and figures?

_____ *Graphs*. Do they conform to the guidelines outlined in the ASA, CSSA, SSSA Publications Handbook and Style Manual? Are they properly labeled?

Do they contain all observations? Is the plotting of the data accurate?

_____ *References*. Is the required information there, complete, and in the proper format? Are there obvious errors, such as misspelled names of authors or publications?

Manuscript Style

_____ *Editorial Style*. Does the manuscript conform to current ASA, CSSA, SSSA editorial style and format?

_____ *Consistency*. Are the same spellings and abbreviations used throughout? Are all abbreviations and variables defined and used uniformly? If an abbreviation is defined in the paper, is it used more than once? If not, it can often be eliminated.

_____ *Abbreviations*. Does the paper have an excessive number of author-made-up abbreviations that serve only to hinder ease of reading and interpreting the information? Are all ad-hoc abbreviations defined in a list immediately after the abstract? If not, work with the author to create the list.

_____ *Sequence of Tables, Figures, and Equations*. Are all serially numbered items presented in the proper sequence?

Abstract

_____ Strive for an impersonal, noncritical, and informative account.

_____ Give a clear, grammatically accurate, exact, and stylistically uniform treatment of the subject.

_____ Provide rationale or justification for the study. The statement should give a brief account of the purpose, need, and significance of the investigation (hypothesis or how the present work differs from previous work).

_____ State the objectives or hypothesis clearly as to what is to be obtained.

_____ Give a brief but specific account of the methods, emphasizing departures from the customary.

_____ Give the full soil classification if it is a factor in interpreting the results.

_____ Clarify whether it is a greenhouse or field experiment.

_____ Identify scientific names of plants.

_____ State results succinctly.

_____ Outline conclusions or recommendations, if any. Emphasize the significance of the work, conclusions, and recommendations. This may include new theories, interpretations, evaluations, or applications.

_____ Use specific figures whenever possible to avoid use of general terms, especially in presenting the method and reporting the results. For example, if two rates of a treatment are used, state what they are.

_____ Never cite references.

_____ Contain about 200 to 250 words for articles or 100 to 150 words for Notes.

_____ Avoid statements such as "is discussed" or "is presented."

Chapter 3

Journal Histories, Management, and Editorial Procedures

The procedures for handling manuscripts and the duties of individual editorial board members vary from journal to journal. This chapter outlines those procedures for each journal. It also gives the histories and makeup of the journals' editorial boards.

Each of the societies, ASA, CSSA, and SSSA, publishes a flagship journal. The three societies also publish additional journals both individually and as copublications of two or more of the societies.

General Procedures

Contributions to all ASA, CSSA, and SSSA journals must be prepared according to instructions given in the *Publications Handbook and Style Manual* (https://www.agronomy.org/publications/journals/author-resources/style-manual). Each journal's online instructions to authors contains the most recent requirements for manuscript preparation and submission.

Journal manuscripts are submitted via an online manuscript submission system. Upon submission, each paper is assigned a manuscript number, and a record is created in the electronic system that holds all the submission and review information. The author is automatically sent an acknowledgment email upon submission.

The majority of ASA, CSSA, and SSSA journals use the single-blind peer-review process, whereby the names of the reviewers are hidden from the author. A few journals, as noted below, use a double-blind review process, whereby the names of the reviewers are hidden from the authors and the names of the authors are hidden from the reviewers.

The online manuscript submission system allows editors, reviewers, and authors to see the current status of articles. The entire review process, documentation and reporting, and correspondence up to the final decision are handled within the manuscript submission system.

Each journal follows a similar workflow. Once a paper is submitted, the editor assigns the paper to a technical editor (or associate editor for those journals without technical editors). If the editor and technical editor determine that the paper should continue in the process, the technical editor assigns an associate editor. The associate editor assigns reviewers via the online submission system.

The editor or technical editor may decide to release a paper prior to official review. Reasons for release prior to review are outlined in more detail in Chapter 2.

Most ASA, CSSA, and SSSA journals also publish letters to the editor and book reviews. All letters to the editor and book reviews are submitted via the online manuscript submission system. These are reviewed by the editor, although the editor may send letters to the editor out for review depending on the content. If a letter refers to a published paper, a copy of the letter should be sent to the corresponding author of the published paper, inviting a response. If there is a response, it is published along with the letter.

Appeals

Should an author feel that the process was implemented incorrectly or that a review was biased or poorly done, the author should first inform the editor of that journal and attempt to resolve the concern at that level. If the concern is not resolved, the author may appeal the decision to the editor(s)-in-chief of that journal. The decision of the editor-in-chief will be final. The appeals process is spelled out further in the ASA-CSSA-SSSA Editorial Policies document.

Agronomy Journal

History

Agronomy Journal (AJ) is the official publication of the American Society of Agronomy. It was launched in 1910, three years after the ASA was founded. The first four volumes were titled *Proceedings of the American Society of Agronomy*. (Volume 1 contains papers from 1907, 1908, and 1909.) From 1913 through 1948, the name was *Journal of the American Society of Agronomy*. In 1949, the name changed to *Agronomy Journal*. Published first in annual bound volumes and later at greater frequency, the journal appeared from 1923 through 1960 as a monthly periodical. Since then it has been published bimonthly in print, and since 1998 in both print and online formats. When *Journal of Production Agriculture* (a joint publication of ASA, CSSA, and SSSA) ceased publication in 1999, the scope of *Agronomy Journal* expanded to allow publishing of papers that previously appeared in *Journal of Production Agriculture*.

Editorial Board

The AJ editorial board consists of the ASA editor-in-chief, the editor, technical editors who are experts in various areas, a number of associate editors covering numerous subject-matter areas, the managing editor, and the publications director and chief executive officer as ex officio members. See Chapter 1 for a general description of the responsibilities of the editorial board.

Editor. The AJ editor is appointed by the ASA editor-in-chief on behalf of the ASA president.

After consultation with the ASA editor-in-chief and on behalf of the ASA president, the editor appoints new and replacement associate editors.

The editor may write editorials and solicit manuscripts on special topics.

Technical Editors. Technical editors are appointed by the ASA editor-in-chief on behalf of the ASA president and after consultation with the editor. New technical editor positions may be created only with the approval of the ASA Board of Directors.

Technical editors delegate to associate editors the responsibility for obtaining reviews from qualified peer scientists. Technical editors of AJ are empowered to accept and release papers.

Associate Editors. Under the direction of a technical editor, associate editors are responsible for evaluating in a timely manner the technical and intellectual content and suitability of manuscripts assigned to them. Associate editors are responsible for finding reviewers and corresponding and working with authors to obtain revisions as needed. Associate editors recommend to their technical editor whether a manuscript should be accepted or released.

Workflow

A contribution to AJ must be prepared in a way that will allow it to receive a double-blind review.

The editor oversees the peer-review process via the online manuscript submissions system. Once a paper is submitted, the editor assigns the paper to a technical editor. Prior to the official review, the editor and technical editor may decide that a paper is not ready for review and release it back to the author.

After determining that a manuscript is ready for review, the technical editor assigns the manuscript to an associate editor. If, at this stage, the associate editor feels that the manuscript is not ready for review, they are urged to discuss their concerns with the technical editor before assigning outside reviewers.

The associate editor seeks the services of qualified peer reviewers via the electronic submission system. The associate editor normally serves as one of the reviewers of the paper (unless the subject matter is too far outside their area of expertise). The associate editor is responsible for obtaining at least two recommendations for acceptance or release of the manuscript. To speed the review process, it is suggested that the associate editor line up a total of three reviewers at the outset. The associate editor is responsible for ensuring that the reviews are completed in a timely manner. Reviewers of AJ manuscripts are requested to complete reviews in 21 days.

Associate editors can decide to return a paper to an author for revision but should never indicate to the corresponding author anything that would guarantee acceptance if certain changes are made.

Corresponding authors are given approximately 28 days to complete revisions, after which time the paper is subject to release.

Associate editors do not have the authority to accept or release a paper during the review process. After reaching a final decision about the acceptability of a paper, the associate editor makes a recommendation to the technical editor regarding acceptance or release of the manuscript. When recommending that

manuscripts be released, the associate editor should give sufficient reason to the technical editor so the author can be fully informed.

The technical editor reviews the reviewers' comments and the associate editor's recommendation and may accept, modify, or disagree with that recommendation. The technical editor may:

- Accept the paper with no additional changes. When the technical editor selects this recommendation, the headquarters office is notified of the accepted paper.
- Agree that the paper is worthy of publication but disagree that the paper is ready for acceptance and recommend a revision. The technical editor then works with the author—usually through the associate editor—to clear up any points (often involving scientific and technical details). If the revised paper is accepted, the production continues as outlined in the previous point.
- Release the paper, informing the corresponding author of that action and detailing the reason(s) for the release. Depending on the circumstances, the technical editor may encourage the author to clear up any technical problems and resubmit the manuscript for further consideration. Resubmissions should be noted as such by the corresponding author at the time of resubmission.

The editor may make an immediate decision at any time during the process if needed.

After a paper is accepted, the managing editor of AJ communicates with the corresponding author throughout the production process. The managing editor supervises copyediting of papers approved for publication, typesetting, transmittal of proofs to authors, and publication.

Paper Types

Any paper published in AJ must make a significant contribution to the advancement of knowledge or toward a better understanding of existing agronomic concepts. Articles published in AJ are peer reviewed and report original research findings and technological information on all aspects of agriculture and natural resource sciences. Manuscripts are encouraged that transfer production-oriented information to a wide range of professional agriculturalists, including other disciplines such as animal science, weed science, agricultural economics, entomology, plant pathology, horticulture, and forestry.

Paper types include original research articles, "Review and Interpretation" papers, "Notes and Unique Phenomena," "Forum" and "Contemporary Issues" papers, software papers, and letters to the editor. "Notes and Unique Phenomena" may be published regarding apparatus, observations, and experimental techniques. Observations usually are limited to studies and reports of unrepeatable phenomena or other unique circumstances.

Research articles are grouped by subject matter. Manuscript authors are given the opportunity to designate the subject-matter heading under which the article could logically appear. These subject-matter areas are: Agronomic Application of Genetic Resources; Agronomy, Soils & Environmental Quality;

Biofuels; Biometry, Modeling & Statistics; Climatology & Water Management; Crop Ecology & Physiology; Crop Economics, Production & Management; Organic Agriculture & Agroecology; Pest Interactions in Agronomic Systems; Soil Fertility & Crop Nutrition; Soil Tillage, Conservation & Management; and Urban Agriculture.

"Forum" and "Contemporary Issues" papers are reviewed by the editor in consultation with one or more technical editors regarding the paper's acceptability for publication. Contributions to the "Forum" and "Contemporary Issues" sections address current agricultural and natural resource issues and questions in brief, thought-provoking form.

The journal regularly publishes special sections. Guest editors may propose topics and work with the editor in developing the special section. Special sections in AJ are designed (i) to bring to the forefront and promote new areas of research of broad interest to the journal's readership; (ii) to highlight and provide a platform for scientific exchange resulting from symposia, collaborative projects, and topical conferences through a rigorous and professional peer-review process; and/or (iii) to provide a periodic overview of the state of the art in various research areas by soliciting contributions from active leaders in the various fields of agronomy.

Special sections are usually coordinated by guest editors. Special section articles follow the same workflow as other AJ articles, with guest editors often taking the role of associate editor and with the journal editor having the decision regarding acceptance or release.

Crop Science

History

Crop Science (CS), published bimonthly, is the official publication of the Crop Science Society of America. Publication began in January 1961, six years after CSSA was organized, and has been published bimonthly ever since. Beginning in 1998 it has also been published electronically.

Editorial Board

The CS editorial board consists of the CSSA editor-in-chief, the editor, technical editors who are experts in various areas, a number of associate editors covering numerous subject-matter areas, the managing editor, and the publications director and chief executive officer as ex officio members. See Chapter 1 for a general description of the responsibilities of the editorial board.

Editor. The CS editor is appointed by the CSSA editor-in-chief on behalf of the CSSA president.

After consultation with the CSSA editor-in-chief and on behalf of the CSSA president, the editor appoints new and replacement associate editors.

The editor may write editorials and solicit manuscripts on special topics.

Technical Editors. Technical editors are appointed by the CSSA editor-in-chief on behalf of the CSSA president and after consultation with the editor. New technical editor positions may be created only with the approval of the CSSA Board of Directors.

Technical editors delegate to associate editors the responsibility for obtaining reviews from qualified peer scientists. Technical editors of CS are empowered to accept and release papers.

Associate Editors. Under the direction of a technical editor, associate editors are responsible for evaluating in a timely manner the technical and intellectual content and suitability of manuscripts assigned to them. Associate editors are responsible for finding reviewers and corresponding and working with authors to obtain revisions as needed. Associate editors recommend to their technical editor whether a manuscript should be accepted or released.

Workflow

The editor oversees the peer-review process via the online manuscript submissions system. Once a paper is submitted, the editor assigns the paper to a technical editor. Prior to the official review, the editor and technical editor may decide that a paper is not ready for review and release it back to the author.

After determining that a manuscript is ready for review, the technical editor assigns the manuscript to an associate editor. If at this stage, the associate editor feels that the manuscript is not ready for review, they are urged to discuss their concerns with the technical editor before assigning outside reviewers.

The associate editor seeks the services of qualified peer reviewers via the electronic submission system. The associate editor is responsible for obtaining at least two recommendations for acceptance or release of the manuscript. To speed the review process, it is suggested that the associate editor line up a total of three reviewers at the outset. The associate editor is responsible for ensuring the reviews are completed in a timely manner. Reviewers of CS manuscripts are requested to complete reviews in 21 days.

Associate editors can decide to return a paper to an author for revision but should never indicate to the corresponding author anything that would guarantee acceptance if certain changes are made.

Corresponding authors are given approximately 28 days to complete revisions, after which time their papers are subject to release.

Associate editors do not have the authority to accept or release a paper during the review process. After reaching a final decision about the acceptability of a paper, the associate editor makes a recommendation to the technical editor regarding acceptance or release of the manuscript. When recommending that manuscripts be released, the associate editor should give sufficient reason to the technical editor so the author can be fully informed.

The technical editor reviews the reviewers' comments and the associate editor's recommendation and may accept, modify, or disagree with that recommendation. The technical editor may:

- Accept the paper with no additional changes. When the technical editor selects this recommendation, the headquarters office is notified of the accepted paper.
- Agree that the paper is worthy of publication but disagree that the paper is ready for acceptance and recommend a revision. The technical editor then works with the author—usually through the associate editor—to clear up any points (often involving scientific and technical details). If the revised paper is accepted, the production continues as outlined in the previous point.
- Release the paper, informing the corresponding author of that action and detailing the reason(s) for the release. Depending on the circumstances, the technical editor may encourage the author to clear up any technical problems and resubmit the manuscript for further consideration. Resubmissions should be noted as such by the corresponding author at the time of resubmission.

The editor may make an immediate decision at any time during the process if needed.

After a paper is accepted, the managing editor of CS communicates with the corresponding author throughout the production process. The managing editor supervises copyediting of papers approved for publication, typesetting, transmittal of proofs to authors, and publication.

Paper Types

Crop Science is the normal channel for publication of papers in plant genetics; breeding; cytology; metabolism; physiology; ecology; turfgrass; weed science; crop quality, production, and utilization; genomics, molecular genetics and biotechnology; and plant genetic resources.

Articles reporting experimentation or research in field crops or reviews or interpretation of such research will be accepted for review as papers. For research involving controlled environments, see https://www.crops.org/files/publications/ces-guide.pdf for guidelines. Letters to the editor are welcomed.

Soil Science Society of America Journal

History

Soil Science Society of America Journal (SSSAJ) is the official publication of the Soil Science Society of America. It was first published as *Soil Science Society of America Proceedings* in 1937, one year after the SSSA was organized. In 1976, the name was changed to *Soil Science Society of America Journal*. It was first published as an annual bound volume. In 1952, it became a quarterly publication, and it has appeared bimonthly since January 1958. Beginning in 1998, it has also been published electronically.

Editorial Board

The SSSAJ editorial board consists of the SSSA editor-in-chief, editor, technical editors, associate editors, managing editor, and publications director and

chief executive officer as ex officio members. See Chapter 1 for a general description of the responsibilities of the editorial board.

Editor. The SSSAJ editor is appointed by the SSSA editor-in-chief on behalf of the SSSA president.

After consultation with the SSSA editor-in-chief and on behalf of the SSSA president, the editor appoints new and replacement associate editors.

The editor may write editorials and solicit manuscripts on special topics.

Technical Editors. Technical editors are appointed by the SSSA editor-in-chief on behalf of the SSSA president and after consultation with the editor. New technical editor positions may be created only with the approval of the SSSA Board of Directors.

Technical editors delegate to associate editors the responsibility for obtaining reviews from qualified peer scientists. Technical editors of SSSAJ are empowered to accept and release papers.

Associate Editors. Under the direction of a technical editor, associate editors are responsible for evaluating in a timely manner the technical and intellectual content and suitability of manuscripts assigned to them. Technical editors normally delegate to associate editors the responsibility of finding reviewers and corresponding and working with authors to obtain revisions as needed. Associate editors have the ability to accept manuscripts but not to release them. When an associate editor recommends that a manuscript be released, they consult with the technical editor, who will inform the author of the paper's release.

Workflow

A contribution to SSSAJ must be prepared in a way that will allow it to receive a double-blind review.

The editor oversees the peer-review process via the online manuscript submissions system. Once a paper is submitted to SSSAJ, the editor assigns the paper to a technical editor. Prior to the official review, the editor and technical editor may decide that a paper is not ready for review and release it back to the author.

Afer determining the paper is ready for review, the technical editor assigns it to an associate editor. If at this time there is still a question about whether a paper is ready for review, the associate editor is urged to discuss any concerns with the technical editor before assigning outside reviewers. The associate editor assigns reviewers via the online submission system. Reviewers of SSSAJ manuscripts are requested to complete reviews in 21 days.

Associate editors of SSSAJ have the authority to accept papers for publication but not to release them. Technical editors can both accept and release a paper submitted to SSSAJ.

Associate editors can decide to return a paper to an author for revision but should never indicate to the corresponding author anything that would guarantee acceptance if certain changes are made. A corresponding author is given

approximately 30 days to complete revisions, after which time their papers are subject to release. The associate editor may:

- Recommend acceptance of the paper with no additional changes.
- Agree that the paper is worthy of publication but disagree that the paper is ready for acceptance and recommend a revision. The associate editor then works with the author to clear up any points (often involving scientific and technical details). If the revised paper is accepted, production then continues.
- Recommend to the technical editor that the paper be released. The technical editor reviews the reviewers' comments and the associate editor's recommendation and may accept, modify, or disagree with that recommendation. If the technical editor agrees with the recommendation, they inform the corresponding author of that action and detail the reason(s) for the release. Depending on the circumstances, the technical editor may encourage the author to clear up any technical problems and resubmit the manuscript for further consideration. Resubmissions should be noted as such by the corresponding author at the time of resubmission.

If the technical editor is not comfortable with the decision, the editor may make the final decision regarding the manuscript and can accept, modify, or disagree with the technical editor's recommendation. If the editor suggests further modifications, the technical editor will work with the author, usually through the associate editor, to clear up any points.

The corresponding author of an accepted paper will be notified via email by either the editor, technical editor, or associate editor. For those papers that are released, a notification email can be recieved from the editor or technical editor. When the editor accepts a manuscript, the headquarters office is notified of the accepted paper.

After a paper is accepted, the managing editor of SSSAJ communicates with the corresponding author throughout the production process. The managing editor supervises copyediting of papers approved for publication, typesetting, transmittal of proofs to authors, and publication.

Paper Types

The SSSAJ is the normal channel for publication of papers and notes reporting on original research in the subject-matter divisions or groups of the SSSA. Reviews, issue papers, comments and letters to the editor, book reviews, symposia papers, and papers on the history of soil science may also be published. Special sections or issues may be published on occasion. The editor-in-chief, editor, and technical editors can ask for input on the submitted proposals for special sections or issues. Papers submitted under these special issues or sections follow the same workflow as outlined above.

Agricultural & Environmental Letters

History

Agricultural & Environmental Letters (A&EL), copublished by ASA, CSSA, and SSSA, is a continuously published electronic-only open-access journal. The journal was launched in 2016.

Editorial Board

The A&EL editorial board consists of the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA editors-in-chief, the editor, technical editors who are experts in various areas, a number of associate editors covering numerous subject-matter areas, the managing editor, and the publications director and chief executive officer as ex officio members. See Chapter 1 for a general description of the responsibilities of the editorial board.

Editor. The A&EL editor is appointed by the ASA editor-in-chief in consultation and agreement with the CSSA and SSSA editors-in-chief and on behalf of the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA presidents.

After consultation with the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA editors-in-chief and on behalf of the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA presidents, the editor appoints new and replacement associate editors.

The editor may write editorials and solicit manuscripts on special topics.

Technical Editors. Technical editors are appointed by the ASA editor-in-chief after consultation with the editor and in consultation and agreement with the CSSA and SSSA editors-in-chief and on behalf of the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA presidents. New technical editor positions may be created only with the approval of the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Boards of Directors.

Technical editors delegate to associate editors the responsibility for obtaining reviews from qualified peer scientists. Technical editors of A&EL are empowered to accept and release papers.

Associate Editors. Under the direction of a technical editor, associate editors are responsible for evaluating in a timely manner the technical and intellectual content and suitability of manuscripts assigned to them. Technical editors normally delegate to associate editors the responsibility of finding reviewers and corresponding and working with authors to obtain revisions as needed. Associate editors recommend to their technical editor whether a manuscript should be accepted or released.

Workflow

A contribution to A&EL receives a single-blind review. *Agricultural & Environmental Letters* uses an expedited review and publication process.

The editor oversees the peer-review process via the online manuscript submissions system. Once a paper is submitted to A&EL, the editor assigns the paper to a technical editor. Prior to the official review, the editor and technical editor may decide that a paper is not ready for review and release it back to the author.

After determining that a manuscript is ready for review, the technical editor assigns the manuscript to an associate editor. If at this stage, the associate editor feels that the manuscript is not ready for review, they are urged to discuss their concerns with the technical editor before assigning outside reviewers.

The associate editor invites qualified peer reviewers via the electronic submission system. The associate editor normally serves as one of the reviewers of the paper unless the subject matter is too far outside their area of expertise. The associate editor is responsible for obtaining at least two recommendations for acceptance or release of the manuscript. To speed the review process, it is suggested that the associate editor line up a total of three reviewers at the outset; often, the associate editor acts as one of the reviewers and asks the technical editor to act as another reviewer. The associate editor is responsible for ensuring the reviews are completed in a timely manner. Reviewers of A&EL manuscripts are requested to complete reviews in 10 days.

Associate editors can decide to return a paper to an author for revision but should never indicate to the corresponding author anything that would guarantee acceptance if certain changes are made.

Corresponding authors are given 10 days to complete revisions, after which time the paper is subject to release.

Associate editors do not have the authority to accept or release a paper during the review process. After reaching a final decision about the acceptability of a paper, the associate editor makes the recommendation to the technical editor regarding acceptance or release of the manuscript. When recommending that manuscripts be released, the associate editor should give sufficient reason to the technical editor so the author can be fully informed.

The technical editor reviews the reviewers' comments and the associate editor's recommendation and may accept, modify, or disagree with that recommendation. The technical editor may:

- Accept the paper with no additional changes.
- Agree that the paper is worthy of publication but disagree that the paper is ready for acceptance and recommend a revision. The technical editor then works with the author—usually through the associate editor—to clear up any points (often involving scientific and technical details).
- Release the paper, informing the corresponding author of that action and detailing the reason(s) for the release. Depending on the circumstances, the technical editor may encourage the author to clear up any technical problems and resubmit the manuscript for further consideration. Resubmissions should be noted as such by the corresponding author at the time of resubmission.

The technical editor notifies the corresponding author of the final decision via the manuscript peer-review system. When the technical editor accepts a manuscript, the headquarters office is notified of the accepted paper, and production for publication begins.

The editor may make an immediate decision at any time during the process if needed.

After a paper is accepted, the managing editor of A&EL communicates with the corresponding author throughout the production process. The managing editor supervises copyediting of papers, layout, transmittal of proofs to authors, and publication.

Paper Types

Manuscripts in A&EL are published under the following categories: (i) editorials, including invited guest editorials; (ii) commentaries—commentary on relevant issues related to science, policy, research trends, business trends, exciting new discoveries, food security, etc.; (iii) letters to the editor; and (iv) research letters—manuscripts that provide research information and other related information. Research letters include an abstract and may be divided into sections to bring organization to the manuscript.

Agrosystems, Geosciences & Environment

History

Agrosystems, Geosciences & Environment (AGE), copublished by ASA and CSSA, is an open-access, continuously published, electronic journal. The journal was launched in 2018.

Editorial Board

The AGE editorial board consists of the ASA and CSSA editors-in-chief, the editor, senior editors who are experts in various areas, a number of associate editors covering numerous subject-matter areas, and the managing editor, publications director, and chief executive officer as ex officio members. See Chapter 1 for a general description of the responsibilities of the editorial board.

Editor. The AGE editor is appointed by the ASA editor-in-chief, on behalf of the ASA president and in agreement with the CSSA editor-in-chief and president. After consultation with the ASA and CSSA editors-in-chief and on behalf of the ASA and CSSA presidents, the editor appoints new and replacement associate editors. The editor may write editorials and solicit manuscripts on special topics.

Senior Editors. Senior editors are appointed by the ASA editor-in-chief after consultation with the editor and in consultation and agreement with the CSSA editor-in-chief and on behalf of the ASA and CSSA presidents. New senior editor positions may be created only with the approval of the ASA and CSSA Boards of Directors.

Senior editors delegate to associate editors the responsibility for obtaining reviews from qualified peer scientists. Senior editors of AGE are empowered to accept and release papers.

Associate Editors. Under the direction of a senior editor, associate editors are responsible for evaluating in a timely manner the technical and intellectual content and suitability of manuscripts assigned to them. Associate editors are responsible for finding reviewers and corresponding and working with authors to obtain revisions as needed. Associate editors recommend to their senior editor whether a manuscript should be accepted or released.

Workflow

A contribution to AGE receives a single-blind review.

The editor oversees the peer-review process via the online manuscript submissions system. *Agrosystems, Geosciences & Environment* will follow two publication tracks: transferred manuscripts from other ASA, CSSA, and SSSA journals or new submissions.

Track 1: Transferred Manuscripts. *Agrosystems, Geosciences & Environment* will act as a cascade journal, taking manuscripts from other ASA, CSSA, and SSSA journals that are being released because they are not in the scope of the journal, not sufficiently novel, too regional, or present null results. These manuscripts can be released after review (from the original journal), in which case the reviews will follow the manuscript to AGE; or they can be released (from the original journal) before review, in which case it will be reviewed with AGE.

The transfer of manuscripts will occur directly between journals within ASA, CSSA, and SSSA, so authors will not have to resubmit them. If an author declines the chance to transfer a manuscript to AGE, the manuscript will be released entirely. Reviewers will be notified that their reviews may be moved to another ASA, CSSA, or SSSA journal (but never outside of ASA, CSSA, and SSSA).

Once a paper is transferred to AGE, the editor and/or senior editor may decide that a paper is not suitable for AGE and release it back to the author. After determining that a manuscript is ready for review, the editor assigns it to a senior editor. The senior editor evaluates the reviewers' comments that were transferred with the manuscript. After this initial assessment, the senior editor may elect to work directly with the authors to revise the manuscript, assign the manuscript to an associate editor to interact with the author(s) to revise the manuscript, or assign the manuscript to an associate editor to obtain additional reviews.

If the senior editor believes the manuscript requires minimal revision, the senior editor may communicate directly with the author to revise the manuscript. If more substantial work is necessary, the senior editor assigns the manuscript to an associate editor. If the associate editor believes additional reviews are needed, then additional reviews can be solicited. The associate editor examines the transferred reviews and corresponds with the author to revise the manuscript. If the associate editor believes additional reviews are needed, then additional reviews can be solicited. The associate editor also serves as a reviewer of the paper (unless the subject matter is too far outside their area of expertise). The associate editor is responsible for obtaining at least two recommendations for acceptance or release

of the manuscript. Reviewers of AGE manuscripts are requested to complete reviews in 14 days. Associate editors are encouraged to assess the revised manuscripts for completeness in addressing the review comments without returning manuscripts to the reviewers for additional reviews.

Associate editors can decide to return a paper to an author for revision but should never indicate to the corresponding author anything that would guarantee acceptance if certain changes are made.

Corresponding authors are given 28 days to complete revisions, after which time the paper is subject to release.

Track 2: New Submissions. New submissions received by AGE will be screened by the editor to ensure they fit within the scope and aim of the journal. The submission will be sent to a senior editor, who assigns it to an associate editor. The associate editor selects reviewers and can either work with the author to revise the manuscript or can return it to the senior editor if a release from the journal is recommended, after receiving a minimum of two reviews. Associate editors will serve as reviewers for manuscripts unless they feel the subject matter is too far outside of their area of expertise. If a revision is recommended, the associate editor will correspond directly with the authors on the revision and are encouraged to assess the revised manuscripts for completeness in addressing the review comments, without returning manuscripts to the reviewers for additional reviews.

Associate editors can decide to return a paper to an author for revision but should never indicate to the corresponding author anything that would guarantee acceptance if certain changes are made.

Corresponding authors are given approximately 28 days to complete revisions, after which time the paper is subject to release.

Workflow for All AGE Manuscripts. Associate editors do not have the authority to accept or release a paper during the review process. After reaching a final decision about the acceptability of a paper, the associate editor makes a recommendation to the senior editor regarding acceptance or release of the manuscript. When recommending that manuscripts be released, the associate editor should give sufficient reason to the senior editor so the author can be fully informed.

The senior editor reads the reviewers' comments and the associate editor's recommendation and may accept, modify, or disagree with that recommendation. The senior editor may:

- Accept the paper with no additional changes.
- Agree that the paper is worthy of publication but disagree that the paper is ready for acceptance and recommend a revision. The senior editor then works with the author—usually through the associate editor—to clear up any points (often involving scientific and technical details).
- Release the paper, informing the corresponding author of that action and detailing the reason(s) for the release. Depending on the circumstances, the senior editor may encourage the author to clear up any technical problems and resubmit

the manuscript for further consideration. Resubmissions should be noted as such by the corresponding author at the time of resubmission.

The senior editor notifies the corresponding author of the final decision via the manuscript peer-review system. When the senior editor accepts a manuscript, the headquarters office is notified of the accepted paper, and production for publication begins.

The editor may make an immediate decision at any time during the process if needed. After a paper is accepted, the managing editor of AGE communicates with the corresponding author throughout the production process. The managing editor supervises copyediting of papers approved for publication, layout, transmittal of proofs to authors, and publication.

Paper Types

Articles published in AGE report original research findings and technological information on all aspects of agriculture, plant, environmental, and soil sciences. Paper types include original research articles in the areas of agrosystems, geosciences, environment, or statistics.

Crop, Forage & Turfgrass Management

History

Crop, Forage & Turfgrass Management (CFTM), launched in 2015, is an electronic copublished by ASA and CSSA Prior to 2015, CFTM existed as the separate journals *Applied Turfgrass Science*, *Crop Management*, and *Forage & Grazinglands*.

Editorial Board

Crop, Forage & Turfgrass Management is prepared by an editorial board consisting of the editor, technical editors, associate editors, the ASA and CSSA editors-in-chief, the managing editor, and the publications director and chief executive officer as ex officio members. See Chapter 1 for a general description of the responsibilities of the editorial board.

Editor. The CFTM editor is appointed by the CSSA editor-in-chief in consultation and agreement with the ASA editor-in-chief and on behalf of the ASA and CSSA presidents.

The editor appoints new and replacement associate editors.

The editor may write editorials and solicit manuscripts on special topics.

Technical Editors. Technical editors are appointed by the CSSA editor-in-chief in consultation and agreement with the ASA editor-in-chief and on behalf of the ASA and CSSA presidents after consultation with the editor. New technical editor positions may be created only with the approval of the ASA and CSSA Boards of Directors.

Technical editors delegate to associate editors the responsibility for obtaining reviews from qualified peer scientists. Technical editors of CFTM are empowered to accept and release papers.

Associate Editors. Under the direction of a technical editor, associate editors are responsible for evaluating in a timely manner the technical and intellectual content and suitability of manuscripts assigned to them. Technical editors normally delegate to associate editors the responsibility of finding reviewers and corresponding and working with authors to obtain revisions as needed. Associate editors recommend to their technical editor whether a manuscript should be accepted or released.

Workflow

A contribution to CFTM receives a single-blind review.

The editor oversees the peer-review process via the online manuscript submissions system. Once a paper is submitted to CFTM, the editor assigns the paper to a technical editor. Prior to the official review, the editor and technical editor may decide that a paper is not ready for review and release it back to the author.

After determining that a manuscript is ready for review, the technical editor assigns the manuscript to an associate editor. If, at this stage, the associate editor feels that the manuscript is not ready for review, they are urged to discuss their concerns with the technical editor before assigning outside reviewers.

The associate editor invites qualified peer reviewers via the electronic submission system. The associate editor normally serves as one of the reviewers of the paper unless the subject matter is too far outside their area of expertise. The associate editor is responsible for obtaining at least two recommendations for acceptance or release of the manuscript. To speed the review process, it is suggested that the associate editor line up a total of three reviewers at the outset. The associate editor is responsible for ensuring that the reviews are completed in a timely manner. Reviewers of CFTM manuscripts are requested to complete their reviews in 21 days.

Associate editors can decide to return a paper to an author for revision but should never indicate to the corresponding author anything that would guarantee acceptance if certain changes are made.

Corresponding authors are given approximately 30 days to complete revisions, after which time the paper is subject to release.

Associate editors do not have the authority to accept or release a paper during the review process. After reaching a final decision about the acceptability of a paper, the associate editor makes a recommendation to the technical editor regarding acceptance or release of the manuscript. When recommending that manuscripts be released, the associate editor should give sufficient reason to the technical editor so the author can be fully informed.

The technical editor reviews the reviewers' comments and the associate editor's recommendation and may accept, modify, or disagree with that recommendation. The technical editor may:

- Accept the paper with no additional changes.
- Agree that the paper is worthy of publication but disagree that the paper is ready for acceptance and recommend a revision. The co-editor then works with the author—usually through the associate editor—to clear up any points (often involving scientific and technical details).
- Release the paper, informing the corresponding author of that action and detailing the reason(s) for the release. Depending on the circumstances, the technical editor may encourage the author to clear up any technical problems and resubmit the manuscript for further consideration. Resubmissions should be noted as such by the corresponding author at the time of resubmission.

The technical editor notifies the corresponding author of the final decision via the manuscript peer-review system. When the technical editor accepts a manuscript, the headquarters office is notified of the accepted paper, and production for publication begins.

The editor may make an immediate decision at any time during the process if needed.

After a paper is accepted, the managing editor of CFTM communicates with the corresponding author throughout the production process. The managing editor supervises copyediting of papers, layout, transmittal of proofs to authors, and publication.

Paper Types

Crop, Forage & Turfgrass Management is a peer-reviewed, international, journal covering all aspects of applied crop, forage and grazinglands, and turfgrass management. The journal serves the professions related to the management of crops, forages and grazinglands, and turfgrass by publishing research, briefs, reviews, perspectives, and diagnostic and management guides that are beneficial to researchers, practitioners, educators, and industry representatives.

Research articles and briefs are published in the topical categories Applied Turfgrass Science, Crop Management, and Forage & Grazinglands.

Research articles should describe work that represents a significant advance in the understanding of a particular issue and that leads to practical solutions to existing problems. The work described must be new and original. Research articles are encouraged to be short and concise and no longer than 3,000 words. All manuscripts must be presented in terms meaningful to both a multidisciplinary audience of scientists and educated, nonspecialist, lay readers.

Briefs are short peer-reviewed scientific reports that report new findings and recommendations relevant to any aspect of the journal's subject-matter area. These include any topics appropriate to other areas of the journal except that they are shorter by nature. Briefs provide a repository of science-based findings that are important to advisers, growers, diagnosticians, researchers, regulatory officials, other practitioners, and the public. Briefs are intended to stand alone and do not include preliminary reports of work that will later be presented in full-length papers, nor are they abstracts. Briefs are limited to 800 words.

Additionally, the following paper types may be published: letters from the editor, letters to the editor, Reviews, Perspectives, Research and Industry Trends, Diagnostic Guides, Management Guides, and Proceedings.

Journal of Environmental Quality

History

The *Journal of Environmental Quality* (JEQ) is published jointly by ASA, CSSA, and SSSA. The first issue was published in January 1972 and was published quarterly until 1994, when it became bimonthly.

Editorial Board

The JEQ editorial board consists of the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA editors-in-chief, the editor, technical editors who are experts in various areas, a number of associate editors covering numerous subject-matter areas, the managing editor, and the publications director and chief executive officer as ex officio members. See Chapter 1 for a general description of the responsibilities of the editorial board.

Editor. The JEQ editor is appointed by the ASA editor-in-chief in consultation and agreement with the CSSA and SSSA editors-in-chief and on behalf of the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA presidents.

The editor appoints new and replacement associate editors.

The editor may write editorials and solicit manuscripts on special topics.

Technical Editors. Technical editors are appointed by the ASA editor-in-chief after consultation with the editor and in consultation and agreement with the CSSA and SSSA editors-in-chief and on behalf of the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA presidents. New technical editor positions may be created only with the approval of the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Boards of Directors.

Technical editors delegate to associate editors the responsibility for obtaining reviews from qualified peer scientists. Technical editors of JEQ recommend to the editor whether a manuscript should be accepted or released.

Associate Editors. Under the direction of a technical editor, associate editors are responsible for evaluating in a timely manner the technical and intellectual content and suitability of manuscripts assigned to them. Technical editors normally delegate to associate editors the responsibility of finding reviewers and corresponding and working with authors to obtain revisions as needed. Associate editors recommend to their technical editor whether a manuscript should be accepted or released.

Workflow

A contribution to JEQ receives a single-blind review.

The editor oversees the peer-review process via the online manuscript submissions system. Once a paper is submitted to JEQ, the editor assigns it to a technical editor. Prior to the official review, the editor and technical editor may decide that a paper is not ready for review and release it back to the author.

After determining that a manuscript is ready for review, the technical editor assigns the manuscript to an associate editor. If, at this stage, the associate editor feels that the manuscript is not ready for review, they are urged to discuss their concerns with the technical editor before assigning outside reviewers.

The associate editor seeks the services of qualified peer reviewers via the electronic submission system. The associate editor normally serves as one of the reviewers of the paper (unless the subject matter is too far outside their area of expertise). The associate editor is responsible for obtaining at least two recommendations for acceptance or release of the manuscript. To speed the review process, it is suggested that the associate editor line up a total of three reviewers at the outset. The associate editor is responsible for ensuring the reviews are completed in a timely manner. Reviewers of JEQ manuscripts are requested to complete reviews in 21 days.

Associate editors can decide to return a paper to an author for revision but should never indicate to the corresponding author anything that would guarantee acceptance if certain changes are made.

Corresponding authors are given approximately 30 days to complete revisions, after which time the paper is subject to release.

Associate editors do not have the authority to accept or release a paper during the review process. After reaching a final decision about the acceptability of a paper, the associate editor makes a recommendation to the technical editor regarding acceptance or release of the manuscript. When recommending that a manuscript be released, the associate editor should give sufficient reason to the technical editor so that the author can be fully informed.

The technical editor notifies the editor of the recommendation.

The technical editor reviews the reviewers' comments and the associate editor's recommendation and may accept, modify, or disagree with that recommendation. The technical editor may:

- Recommend acceptance of the paper with no additional changes.
- Agree that the paper is worthy of publication but disagree that the paper is ready for acceptance and recommend a revision.The technical editor then works with the author—usually through the associate editor—to clear up any points (often involving scientific and technical details).
- Recommend that the paper be released, informing the editor of that recommendation and detailing the reason(s) for the release.

The editor makes the final decision regarding the manuscript and can accept, modify, or disagree with the technical editor's recommendation. If the editor suggests further modifications, the technical editor will work with the author, usually through the associate editor, to clear up any points. If the recommendation is for release and depending on the circumstances, the editor may encourage the author to clear up any technical problems and resubmit the manuscript for further consideration. Resubmissions should be noted as such by the corresponding author at the time of resubmission.

The editor may make an immediate decision at any time during the process if needed.

The editor notifies the corresponding author of the final decision. When the editor accepts a manuscript, the headquarters office is notified of the accepted paper.

After a paper is accepted, the managing editor of JEQ communicates with the corresponding author throughout the production process. The managing editor supervises copyediting of papers approved for publication, typesetting, transmittal of proofs to authors, and publication.

Paper Types

Papers in JEQ cover various aspects of different types of nonnatural impacts on the environment, with particular focus on terrestrial and aquatic systems. Emphasis is given to the understanding of underlying processes rather than to monitoring. Papers should be broad in scope.

Contributions reporting original research or reviews and analyses dealing with some aspect of environmental quality in natural and agricultural ecosystems are accepted from all disciplines for consideration by the editorial board. Papers may be volunteered, invited, or coordinated as a special section.

Paper types include Technical Reports, Reviews and Analyses, Environmental Issues, Short Communications, Datasets, and Special Sections. Letters to the editor and book reviews are also accepted. Reviews and Analyses papers and book reviews may be invited by the editor.

Technical reports are grouped by subject matter. Authors are given the opportunity to designate the subject-matter heading under which the article could logically appear. These subject areas are periodically reviewed by the JEQ editorial board and are subject to change. The current subject-matter areas include atmospheric pollultants and trace gases, biodegredation and bioremediation, ecological risk assessment, ecosystem restoration, environmental microbiology, environmental models, modules, and datasets, groundwater quality, landscape and watershed processes, plant and environment interactions, organic compounds in the environment, surface water quality, trace elements in the environment, urban pollutants, vadose zone transport processes and chemical transport, waste management, and wetlands and aquatic processes.

The journal regularly publishes special sections. Guest editors may propose topics and work with the editor in developing the special section. Special sections in JEQ are designed (i) to bring to the forefront and promote new areas of research of broad interest to the journal's readership; (ii) to highlight and provide a platform for scientific exchange resulting from symposia, collaborative projects, and topical conferences through a rigorous and professional peer-review process; and/or (iii) to provide a periodic overview of the state of the art in various research areas by soliciting contributions from active leaders in the field of environmental quality. Special sections usually have guest editors. Special section articles follow the same workflow as other JEQ articles, with guest editors often

taking the role of associate editor and with the journal editor having the final decision regarding acceptance or release.

Journal of Plant Registrations

History

Journal of Plant Registrations (JPR) is the official registration publication of CSSA. It was first published in May 2007. Previously, plant registrations were published as short notes in *Crop Science*.

The journal works in cooperation with the USDA–ARS's National Germplasm Resources Laboratory of the National Plant Germplasm System and the National Laboratory for Genetic Resources Preservation to ensure assignment of a registration number to registered material, issue certificates of registration, confirm a permanent record file in the Germplasm Resources Information Network database, and ensure that the list of all registered materials is available to users worldwide.

Editorial Board

Journal of Plant Registrations is prepared by an editorial board consisting of the editor, associate editors, the CSSA editor-in-chief, the managing editor, and the publications director and chief executive officer as ex officio members See Chapter 1 for a general description of the responsibilities of the editorial board.

Editor. The JPR editor is appointed by the CSSA editor-in-chief on behalf of the CSSA president.

The editor appoints new and replacement associate editors.

The editor may write editorials and solicit manuscripts on special topics.

The editor delegates to associate editors the responsibility for obtaining reviews from qualified peer scientists.

Associate Editors. Under the direction of the editor, associate editors are responsible for evaluating in a timely manner the technical and intellectual content and suitability of manuscripts assigned to them. Associate editors recommend to the editor whether a manuscript should be accepted or released.

Workflow

A contribution to JPR receives a single-blind review.

The editor oversees the peer-review process via the online manuscript submissions system. Once a paper is submitted to JPR, the editor assigns the paper to an associate editor. Prior to the official review, the editor may decide that a paper is not ready for review and release it back to the author.

After determining that a manuscript is ready for review, the editor assigns the manuscript to an associate editor. If, at this stage, the associate editor feels that the manuscript is not ready for review, they are urged to discuss their concerns with the editor before assigning outside reviewers.

The associate editor invites qualified peer reviewers via the electronic submission system. The associate editor normally serves as one of the reviewers of the paper unless the subject matter is too far outside their area of expertise. The associate editor is responsible for obtaining at least two recommendations for acceptance or release of the manuscript. To speed the review process, it is suggested that the associate editor line up a total of three reviewers at the outset. The associate editor is responsible for ensuring that the reviews are completed in a timely manner. Reviewers of JPR manuscripts are requested to complete reviews in 21 days.

Associate editors can decide to return a paper to an author for revision but should never indicate to the corresponding author anything that would guarantee acceptance if certain changes are made.

Corresponding authors are given 30 to 60 days to complete revisions, after which time the paper is subject to release.

Associate editors do not have the authority to accept or release a paper during the review process. After reaching a final decision about the acceptability of a paper, the associate editor makes a recommendation to the editor regarding acceptance or release of the manuscript. When recommending that manuscripts be released, the associate editor should give sufficient reason to the editor so that the author can be fully informed.

The editor reviews the reviewers' comments and the associate editor's recommendation and may accept, modify, or disagree with that recommendation. The editor may:

- Accept the paper with no additional changes.
- Agree that the paper is worthy of publication but disagree that the paper is ready for acceptance and recommend a revision. The editor then works with the author—usually through the associate editor—to clear up any points (often involving scientific and technical details).
- Release the paper, informing the corresponding author of that action and detailing the reason(s) for the release. Depending on the circumstances, the editor may encourage the author to clear up any technical problems and resubmit the manuscript for further consideration. Resubmissions should be noted as such by the corresponding author at the time of resubmission.

The editor notifies the corresponding author of the final decision. When the editor accepts a manuscript, the headquarters office is notified of the accepted paper.

The editor may make an immediate decision at any time during the process if needed.

After a paper is accepted, the managing editor of JPR communicates with the corresponding author throughout the production process. The managing editor supervises copyediting of papers, layout, transmittal of proofs to authors, and publication.

Paper Types

The journal publishes rigorously peer-reviewed research describing the development of new plant genotypes with enhanced nutrition, productivity, quality, and/or genetic diversity. The journal is the premier international venue for plant breeders, geneticists, and genome biologists to publish research describing new and novel plant cultivars, germplasms, parental lines, genetic stocks, and genomic mapping populations. In addition to biomedical, nutritional, and agricultural scientists, the intended audience includes policymakers, humanitarian organizations, and all facets of the food, feed, fiber, bioenergy, and shelter industries.

The journal publishes cultivar, germplasm, parental line, genetic stock, and mapping population registration manuscripts, keeping breeders informed about new advances in the genetic diversity of crops. The journal also accepts reviews and analyses papers.

Registration of genetic materials protected by patents, plant variety protection, or other instruments is encouraged by CSSA and JPR. The requirements are as follows: "To be registered, plant material must be available for use as a source material for research and breeding. Both nonexclusive and exclusive releases must be made available to the public without restriction upon expiry of protections (such as Patents, Plant Variety Protection, or Material Transfer Agreements), which may not exceed 20 years." It is the authors' responsibility to state the form of restriction and the way to access the material during the period of restricted use.

Natural Sciences Education

History

Natural Sciences Education (NSE) is an outgrowth of the agronomic education section formerly published in *Agronomy Journal*. It was established as a separate journal by ASA in 1971 under the title *Journal of Agronomic Education*. In 1992, it was given the name *Journal of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Education* when its scope was expanded and a number of organizations were brought in as cooperators. The title was changed to *Natural Sciences Education* in 2013 to widen the scope further and add more cooperators.

The journal was published twice yearly from 1971 through 1997. Beginning in 1998, articles were electronically published. The journal became electronic only starting in 2013. At the end of each year, the papers for that year are collected and published in an annual volume.

Editorial Board

The editorial board of NSE consists of the ASA editor-in-chief, an editor, a number of associate editors, the managing editor, and the publications director and chief executive officer as ex officio members. See Chapter 1 for a general description of the responsibilities of the editorial board.

Editor. The NSE editor is appointed by the ASA editor-in-chief on behalf of the ASA president.

After consultation with the ASA editor-in-chief and on behalf of the ASA president, the editor appoints new and replacement associate editors. The editor delegates to associate editors the responsibility for obtaining reviews from qualified peer scientists. The editor may write editorials and solicit manuscripts on special topics.

Associate Editors. Under the direction of the editor, associate editors are responsible for evaluating in a timely manner the content and suitability of manuscripts assigned to them. Associate editors are responsible for finding reviewers and corresponding and working with authors to obtain revisions as needed. Associate editors recommend to the editor whether a manuscript should be accepted or released. Cooperating societies have an opportunity to suggest associate editors to be appointed to the editorial board. The associate editors representing cooperators have the additional responsibility of encouraging members of their society to submit manuscripts to the journal and to subscribe.

Workflow

A contribution to NSE receives a single-blind review.

The editor oversees the peer-review process via the online manuscript submissions system. Once a paper is submitted to NSE, the editor assigns the paper to an associate editor. Prior to the official review, the editor may decide that a paper is not ready for review and release it back to the author.

After determining that a manuscript is ready for review, the editor assigns the manuscript to an associate editor. The associate editor invites qualified peer reviewers via the electronic submission system. The associate editor normally serves as one of the reviewers of the paper unless the subject matter is too far outside their area of expertise. The associate editor is responsible for obtaining at least two recommendations for acceptance or release of the manuscript. To speed the review process, it is suggested that the associate editor line up a total of three reviewers at the outset. The associate editor is responsible for ensuring that the reviews are completed in a timely manner. Reviewers of NSE manuscripts are requested to complete reviews in 21 days.

Associate editors can decide to return a paper to an author for revision but should never indicate to the corresponding author anything that would guarantee acceptance if certain changes are made.

Corresponding authors are given 30 days to complete revisions, after which time the paper is subject to release.

Associate editors do not have the authority to accept or release a paper during the review process. After reaching a final decision about the acceptability of a paper, the associate editor makes the recommendation to the editor regarding acceptance or release of the manuscript. When recommending that manuscripts be released, the associate editor should give sufficient reason to the editor so the author can be fully informed.

The editor reviews the reviewers' comments and the associate editor's recommendation and may accept, modify, or disagree with that recommendation. The editor may:

- Accept the paper with no additional changes.
- Agree that the paper is worthy of publication but disagree that the paper is ready for acceptance and recommend a revision. The editor then works with the author—usually through the associate editor—to clear up any points (often involving scientific and technical details).
- Release the paper, informing the corresponding author of that action and detailing the reason(s) for the release. Depending on the circumstances, the editor may encourage the author to clear up any technical problems and resubmit the manuscript for further consideration. Resubmissions should be noted as such by the corresponding author at the time of resubmission.

The editor notifies the corresponding author of the final decision via the manuscript peer-review system. When the editor accepts a manuscript, the headquarters office is notified of the accepted paper, and production for publication begins.

The editor may make an immediate decision at any time during the process if needed.

After a paper is accepted, the managing editor of NSE communicates with the corresponding author throughout the production process. The managing editor supervises copyediting of papers, layout, transmittal of proofs to authors, and publication.

Paper Types

The journal accepts reports of original studies pertaining to concepts of resident, extension, and industrial education in various disciplines. This includes analysis and synthesis of existing knowledge or research, instructional techniques and methods, surveys of instruction, and other studies that contribute to the development or better understanding of educational efforts. Reviews of comprehensive and well-defined scope are acceptable. Manuscripts based mainly on personal philosophy or opinion are acceptable if they conform to the above criteria.

Articles are published in the areas of animal science, ecology, natural resources, agronomy, the environment, entomology, and more. Table of contents headings in the journal are: Graduate Education, Undergraduate Education, K–12 Education, Extension Education, Research, Notes, and Web Lessons and Learning Activities. Authors are given the opportunity to designate the subject matter heading under which the article could logically appear. Other types of manuscripts published in NSE include case studies, computer software articles, profiles, news features, slide set articles, and letters to the editor.

The Plant Genome

History

With the growth of the plant sciences, genetics, physiology, and biotechnology have merged and CSSA found it necessary to begin a new journal, *The Plant Genome* (TPG). The first issue was published as a *Crop Science* supplement to the November–December 2006 issue. *The Plant Genome* was published for the first time as a separate journal in July 2008. This online journal publishes three times per year and is fully open access.

Editorial Board

The Plant Genome editorial board consists of the CSSA editor-in-chief, the editor, associate editors, the managing editor, and the publications director and chief executive officer as ex officio members. See Chapter 1 for a general description of the responsibilities of the editorial board.

Editor. *The Plant Genome* editor is appointed by the CSSA editor-in-chief on behalf of the CSSA president.

After consultation with the CSSA editor-in-chief and on behalf of the CSSA president, the editor appoints new and replacement associate editors.

The editor may write editorials and solicit manuscripts on special topics.

Associate Editors. Under the direction of the editor, associate editors are responsible for evaluating in a timely manner the technical and intellectual content and suitability of manuscripts assigned to them. Associate editors are responsible for finding reviewers and corresponding and working with authors to obtain revisions as needed. Associate editors recommend to the editor whether a manuscript should be accepted or released.

Workflow

A contribution to TPG receives a single-blind review.

The editor oversees the peer-review process via the online manuscript submissions program. Once a paper is submitted, the editor assigns the paper to an associate editor. Prior to the official review, the editor may decide that a paper is not ready for review and release it back to the author.

After determining that a manuscript is ready for review, the editor assigns the manuscript to an associate editor. If at this stage, the associate editor feels that the manuscript is not ready for review, they are urged to discuss their concerns with the editor before assigning outside reviewers.

The associate editor seeks the services of qualified peer reviewers via the electronic submission system. The associate editor is responsible for obtaining at least two recommendations for acceptance or release of the manuscript. To speed the review process, it is suggested that the associate editor line up a total of three reviewers at the outset. The associate editor is responsible for ensuring the reviews

are completed in a timely manner. Reviewers of TPG manuscripts are requested to complete reviews in 14 days.

Associate editors can decide to return a paper to an author for revision but should never indicate to the corresponding author anything that would guarantee acceptance if certain changes are made.

Corresponding authors are given approximately 28 days to complete revisions, after which time their papers are subject to release.

Associate editors do not have the authority to accept or release a paper during the review process. After reaching a final decision about the acceptability of a paper, the associate editor makes the recommendation to the editor regarding acceptance or release of the manuscript. When recommending that manuscripts be released, the associate editor should give sufficient reason to the editor so the author can be fully informed.

The editor reviews the reviewers' comments and the associate editor's recommendation and may accept, modify, or disagree with that recommendation. The editor may:

- Accept the paper with no additional changes. When the technical editor selects this recommendation, the headquarters office is notified of the accepted paper.
- Agree that the paper is worthy of publication but disagree that the paper is ready for acceptance and recommend a revision. The editor then works with the author—usually through the associate editor—to clear up any points (often involving scientific and technical details). If the revised paper is accepted, the production continues as outlined in the previous point.
- Release the paper, informing the corresponding author of that action and detailing the reason(s) for the release. Depending on the circumstances, the editor may encourage the author to clear up any technical problems and resubmit the manuscript for further consideration. Resubmissions should be noted as such by the corresponding author at the time of resubmission.

The editor notifies the corresponding author of the final decision via the manuscript peer-review system. When the editor accepts a manuscript, the headquarters office is notified of the accepted paper, and production for publication begins.

The editor may make an immediate decision at any time during the process if needed.

After a paper is accepted, the managing editor of TPG communicates with the corresponding author throughout the production process. The managing editor supervises copyediting of papers approved for publication, typesetting, transmittal of proofs to authors, and publication.

Paper Types

Papers published in TPG must be either reports of original research, critical reviews, or interpretive articles. *The Plant Genome* will publish original research investigating all aspects of plant genomics. Technical breakthroughs reporting improvements in the efficiency and speed of acquiring and interpreting

plant genomics data are welcome. Short articles (usually four printed pages or less) concerned with experimental techniques, database descriptions, method improvements, new analytical equipment, computational tools or other breakthroughs that significantly improve genomic data acquisition and analysis will be accepted for review as Science Notes. Science Notes may also describe novel findings that do not require extensive background or discussion. The editorial board will give preference to novel reports that use innovative genomic applications that advance our understanding of plant biology and may have applications to crop improvement.

The Plant Phenome Journal

History

The Plant Phenome Journal (TPPJ), copublished by ASA and CSSA, is a continuously published, online only, open access journal. *The Plant Phenome Journal* is a transdisciplinary journal publishing original research, interpretations, and datasets investigating all aspects of plant phenomics. Methodological advancements in sensors, devices, vehicles, or technologies for data collection, data management, algorithms or data analysis should be combined with impact in at least one application domain of agronomy, genetic discovery, physiology, pest management, or plant breeding. The journal was launched in 2017.

Editorial Board

The editorial board of TPPJ consists of the ASA and CSSA editors-in-chief, editor, technical editors, the managing editor, and the publications director and chief executive officer as ex officio members. See Chapter 1 for a general description of the responsibilities of the editorial board.

Editor. The TPPJ editor is appointed by the ASA editor-in-chief in consultation and agreement with the CSSA editor-in-chief and on behalf of the ASA and CSSA presidents.

After consultation with the ASA and CSSA editors-in-chief and on behalf of the ASA and CSSA presidents, the editor appoints new and replacement technical and associate editors. The editor may write editorials and solicit manuscripts on special topics.

Technical Editors. Technical editors are appointed by the journal editor after consultation with the ASA and CSSA editors-in-chief and on behalf of the ASA president. New technical editor positions may be created only with the approval of the ASA and CSSA Boards of Directors.

Technical editors for TPPJ are responsible for obtaining reviews from qualified peer scientists. Technical editors for TPPJ are empowered to accept and release papers.

Workflow

Papers submitted to TPPJ undergo a single-blind review process.

The editor oversees the peer-review process via the online manuscript submissions system. Once a paper is submitted, the editor assigns the paper to a technical editor. Prior to the official review, the editor and technical editor may decide that a paper is not ready for review and release it back to the author.

The technical editor seeks the services of qualified peer reviewers via the electronic submission system. The technical editor normally serves as one of the reviewers of the paper unless the subject matter is too far outside their area of expertise. The technical editor is responsible for obtaining at least two recommendations for acceptance or release of the manuscript. To speed the review process, it is suggested that the technical editor line up a total of three reviewers at the outset. Authors will be prompted to provide a list of preferred and non-preferred reviewers. These reviewers cannot have a conflict of interest involving the authors or the study, and the editorial board has the right to not use any reviewers suggested by authors. The technical editor is responsible for ensuring the reviews are completed in a timely manner. Reviewers of TPPJ manuscripts are requested to complete reviews in 21 days.

Technical editors can decide to return a paper to an author for revision (major or minor) but should never indicate to the corresponding author anything that would guarantee acceptance if certain changes are made. Corresponding authors are given approximately 30 days to complete revisions, after which time their papers are subject to release by the editor.

After reaching a final decision about the acceptability of a paper, the technical editor may:

- Accept the paper with no additional changes. When this recommendation is selected, the headquarters office is notified of the accepted paper.
- Feel that the paper is worthy of publication but not ready for acceptance and recommend a revision. The technical editor then works with the author to clear up any points (often involving scientific and technical details). If the revised paper is accepted, the production continues as outlined in the previous point.
- Release the paper, informing the corresponding author of that action and detailing the reason(s) for the release. Depending on the circumstances, the technical editor may encourage the author to clear up any technical problems and resubmit the manuscript for further consideration. Resubmissions should be noted as such by the corresponding author at the time of resubmission.

The editor may make an immediate decision at any time during the process if needed.

After a paper is accepted, the managing editor of TPPJ communicates with the corresponding author throughout the production process. The managing editor supervises copyediting of papers approved for publication, typesetting, transmittal of proofs to authors, and publication.

Paper Types

Contributions to TPPJ may be Original Research, Review and Interpretation, Science Notes, Proceedings Papers, Data Briefs, and Letters to the Editor. Original Research papers report breakthrough research in applications domains and new technological advancements. Interpretations synthesize across crops, disciplines and institutions. Science Notes are short articles (usually 4 printed pages or less) primarily concerned with specific methodological advancements that improve plant phenomics. This is a good fit for describing new sensors, software, techniques, and other technologies that do not yet have substantial biological findings or impact from application.

Proceedings Papers and Data Briefs are limited to 2 printed pages, including figures. Proceedings Papers provide status updates on methodology, techniques, and tips of topical but broad interest, while Data Briefs describe a large phenotypic data set submitted to the journal repository for community analysis. All data sets should adhere to the best metadata and curation practices at the time of submission, which we expect to evolve over time.

Letters to the Editor are welcomed and are published subject to review and approval of the editor. When letters concern previous articles, the authors will be invited to reply; letter and reply are published together.

Urban Agriculture & Regional Food Systems

History

Urban Agriculture & Regional Food Systems (UA), copublished by ASA and CSSA, is a continuously published electronic-only open-access journal. The journal launched in 2016 after being acquired from the Baltzer Scientific Group.

The UA is intended to be a platform for cutting edge research on urban and peri-urban agricultural production for food and nonfood (e.g. flowers, medicine, cosmetics) uses and for social, environmental, and health services (e.g. tourism, water storage, care, education, waste recycling, urban greening). It aims to explore, analyze, and critically reflect upon urban and regional food production, processing, transport, trade, marketing, and consumption and the social, economic, environmental, health and spatial contexts, relations, and impacts of these food provisioning activities.

Editorial Board

The UA editorial board consists of the ASA and CSSA editors-in-chief, the editor, associate editors, the managing editor, and the publications director and chief executive officer as ex officio members. See Chapter 1 for a general description of the responsibilities of the editorial board.

Editor. The UA editor is appointed by the ASA and CSSA editors-in-chief on behalf of the ASA and CSSA presidents.

After consultation with the ASA and CSSA editors-in-chief and on behalf of the ASA and CSSA presidents, the editor appoints new and replacement associate editors.

The editor may write editorials and solicit manuscripts on special topics.

Associate Editors. Under the direction of the editor, associate editors are responsible for evaluating in a timely manner the technical and intellectual content and suitability of manuscripts assigned to them. Associate editors are responsible for finding reviewers and corresponding and working with authors to obtain revisions as needed. Associate editors recommend to the editor whether a manuscript should be accepted or released.

Workflow

A contribution to UA must be prepared in a way that will allow it to receive a double-blind review.

The editor oversees the peer-review process via the online manuscript submissions system. Once a paper is submitted, the editor assigns the paper to an associate editor. Prior to the official review, the editor may decide that a paper is not ready for review and release it back to the author.

After determining that a manuscript is ready for review, the editor assigns the manuscript to an associate editor. If, at this stage, the associate editor feels that the manuscript is not ready for review, they are urged to discuss their concerns with the editor before assigning outside reviewers.

The associate editor seeks the services of qualified peer reviewers via the electronic submission system. The associate editor is responsible for obtaining at least two recommendations for acceptance or release of the manuscript. To speed the review process, it is suggested that the associate editor line up a total of three reviewers at the outset. The associate editor is responsible for ensuring that the reviews are completed in a timely manner. Reviewers of UA manuscripts are requested to complete reviews in 21 days.

Associate editors can decide to return a paper to an author for revision but should never indicate to the corresponding author anything that would guarantee acceptance if certain changes are made.

Corresponding authors are given approximately 28 days to complete revisions, after which time the paper is subject to release.

Associate editors do not have the authority to accept or release a paper during the review process. After reaching a final decision about the acceptability of a paper, the associate editor makes a recommendation to the editor regarding acceptance or release of the manuscript. When recommending that manuscripts be released, the associate editor should give sufficient reason to the editor so that the author can be fully informed.

The editor reviews the reviewers' comments and the associate editor's recommendation and may accept, modify, or disagree with that recommendation. The editor may:

- Accept the paper with no additional changes. When the editor selects this recommendation, the headquarters office is notified of the accepted paper.
- Agree that the paper is worthy of publication but disagree that the paper is ready for acceptance and recommend a revision. The associate editor then works with the author to clear up any points (often involving scientific and technical details). If the revised paper is accepted, the production continues as outlined in the previous point.
- Release the paper, informing the corresponding author of that action and detailing the reason(s) for the release. Depending on the circumstances, the editor may encourage the author to clear up any technical problems and resubmit the manuscript for further consideration. Resubmissions should be noted as such by the corresponding author at the time of resubmission.

The editor notifies the corresponding author of the final decision via the manuscript peer-review system. When the editor accepts a manuscript, the headquarters office is notified of the accepted paper, and production for publication begins.

The editor may make an immediate decision at any time during the process if needed.

After a paper is accepted, the managing editor of UA communicates with the corresponding author throughout the production process. The managing editor supervises copyediting of papers approved for publication, typesetting, transmittal of proofs to authors, and publication.

Paper Types

The journal addresses one of the contemporary grand societal challenges: how to secure the availability, affordability, and access to culturally appropriate, nutritious, and safe food for a growing and rapidly urbanizing world population in times of increasing resource scarcity, diet-related ill health, and climate change. Because this challenge requires a multidisciplinary approach, UA welcomes contributions from a wide variety of disciplines, such as sociology, economics, marketing and consumer studies, gender studies, human and economic geography, urban and regional planning, architecture, urbanism, landscape architecture, political science, agronomy, soil science, water management, and public health studies. The journal publishes original research as well as critical reviews.

Vadose Zone Journal

History

Vadose Zone Journal (VZJ) is published online monthly by SSSA. The first issue was published in August 2002. The journal became open access in 2018, beginning with that volume.

Vadose Zone Journal is a unique publication outlet for interdisciplinary research and assessment of the critical zone, which comprises the Earth's critical living surface down to groundwater. *Vadose Zone Journal* is a peer-reviewed,

international journal publishing reviews, original research, and special sections across a wide range of disciplines.

Editorial Board

The VZJ editorial board consists of the SSSA editor-in-chief, the editor, co-editors who are experts in various areas, a number of associate editors covering numerous subject-matter areas and responsibilities, the managing editor, and the publications director and chief executive officer as ex officio members. See Chapter 1 for a general description of the responsibilities of the editorial board.

Editor. The VZJ editor is appointed by the SSSA editor-in-chief on behalf of the SSSA president.

After consultation with the SSSA editor-in-chief, the editor appoints new and replacement co-editors and associate editors.

The editor may write editorials and solicit manuscripts and special sections on special topics.

Co-editors. Co-editors delegate to associate editors the responsibility for obtaining reviews from qualified peer scientists. Co-editors of VZJ have the authority to release or accept manuscripts.

Associate Editors. Under the direction of a co-editor, associate editors are responsible for evaluating in a timely manner the technical and intellectual content and suitability of manuscripts assigned to them. Co-editors normally delegate to associate editors the responsibility of finding reviewers and corresponding and working with authors to obtain revisions as needed. Associate editors recommend to their co-editor whether a manuscript should be accepted or released.

Workflow

A contribution to VZJ receives a single-blind review.

The editor oversees the peer-review process via the online manuscript submissions system. Once a paper is submitted to VZJ, the editor assigns the paper to a co-editor. Prior to the official review, the editor and co-editor may decide that a paper is not ready for review and release it back to the author.

After determining that a manuscript is ready for review, the co-editor assigns the manuscript to an associate editor. If, at this stage, the associate editor feels that the manuscript is not ready for review, they are urged to discuss their concerns with the co-editor before assigning outside reviewers.

The associate editor invites qualified peer reviewers via the electronic submission system. The associate editor normally serves as one of the reviewers of the paper unless the subject matter is too far outside their area of expertise. The associate editor is responsible for obtaining at least two recommendations for acceptance or release of the manuscript. To speed the review process, it is suggested that the associate editor line up a total of three reviewers at the outset. The associate editor

is responsible for ensuring that the reviews are completed in a timely manner. Reviewers of VZJ manuscripts are requested to complete reviews in 21 days.

Associate editors can decide to return a paper to an author for revision but should never indicate to the corresponding author anything that would guarantee acceptance if certain changes are made.

Corresponding authors are given approximately 30 days to complete revisions, after which time the paper is subject to release.

Associate editors do not have the authority to accept or release a paper during the review process. After reaching a final decision about the acceptability of a paper, the associate editor makes a recommendation to the co-editor regarding acceptance or release of the manuscript. When recommending that manuscripts be released, the associate editor should give sufficient reason to the co-editor so the author can be fully informed.

The co-editor reviews the reviewers' comments and the associate editor's recommendation and may accept, modify, or disagree with that recommendation. The co-editor may:

- Accept the paper with no additional changes.
- Agree that the paper is worthy of publication but disagree that the paper is ready for acceptance and recommend a revision. The co-editor then works with the author—usually through the associate editor—to clear up any points (often involving scientific and technical details).
- Release the paper, informing the corresponding author of that action and detailing the reason(s) for the release. Depending on the circumstances, the co-editor may encourage the author to clear up any technical problems and resubmit the manuscript for further consideration. Resubmissions should be noted as such by the corresponding author at the time of resubmission.

The co-editor notifies the corresponding author of the final decision via the manuscript peer-review system. When the co-editor accepts a manuscript, the headquarters office is notified of the accepted paper, and production for publication begins.

The editor may make an immediate decision at any time during the process if needed.

After a paper is accepted, the managing editor of VZJ communicates with the corresponding author throughout the production process. The managing editor supervises copyediting of papers, layout, transmittal of proofs to authors, and publication.

Paper Types

Vadose Zone Journal reports fundamental and applied research from disciplinary and multidisciplinary investigations of the mostly unsaturated zone between the soil surface and the groundwater table. Topic areas include variably saturated fluid flow, heat and solute transport, flow processes in the capillary fringe at or near the water table, water table management, regional and global climate change impacts on the

vadose zone, carbon sequestration, design and performance of waste disposal facilities, long-term stewardship of contaminated sites, biogeochemical transformation processes, microbial processes in shallow and deep formations, bioremediation, and the fate and transport of radionuclides, inorganic and organic chemicals, colloids, viruses, and microorganisms. *Vadose Zone Journal* also addresses yet-to-be-resolved issues, such as how to quantify heterogeneity of subsurface processes and properties, and how to couple physical, chemical, and biological processes across a range of spatial scales from the molecular to the global.

Contributions to VZJ include reviews, updates, original research papers, technical notes, comments or letters to the editor, book reviews, and priority communications.

Reviews may be may be invited or submitted. Updates are related to the journal's focus topics and are short reviews of recent progress in a particular area. They are meant to serve as both resources for research and advanced teaching tools. Most update papers are solicited from subject matter experts in association with a specific focus topic. However, the journal also welcomes contributed updates. They should be written in a manner making them easily accessible to a broader audience and of interest to readers seeking an introduction to the particular topic. Updates should not exceed 5000 words, with references, but excluding supplemental material. Updates should include a title that attracts the attention of nonspecialists and an abstract of not more than 150 words. Updates are subject to the regular review process.

Original research findings are interpreted to mean the outcome of scholarly inquiry, investigation, modeling, or experimentation having as an objective the revision of existing concepts, the development of new concepts, or the development of new or improved techniques in some aspect of the vadose zone.

Priority Communications are intended to highlight time-sensitive new research results that have far-reaching impacts across the vadose zone community, i.e., "game changers." These manuscripts undergo the same rigorous peer reviews as other submissions, but the process is accelerated and the papers are shorter and more accessible.

Technical Notes are scientifically sound, stand-alone articles that tend to focus on new experimental (laboratory or field), analytical, or modeling methods, and they tend to be shorter in length (approximately four to six published pages). Technical notes are handled identically to other full research articles, following the same peer-review process.

Special sections on particular topical areas are identified and developed by the editorial board, and contributions are solicited by guest editors and calls for papers on the VZJ website.

Articles designated as Reproducible Research (RR) in VZJ are not a separate paper type but rather a class of articles that include supplemental computer code and/or data that permit readers to analyze the data in a manner similar to that presented in the article and reproduce all results from the article. The purpose of RR in VZJ is to provide a means for verifying the correctness of results presented in published articles and to build on results in future research and applications.

Chapter 4

ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Books

In addition to the scientific journals, ASA, CSSA, and SSSA publish books, including Agronomy Monographs, the SSSA Book Series, Advances in Agricultural Systems Modeling, and the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Special Publication Series, as well as books on special topics, textbooks, professional guides, K12 educational materials, multimedia, glossaries, and other miscellaneous publications.

Society books are available in the ACSESS Digital Library. Many books are also available in print.

Development and Production of New Publications

The Book and Multimedia Publishing Committee

Development of new publications is handled by the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Book and Multimedia Publishing Committee (ACS320), which consists of a chair, the editors-in-chief of the Societies, and representatives of the Societies. Ex officio members of the committee include the staff publications director and managing editor. Committee members serve three-year terms and may be reappointed. The chair serves a three-year term and may be reappointed for a second three-year term but not a third without an intervening three-year period. The chair rotates among ASA, CSSA, and SSSA. One of the appointed members who has served at least two years on the committee is selected as chair after consultation with the retiring chair and the editors-in-chief. On behalf of the Society presidents, the book committee chair appoints members from each of the Societies to serve on the committee. On behalf of the president, the appropriate editor-in-chief appoints the chair. The editors-in-chief recommend a chair to the president.

Duties of the Book and Multimedia Publishing Committee

The committee's functions are:

- To receive and review book proposals and approve or reject the proposed publication on the basis of:
  - importance of the subject to agronomic and environmental sciences,
  - quality of content,
  - scope and nature of content,
  - probable demand and need for the proposed publication, and
  - existence of, or plans for, publications on the same topic.

  The committee may release a proposal and request it be resubmitted with improvements, such as inclusion of additional subject matter or chapter authors.

- To explore and prioritize topics for development and publication, with the goal of ensuring ASA, CSSA, and SSSA are leading publishers in the agronomy, crop, and soil sciences.
- To identify editors and authors who are experts in these fields and solicit manuscripts from them on these topics.
- To identify and prioritize potential derivative publications and new editions of existing titles.
- To recommend policy with respect to publishing activities for consideration by the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Boards of Directors.
- To promote ASA, CSSA, SSSA publications with regard to sales, manuscript submissions, and general visibility to Society members and others.
- To prepare an annual report of committee activities for submission to the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Boards of Directors.
- When deemed appropriate, to review an ongoing project (i.e., outline of subject matter, selected authors, originality, and the status and quality of the manuscripts) to determine if it is consistent with the original intent of an approved proposal. The committee may recommend termination of a project on the basis of this review.

Duties of the Book Editor

The lead book editor (in the case of multiple-author projects, such as a monograph) is responsible for the proposal. All projects, even those solicited by the committee, require a written proposal. An online proposal form is available and can also be requested from the managing editor. The managing editor will assist with preparation of the proposal.

The book editor is responsible for preparation, peer review, and content editing of the publication. This includes determining the scope, organizing subject matter, and selecting qualified authors. There may be more than one editor on a book. The editor(s) may serve as author(s), and an author may prepare more than one chapter.

The editor advises authors on the scope and intended audience. Authors do not need to be members of the Societies. The editor should inform authors of any special requirements to ensure uniformity in style of writing for the text, units of measurements, scientific names, literature references, illustrations, and other details specific to the content area.

The editor's primary responsibility is ensuring the scientific review and technical editing of manuscripts. Quality peer review is the cornerstone of the Society book publishing program. See Chapter 2 for a general discussion of peer review.

The editor is responsible for ensuring the timely completion of the entire book. The editor informs authors of their responsibilities relating to completion of manuscripts within a prescribed time and is responsible for maintaining the book development schedule. Timeliness of publication is crucial to meeting the

objectives for publication, fulfilling commitments to authors, and achieving a well-received publication.

The editor is also responsible for supporting marketing efforts and is asked to supply contacts for marketing and to engage in promotional opportunities, such as participating in promotional events and distributing marketing material at relevant meetings.

On occasion, the Societies publish books by a single author. In this case, a member of the book committee or a volunteer with knowledge of the subject takes on the role of editor to manage the peer review.

Duties of the Managing Editor

Headquarters staff conducts a financial analysis of proposals, and viable proposals are forwarded to the Book and Multimedia Publishing Committee for review.

The managing editor supports the editor during the proposal, development, and peer review of a title and oversees production of the final publication.

Once manuscripts have been accepted, a headquarters editor or a freelance copy editor corresponds directly with authors about questions requiring their attention. Proofs of each chapter are sent to authors for proofreading.

The managing editor asks the president(s) of the Society(ies) sponsoring the publication to prepare a foreword for books in the major series.

The headquarters staff handles online and print production, copyright registration, promotion, sales, and distribution.

Royalties

The lead editor (or author of a single-author book) of an accepted book project may be eligible for an honorarium and royalties, provided the final manuscript is submitted by the deadline agreed upon and specified in the contract. Contributing authors do not receive payment, but each contributor receives a complimentary copy of the published work.

Series

Agronomy Monographs

An Agronomy Monograph is a detailed, scholarly treatise written by experts on a single topic where a definitive reference is required by the community. Monographs are published on an irregular schedule, only after the Book and Multimedia Publishing Committee determines a need for monographic treatment of a topic.

Advances in Agricultural Systems Modeling

The Advances in Agricultural Systems Modeling series includes the tagline "Transdisciplinary Research, Synthesis, and Applications," and the focus of the series is on this view of the role of modeling in advancing the agricultural sciences.

Books in this series look at particular topics and how modeling can be improved and implemented to solve practical problems in agriculture.

SSSA Book Series

A book in the SSSA Book Series is a detailed, scholarly treatise written by experts on a single topic where a definitive reference is required by the soil science community. Books in this series are published on an irregular schedule, only after the Book and Multimedia Publishing Committee determines a need for monographic treatment of a topic.

Methods of Soil Analysis

Methods of Soil Analysis is a well-known subseries of the SSSA Book Series. Methods books on a particular topic may be published in the SSSA Book Series. Also, individual methods articles addressing advances in methods techniques or introducing new methods may be published at Methods of Soil Analysis online.

Special Publications Series

Each Society has its own Special Publication series. These represent a state-of-the-science look at a special topic. They often result from symposia on timely topics but may also be developed from an idea for a specific topic that is not associated with a symposium. The Societies may jointly publish any of the series. Symposium organizers are urged to consider proposing a special publication and should do so as early in the symposium planning process as possible.

Other Books

The subject matter of other books published by the Societies includes any topic within the publishing goals of the Societies according to their missions and strategic plans. Appropriate book projects include audience-specific publications, such as textbooks, books for those in related disciplines, and professional guides. The style and format vary with each project.

Multimedia

The Societies encourage proposals for books that include complementary multimedia materials. The Societies will also consider publication of stand-alone multimedia publications.