

A vision for *Weed Research* – 2005

Weed Research is the journal of the European Weed Research Society (EWRS) and has been published by Blackwell Publishing for over 40 years. This year marks a change in the Editor of *Weed Research* (Cathy Knott has retired and I have taken on the role of Editor-in-Chief) and some changes in the functioning of the journal. Further details follow, but first I give a brief review of the status of the journal and its potential.

Weed Research has enjoyed a period of increasing impact, achieving an ISI Citation score of over 1.2 in 2002. Whether one likes such scores or not, these are widely used to judge the academic worth of a journal's content and Editors ignore them to their peril. In comparison with other similar agronomy journals, *Weed Research* scores well. The citation score dropped back to 1.056 in 2003, perhaps reflecting fewer well-cited papers. Nevertheless, the journal is in very good shape, reflecting the hard work of Cathy Knott, the retiring Technical Editor, and the subject editors of the Editorial Board over recent years. There remains room for improvement, particularly in impact, immediacy and global coverage. The journal is well placed to achieve increases in all these indicators, while servicing the needs of authors and the society it supports.

I should like to re-examine the aims and scope of the journal in the light of changes in weed science and our potential readers and authorship. The topics now covered by the journal, as exemplified by the subject Editors, are wide. I suggest that the journal should be looking to further expand the scope of papers taken, to broaden our authorship. Weed research is relevant to most aspects of vegetation management in the majority of land uses and is clearly broader than its main themes of weed biology and control in agriculture and horticulture. The variety of subjects covered by the EWRS Working Groups is testimony to this fact (<http://www.ewrs.org/>). Topics include biological control, biodiversity, herbicides and shortly a group will be convened to co-ordinate studies on invasive plant species. To increase the topicality of the journal, we should be soliciting authoritative review papers and short topical articles, as well as regular research papers. I am therefore suggesting moderate rewording of the Aims and Scope of the journal to the following:

Weed Research (print ISSN 0043-1737, online ISSN 1365-3180) is an international peer-reviewed journal that publishes topical and innovative papers on weed science, in the English language. It is the official journal of the European Weed Research Society (<http://www.ewrs.org>). Papers are taken on all aspects of weeds, defined

as plants that impact adversely on economic, aesthetic or environmental aspects of any system. Topics include, amongst others, weed biology and control, herbicides, invasive plant species in all environments, population and spatial biology, modelling, genetics, biodiversity and parasitic plants. The journal welcomes submissions on work carried out in any part of the world. In addition to research papers, the journal also seeks review articles and shorter insights papers covering personal views, new methods and breaking news in weed science. The criteria Editors use for accepting manuscripts for publication are originality, relevance, scientific rigour and the clarity of presentation. The journal accepts approximately 40% of submitted manuscripts and the time taken from submission to publication is 11.5 months.

The extensive list of expert subject editors that make up the Editorial Board will be added to during 2005. The journal will be soliciting papers on the most innovative work across the varied subject areas the journal covers. At the same time, we will continue to help develop the writing skills of younger scientists. We need to handle manuscripts from submission to publication fairly, with rapidity and efficiency.

Authors are looking for the journals with the highest impact factors for their papers, so, within the constraints of the size of the weed science community, the Editors will be striving to increase the citation indices. This is closely dependent on attracting the best science for publishing, but there are a number of initiatives the journal will be putting into place to support this. Short topical articles can raise immediacy. The use of referees from across the globe will broaden the potential authorship base and provide a balanced peer assessment of submitted manuscripts. In collaboration with the society and the Editorial Board, Blackwell Publishing will be mounting marketing initiatives to support the work of the Editors.

During 2005, the office of the Association of Applied Biologists at Wellesbourne, UK will initially handle submitted manuscripts. During the summer, preparations will be made to move the journal to an electronic web-based submission and reviewing system called Manuscript Central. Electronic submission brings with it a series of challenges, as well as opportunities, so I look forward to a busy year. For some, the system will be inaccessible or difficult to work with and, for them, the traditional hardcopy methods of working will continue in the short term. Ultimately, the new systems should allow authors, Editors and Blackwell Publishing to work with more efficiency, as well as giving *Weed*

Research a greater presence in scientific publishing. At the same time, it remains our aim that the journal achieves the highest levels of accuracy in grammar, copy editing and production, to present articles in a very readable form.

In summary, my vision for *Weed Research* is that it becomes the journal of choice for scientists across the globe who are publishing in areas of weed science. The content of the journal should be widely relevant, timely and exciting science. It should clearly expand its areas of

interest to the whole world, where land management and invasive plant species are very broad interests. The journal also needs to achieve a steady increase in its impact and to continue to provide a high level of service to authors.

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