EDITORIAL — New Procedures for Crop Science Management

I. J. Johnson, Editor

CROP SCIENCE has completed its first volume of publication. In this year we have achieved our initial objective of providing for Crop Science Society members a technical journal for publication of research manuscripts that are primarily of interest and value to crop scientists. The addition of this research journal to the Agronomy Society publication outlets has strengthened the position of the Agronomy Journal by giving it a uniqueness in its subject matter coverage. It now carries research manuscripts that are of interest and value to both crops and soils research scientists, to agronomic education, and to other special groups.

In this first year of operation we have encountered several problems that could not have been accurately anticipated. The number of manuscripts exceeded to a considerable degree the total expected. Approximately 200 were submitted for publication in this first year. This large number inevitably caused some delays in their review and make it necessary to increase the number of pages per issue in order to reduce the backlog of manuscripts.

Important actions to expedite review of manuscripts, to maintain the high technical quality of manuscripts, and to strengthen the relationships between the editorial staff and the authors of manuscripts were recommended by the Editorial Board for Crop Science and approved by the Board of Directors of the Crop Science Society at the 1961 meeting in St. Louis.

Beginning on January 1, 1962, the following procedures and policies will become operative.

1. All manuscripts for publication in Crop Science will be sent to the Managing Editor in the Central Office at Madison, Wis.

2. These manuscripts will be referred by the Central Office to one of 12 Associate Editors, each representing a specific subject matter area in crop science. (This is an important deviation from our present system and will divide the work load of initial examination of manuscripts.)

3. The Associate Editor will review the manuscripts received or will send them to other reviewers who are competent in the subject matter field. The Associate Editor will communicate directly with the author on any manuscript revisions that may be necessary.

4. The Editor of Crop Science has been asked for final approval of manuscripts. For any manuscript recommended for publication by an Associate Editor he will arrange for an "appeal," if it is desired, as chairman of the Editorial Board representative on the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Agronomy Society.

5. The Managing Editor in the Science office will notify authors of the acceptance of papers and the probable date of publication of manuscripts in Crop Science.

In all technical publications, authors have a common responsibility. They have the objective of maintaining the high caliber of Crop Science. Authors should expect—and welcome—the reviewer or Associate Editor, a specialist in the field covered by the manuscript, to question, criticize, or interpret a report so that other readers, less familiar with the subject matter, will have even greater difficulty in understanding it.

Experience has shown that manuscripts that have been peer reviewed by the authors' colleagues or independent review committees generally are of a higher quality than those submitted without local review. The Editorial Board could not justifiably suggest that authors deny themselves the opportunities to benefit by having their manuscript reviewed by Crop Science. This would tend to enhance the quality of Crop Science. This would also tend to enhance the quality of Crop Science.

A definite policy was established by the Crop Science Editorial Board and by the Coordinating Committee regarding "series manuscripts." It is felt that authors should combine a series of manuscripts into a single manuscript, effectively reduce the total number of manuscripts for publication. Because the number of manuscripts is increasing—as are publication costs—authors should continue to be cognizant of their responsibility to control costs within our budget. Concise writing is not at the expense of the adequacy and clarity of expression of the author's ideas.