

Editorial Letter

Dear Colleagues,

the last issue of JPDP in 2015 is also the last before some fundamental changes. JPDP will continue in 2016 with a new publisher: Springer. Springer proposed to take care of all manuscript handling in scientific as well as in technical matters with the publisher's staff and thus, a Managing Editor is no longer foreseen in the publishing procedure. In addition, the German Society of Plant Protection and Plant Health (DPG), who now owns the journal, would like to encourage esteemed members to volunteer as Editor-in-Chief. Hence, we finish our work as Editorial Office of JPDP together with the change of the publisher.

We take this last Editorial Letter as an opportunity to look back on the five years of our work as Editorial Office. The best guideline for this retrospect is the mission and the instruments on which we agreed together with the Board of DPG acting 2010, when we took over the Editorial office. Without any doubt our joint goal was to improve the quality of the journal. In order to achieve this, we agreed on the following instruments:

- 1) Produce a full English journal
- 2) Internationalize the Editorial Board
- 3) Involve members of the Editorial Board as Section Editors in the reviewing process
- 4) Professionalize the Editorial Board.
- 5) Establish an online submission system together with the publisher
- 6) Secure that the scope of JPDP includes all areas of activities of the DPG-Working Groups

ad 1) A full English journal was almost immediately achieved. German abstracts were cancelled. Abstracts of DPG Working group meeting were included, if they are given in English. Moreover we excluded all communication, abstracts and information from the core journal pages. Readers experienced this, because the journal title is not running on these pages.

ad 2) The Editorial Board today has 13 international and 8 German members. It appeared that recruiting new members for the Editorial Board was more demanding than expected. Thus, the Editorial Board has a lower number of members as we would have appreciated.

ad 3) These difficulties rose because being member of the Editorial Board means to assist in the reviewing process with up to 6 manuscripts per year. However, we stuck to this course and were lucky to find members who themselves continuously engaged. „Honorary“ members of the Editorial Board, who are not willing to engage themselves, were consequently avoided.

ad 4) Members of the Editorial Board need to have in their area of interest both, a proven experience in reviewing

indicated by own scientific publications and a reliable network of colleagues engaged in publishing. If these prerequisites together with the willingness to assist in the reviewing process are fulfilled, scientists were invited to join the Editorial Board regardless of position and age.

ad 5) In 2011 Ulmer installed an open-access on-line submission system. Though we were enthusiastic to finish email-submissions, handling of this on-line submission system required much input by the Editorial Office and nevertheless manuscript handling stayed troublesome and laborious. We continuously informed DPG about the feedback we received from authors, reviewers and Section Editors.

ad 6) A broad scope is not always a success factor for a scientific journal. However, we respected the idea to offer all DPG-working groups a platform for active and passive participation. The board acting in 2010 had identified a wider niche for a scientific journal focusing plant protection issues rather than plant diseases only and thus, we moved JPDP that way. Nevertheless, manuscripts submitted under our Editorship covered a wide area of themes, serving among many others areas like Molecular Pathology, Entomology, Biocontrol and Plant Protection concepts. At the end, we received good quality submissions from all areas and could serve the wished broad scope.

The agreed and implemented instruments resulted in an increasing number of submissions (more than 200 in 2015) from all over the world. Approx. 60 % of the submissions were rejected after the first check by the Managing Editor without a complete review. From those entering the review process, approx. 35 % were rejected after review. Hence, in the average one out of five submissions is finally published. This process of quality insurance based on the work of Editorial Office and Board enabled us to more than double the Impact Factor of JPDP in the last years. However, we are convinced that more would have been possible. The restrictive policy of the publisher not enabling any on-line access (even not purchased) to individual papers for two years prevent international access to and thus, citation of articles. As one consequence we continuously encouraged DPG to move to another publisher and this autumn, DPG finally went that road. We applaud this transition to another publisher and congratulate DPG on that step – even though we regret that the journal will continue without us.

We want to express our warmest thanks to all who helped to improve the quality of JPDP during the last years: authors, reviewers and members of the Editorial Board. Despite all arguing about professional scientific journal businesses

with the publisher Ulmer, in our daily business we experienced excellent support by people and institutions and thank them all for the good cooperation, namely: Gerd Friedrich, Sabine Mann and Paolo Capudi, Ulmer as well as the staff of mediaTEXT Jena GmbH.

We submit our best wishes and every success for the new start and are looking forward with great interest to the first

issue in 2016 produced with a new publisher and under the responsibility of a new Editor-in-Chief.

Rostock, November 2015

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