LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

As of 1 Jan. 2002, I succeeded Dr. Ken Barbarick as Editor of Agronomy Journal (AJ). During the 6 yr that Dr. Barbarick was Editor, AJ experienced many significant changes, possibly more so than at any time in the history of the journal. Dr. Barbarick's excellent leadership during this unprecedented period of change is noteworthy. These changes were necessary to address current demands and to prepare for anticipated needs.

While AJ has experienced many changes in recent years, more changes are on the horizon. Sometime this year, we expect to begin using Manuscript Tracker. This web-based software will allow authors, editors, and headquarters staff to access and input information appropriate to their responsibilities. With the use of Manuscript Tracker, manuscripts will be submitted and moved electronically through the steps of the review process. This will greatly speed the transfer of manuscripts from one person to another. Ultimately, everything else staying the same, the use of Manuscript Tracker will reduce the time it takes for manuscripts to go from submission to publication. Obviously, Manuscript Tracker does not have any control over manuscripts during the time when authors are making revisions on their papers. Typically, the longest time spent in the review and publication process is when authors are revising their manuscripts.

Manuscript Tracker will give authors new freedom in that they can follow the review of their manuscripts using the internet and they can check on the status of their manuscripts whenever they want. Editors will also be able to conveniently enter and maintain up-to-date review information for manuscripts assigned to them. Manuscript Tracker will be a major change in how we review and handle manuscripts, and we anxiously anticipate this exciting, new development. We readily see how valuable this software will be to our authors and editors. We do, however, anticipate a startup phase with Manuscript Tracker, and we ask for your indulgence during this time.

As I begin as Editor of AJ, I welcome your questions and comments about how we can better serve our authors and readers. You may communicate with me by telephone, internet, or letter, whichever is most convenient for you.

We encourage authors to submit manuscripts electronically. International authors are well served with electronic submissions by the savings they obtain in time and mailing costs. Authors who wish to submit manuscripts electronically should continue to send them to Dr. Robert Lascano at r-lascano@tamu.edu.

As of January 2002, paper-copy manuscripts should be submitted to me at the address below.

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