LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The beginning of a new volume for *Agronomy Journal* (AJ) and the start of a new year is an appropriate time to inform our readership about new items that have occurred during the past year. This is also a good opportunity to convey some reminders to authors when submitting new manuscripts and also with regard to issues that occur from time to time during the review of manuscripts.

**Electronic submissions.** In keeping with the official policy adopted by the AJ editorial board at the annual meetings in Denver, CO, in 2003, all manuscripts were submitted electronically through Manuscript Tracker during 2004. As a reminder to our readership, we do not accept paper copies of manuscripts, and all manuscripts must be submitted via Manuscript Tracker at www.manuscripttracker.com/aj/.

**Publication fee for manuscripts submitted to AJ.** A new publication fee structure became effective on 1 Jan. 2004 for all manuscripts submitted to AJ, which is $450 for members and $700 for nonmembers. The publication fee has replaced page charges and is assessed on a per-manuscript basis. Also, note there are additional costs associated with figures and illustrations, and these charges will be added to the publication fee.

**Preparation of manuscripts.** *Agronomy Journal* uses a double-blind review. This means reviewers do not know author names, and authors do not know reviewer names. Authors must prepare their manuscripts without any identifying information. The first page of the manuscript should contain only the title and abstract. No author names, affiliations, or acknowledgments should be found within the paper. Pay particular attention to options such as document summaries and properties and also tables, figures, headers, and footers and remove any author-identifying information. If the manuscript is accepted, authors will receive an email from headquarters asking them to prepare a cover page (that includes the title, author names, affiliations/addresses, and acknowledgments) as part of the final version of the manuscript. In that email from headquarters, authors will also be asked to send a printed copy and word-processing file of the final version to headquarters.

**Continuous publication of manuscripts begins in 2005.** With the May–June 2005 issue of AJ, we will begin using a concept known as “continuous publication.” Manuscripts in a particular issue are not currently posted online until the full issue is completed. By adopting continuous publication, manuscripts will be posted online each month, and each manuscript will have fully citable reference information, including volume and page numbers. Continuous publication is an economical method to achieve faster publication of research papers, resulting in manuscripts being published one to two months sooner online than when the print version of the journal normally becomes available. Adopting continuous publication carries with it additional costs, which will be $1320 ($220 per issue × 6 = $1320). In order for this change in process to occur, all authors are asked to complete a brief online survey, which is 12 questions long. A few questions request demographic information, and other questions ask authors to rate their reaction to various statements. Additional written comments can be entered for each of the rating questions. Authors are given the web address where they can go and complete the survey. Results of the real-time summaries and are available to anyone who wishes to see the results. The web addresses for the real-time summaries, one for accepted and another for released manuscripts, are listed below:

Accepted: http://www.zoomerang.com/report.scripts?ID = L2256TZ45528

**Centennial anniversary of AJ.** During 2008, AJ will celebrate its centennial anniversary. To commemorate this important occasion, the AJ editorial board will publish special papers in each of the six issues of AJ as part of a year-long celebration of the 100th anniversary. We are planning well in advance in an attempt to take full advantage of this opportunity. Some of the items we are working on are as follows:

- We have solicited “special papers” from each of the three societies, and these manuscripts will be reviewed in advance and published in each of the six issues. Details of this effort were published in the May–June 2004 issue of *Agronomy Journal*.
- I encourage interested authors to prepare manuscripts to be included in the centennial volume. These manuscripts will be in addition to the “special papers” described above and differ from them in that they are not required to pay publication fees. Manuscripts must be submitted to the editorial board via Manuscript Tracker (www.manuscripttracker.com/aj/) by 1 Jan. 2007. Contact me if you have questions about preparing manuscripts to be included in the centennial volume.
- I am preparing an introductory article that will appear in a special volume that will highlight some of the key papers by Ernst and Matt Nilsson are working on this article. I will be including coauthors, editors, and contributors from the editorial board.
- We are designing a special cover to be used on the centennial volume.
- I am also coordinating efforts with Lowell Moser and Laurence Clifton to coordinate ASA's and AJ's centennial celebrations. Activities for the centennial celebration will occur in 2007.
- In cooperation with Lowell Moser and headquarters staff, we are developing a centennial logo that can be used both for ASA and AJ centennial activities.

**Author surveys.** As part of our continuing efforts to improve the review process of AJ, we are soliciting additional ideas and suggestions from people that will help us commemorate this most important occasion in a significant and memorable way.