

## **Editorial Operations of the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics***

Beginning with volume 80 (1998), the AJAE has been directed by a four person editorial team. Each editor serves a (roughly) four year term. Two editors rotate off every two years. New editors are typically selected by the American Agricultural Economics Association (AAEA) Executive Board in the spring of odd numbered years and formally begin their term on or before January 1 of even numbered years, with many gradually taking on new submissions and taking over resubmissions from outgoing editors over the course of the fall following their selection. Editors' terms typically end December 31, four (or slightly more) years after their appointment began.

This collaborative editing process has three important advantages. First, papers are generally assigned to an editor who has substantial knowledge of the topic. This expertise is helpful in the selection of referees and in the decision of whether to publish a submission.

Second, the collaborative editing process permits us to avoid any concerns of conflict of interest arising from an editor's handling of a departmental colleague's, current or past graduate student's, or current collaborator's submission. In general, editors are not assigned papers written by authors at the same institution.

Third, the collaborative editing process provides a format to handle the large number of manuscripts received for publication consideration in a prompt fashion without overburdening any single editor. This also enables the AAEA to call on active researchers to take on demanding editorial responsibilities without completely sacrificing their own research programs.

### **Editorial Board**

The editors are assisted by a strong board of associate editors drawn from a wider range of backgrounds within the profession. The associate editors act as frequent reviewers, assist in resolving disagreements among referees, serve as the committee selecting the Outstanding AJAE Article, and advise the editors on policy questions. Associate editors' appointments likewise run four years, with roughly half replaced every two years. Every odd-numbered fall, the new set of Editors (two continuing and two newly selected) nominate a new slate of incoming Associate Editors to the AAEA Executive Board for its approval at the January Board meeting each even numbered year.

### **Editorial Administration**

The manuscript distribution is approximately equal among the four editors. The manuscript allocation protocol is flexible enough to allow one editor to substitute for another when needed. In 2004 the AJAE switched over to an electronic editorial management system using the web-based product Editorial Express (EE). In order to assure the anonymity of reviewers, before being granted access to the Editorial Express database, editors and their assistants are blinded from viewing any information associated with their past or current paper submissions.

Administrative responsibilities are distributed among the editors as well. One editor assumes the responsibility for final production scheduling of accepted papers and for liaison with Blackwell Publishers. This involves assembling accepted manuscripts, organizing issue layout, and serving as the liaison between the editors and the technical editor concerning production scheduling and disposition of galley and page proofs. A second editor takes responsibility for the AJAE's web-based editorial management system. This includes reviewing manuscripts to verify that they are free of identifying data, coordinating software upgrades, ensuring system security, monitoring system performance, blinding editors and their assistants, as needed, and maintaining the journal's web page. A third editor assumes responsibility for assembling materials for the December proceedings issue. The fourth editor supervises selection of the annual Outstanding AJAE Article award and oversees editorial policy. One of the two continuing editors serves as the editors' liaison to the AAEA Executive Board, including preparation of the Journal's annual report, and scheduling and chairing the annual editorial board meeting.

Since 2004, the AAEA Executive Board has authorized AJAE editors to submit papers for publication review. An editor may publish up to four papers during his editorship. In order to avoid prospective conflicts of

interest, a former editor is appointed by the AAEA Executive Board to handle the review and editorial decision process for any submissions by current editors.

### **Book Reviews**

The AJAE also publishes book reviews. The AAEA Executive Board appoints a Book Review Editor who typically serves a four year term. The Book Review Editor receives books, monographs, etc. directly from publishers and authors, decides which documents to send out for review, and determines which submitted reviews will be published. Book reviews are not managed through the editorial management system and are submitted directly by the Book Review Editor to the Publisher.

### **Journal Format**

The AJAE publishes five issues per annual volume. As of 2004, the first four issues (February, May, August, November) contain only peer-reviewed articles, comments and replies. Previously, the August issue contained a section of unrefereed principal papers from the AAEA sessions at the January Allied Social Sciences Association (ASSA) meetings. Beginning with the August 2005 issue, the ASSA proceedings will not be included. The fifth (December) issue each year is a Papers and Proceedings issue that contains only unrefereed papers that constitute the proceedings of that year's annual meetings' principal paper sessions, as well as administrative matter related to the AAEA and the AJAE Editors' annual report. Beginning in 2000, unrefereed papers are clearly identified as such. Beginning in 2005, the fifth, papers and proceedings issue each year will be indexed separately from the other four issues' refereed papers in the Social Sciences Citation Index.

*Christopher B. Barrett, B. Wade Brorsen, Ian Sheldon, Stephen K. Swallow*  
*Editors*  
*April 2005*