The January–February issue of the *Soil Science Society of America Journal* (SSSAJ) introduces the first major change to the cover of the journal since 1952, for certain, and perhaps going back to the first issue in 1936. The purpose of this letter is to advise the membership of events leading to the development and adoption of this new cover design.

The SSSAJ Editorial Board, at its 1996 meeting in Indianapolis, considered several issues related to the organization, format, and electronic delivery of the journal. As a consequence of this discussion, the Board authorized the Editor-in-Chief to appoint a committee to (i) weigh the advantages and disadvantages of altering the cover design of the SSSAJ, (ii) investigate cost-effective options for modernizing the cover while maintaining important elements of tradition and public recognition, and (iii) formulate a recommendation for consideration at a future meeting of the Editorial Board.

The appointed committee was composed of Warren Busscher, David Mulla, Donald Reeves, Robert Tate, and William Luellen with Robert Sojka as chair. During a 6-month period, the committee debated all aspects of the charge and brought five “prototype” covers to the Editorial Board at its 1997 meeting in Anaheim, CA. The committee formally recommended that:

1. the SSSAJ cover be redesigned to reflect a more modern appearance while incorporating some stylistic elements to preserve continuity and the traditional “look” of the journal;
2. the SSSAJ cover not carry divisional listings;
3. the SSSAJ cover incorporate full-color photography with a new photo/image for each volume (six issues) of the journal with cost be partially defrayed by color advertising on the back page;
4. the Technical Editors select photos for one or two years and that, thereafter, the Editorial Board adopt a protocol for selection;
5. the Editorial Board identify a basic design from the five options offered, and that Headquar ters staff be given the latitude to adjustments in font, color, or layout to accommodate the technical needs of the publication.

The full Editorial Board adopted the recommendations of the cover design committee and selected basic design elements displayed on this issue by a nearly unanimous vote. The prototype cover was forwarded to the second meeting of the SSSA Board of Directors in Anaheim with a recommendation that new full-color photos or other images be incorporated in the cover of each issue of the SSSAJ beginning with the first issue of 1998. The recommendation was approved by a unanimous vote of the Directors.

We acknowledge the hard work of the Cover Design Committee, and we hope the full membership pleased by the look featured on this cover. We also invite journal authors to participate in bringing potential cover photos and images to the attention of the Editorial Board. Finally, we express our sincere appreciation to all members of the Society who were involved in this activity.

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