

## Foreword

In this final issue of *Animal Science*, before it is integrated into the new journal—*Animal*, it is appropriate to take a brief look back at the life of the journal.

The evolution of *Animal Science* as a journal has been one of perhaps some hesitancy tempered by opportunity. The British Society of Animal Production emerged during the Second World War from the meetings of workers in animal production particularly with the Scottish group of research institutions and also with the animal production industry. The infant Society was seen to fill a gap when the government theme of food from our own resources was paramount. It comes as no surprise therefore that the early years of the Society and of its publications were directed towards improvement of farm animal production efficiency by whatever means were possible at the time.

The early activities of the Society were chronicled as the papers read to various Society meetings and between 1944 and 1950 covered topics such as the British Sheep Industry and Animal Behaviour (1944), Meat (1945), British Pig Production (1945), Breeding Methods in Livestock Improvement and Artificial Insemination (1946), Inbreeding and Outbreeding in Farm Livestock (1947), Animals and Grass (1948), Increasing Beef Production in Britain (1949), and Reproductive Behaviour in Cattle (1950). It was at this time too that the practice of a summer meeting of a practical/management nature developed – The Livestock of the South West of Britain (1948), Livestock Farming in the Lowlands of Scotland (1950) and Livestock Production from Grassland in the West Midlands (1951).

In 1951 the first 'Proceedings' of the Society were published and the Society began to indicate that its editors would 'accept . . . short original papers (including preliminary reports and reviews) on any aspect of animal production'. The 1955 'Proceedings' carried a report of the Fifth Study Meeting of the European Association for Animal Production held in Reading with representatives from seventeen countries.

The 'Proceedings' continued as the main publication vehicle of the Society until 1958. This rôle was taken over in 1959 by a journal – *Animal Production*. The editorial information indicated that the journal would be published not less than twice per year. Journal submissions increased rapidly and by 1961 publication per year had increased to three issues and by 1971 to four issues per year.

Papers included in the first issue of *Animal Production* reflected the applied interests of the time. Topics included environmental conditions and food utilization by sheep, hexoestrol implantation of wether lambs, social behaviour and experimental design, management of pregnant sows on pasture. All indicating the catholic nature of the Society as it sought to span the wide-ranging interests of its members within the umbrella of farm animal science.

The journal continued to grow and to respond to changes in research interests throughout the 70s and 80s. The next phase in its evolution was associated with changes in the concerns and research bases of members and also with the increasingly stringent requirements for accountability from research sponsors. The demands for the graded assessment of research led the Society to change its own name and that of the journal. In 1995, Volume 60(1) was issued as *Animal Science*. This change initiated in turn an indication that the editors would consider papers that reported 'studies in all aspects of the sciences which are germane to an understanding of animals, their function and performance and their relationship to the social and physical environment.' Repositioning was not without some cost as the journal had to re-establish its status in those indicators used by managers of research funding systems. Chasing the 'impact factor' and its associated parameters is an ongoing process.

The integration of *Animal Science* into a new journal, *Animal* in 2007 marks a further evolutionary step. The Society has always aimed to be forward looking. The arguments for this latest change have been rehearsed by its members and we look to a new publication that will accept animal science papers from any countries in a critical and peer-assessed way.

In this very brief review of the evolution of the journal and its activities I would like to acknowledge the contributions of editors and reviewers of all types to the success of *Animal Science* down the years. It would be invidious to attempt to name all who have acted as reviewers but my thanks goes to all who have recognized the urgency of the rôle and sought to maintain a high standard in the acceptance of papers. The ambivalent nature of being a potential author and a reviewer is sometimes a difficult bridge to cross!

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Senior editors have been in a position to direct the positioning of the journal in many ways. The journal has had few senior editors in its existence: I.L. Mason, Gerald Wiener, John Rook and Tony Lawrence. Gerald and Tony continue to be active in *Animal Science* activities. They have all made major contributions to the journal's development and distinctiveness.

The journal has also been well served by a small committed team of technical editors. These have made a significant contribution to the house style of the journal and have a well earned reputation for editorial correctness.

*Animal Science* continues to evolve. The contents of this issue span a wide range of topics and indicate the changing nature of animal science. We have, among others, contributions from a Mammal Society meeting, health, production quality, management and production systems and animal behaviour. Some of the papers continue the interests of half a century ago and continue to be relevant, others are indicative of the move into new areas of research activity. We hope that this 'rich mix' will continue in *Animal* and that Society members will continue to submit papers

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Chairman of the Editorial Board