

Editorial

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Editor

This issue starts volume 15 of *Agricultural and Food Science*, published jointly by the Scientific Agricultural Society of Finland and MTT Agrifood Research Finland. In 2005, the journal received 116 submissions, which is its all-time record. The four issues of volume 14 contained 31 articles, and the impact factor of the journal was 0.438. The journal was evaluated by the American Economic Association and accepted for listing in its electronic indexes. This means that the journal's articles are included in EconLit, beginning with our 2005 issues. In 2005, as many as 132 referees, listed at the end of the previous issue, contributed to the production of this journal. Many of them have collaborated with us for several years already and reviewed a number of manuscripts in 2005. Geographically, 23 of the referees were from Finland, 40 from the other Scandinavian countries, 42 from the rest of Europe, 21 from North America, including Mexico, and 6 from other parts of the world. I extend my warmest thanks to all of them for their generous help.

Scientific publishing has at least two time perspectives. One is characterised by the exchange of ideas among colleagues studying the same topic or related topics and by communicating research results to others interested in them. This activity takes place in the present. Nowadays, there is an increasing tendency to speed up the dissemination of all information, including the results of scientific research. *Agricultural and Food Science* has responded to this demand by going online. Our home page is www.mtt.fi/afs, and since 2004, our journal has been distributed by the online research service of Ingenta (www.ingentaconnect.com). These media make the research published in this journal quickly available to those interested. An analysis of our home page's traffic from January to March 2006 showed a total of about 1,100 downloads by about 370 people per month. And in the year 2005, our abstracts, which are free of charge, were viewed about 240 times per month through Ingenta's service, which amounts to a total of 2,890 for that year. These numbers show that electronic use of scientific papers has become very widespread. Our journal's articles that are older than two years are also available in Finnish public libraries (www.lib.helsinki.fi/elektra).

In addition, the journal has switched to use of electronic reprints. The authors get a PDF file of their article, which they can easily send to those requesting it. Although this is quick and convenient, I personally in a way miss the old times when researchers requested reprints from each other, sending cards and letters often decorated with beautiful stamps. Due to that correspondence, you learned who was reading your paper, often in far-away countries. Now there are electronic, less intimate means to find out who has used your article as a reference. Writing an e-mail to a colleague after reading his/her paper may be a modern compliment and certainly well received, since only few scientists get much direct feedback from the readers of their papers.

The other time perspective of scientific publishing consists of a period of at least several decades. We need to document our findings so that the conclusions can be checked and evaluated after new information has accumulated. It often happens that scientific observations cannot be explained right away, or some findings may be neglected by the contemporaries and forgotten. The availability of older literature makes it also possible to revisit results and ideas published long ago. In this way, we can also find the roots of our own scientific thinking. Even today, printed journals may still be the most reliable way to guarantee this continuity for further generations. This is one reason why *Agricultural and Food Science* is still published as a printed journal.

I wish all the readers rewarding moments with our journal, be it the printed or the electronic form.