

Editorial

Dr. Markku Yli-Halla

Editor

This issue starts the volume 14 of *Agricultural and Food Science*, published jointly by the Scientific Agricultural Society of Finland and MTT Agrifood Research Finland. The journal has had this name since the previous volume, instead of *Agricultural and Food Science in Finland*. The journal continues to have a northern perspective, but the present name better reflects the fact that we get an increasing number of submissions from countries other than Finland. Moreover, the results presented in our articles are applicable to the agricultural, environmental and food sectors throughout the northern areas, whatever the country of the origin of the research might be.

As the new editor, I want to thank my predecessor Dr. Ilkka P. Laurila. He served the journal for nine years, six years (1999–2004) of which as the editor. During that period, decisions were made to establish the electronic version of the journal. The abstracts are available free of charge at our homepage, and the full papers can be downloaded by the individual subscribers and by the customers of the libraries subscribing the electronic journal. In the previous four-month period (January–April 2005) our homepage was visited, on an average, 866 times a month by as many as 366 users. Full papers were downloaded, on average, 161 times a month. These numbers show that the e-journal has been well accepted by the clientele.

In order to further improve the availability of the articles published in *Agricultural and Food Science*, a new phase of electronic publishing and distribution has been brought into effect in 2004. This journal joined the Ingenta online research service, providing on-line articles from 6100 journals and abstracts from 28,000 publications. In 2005 we also join the reference linking system. These improvements make our articles available practically at all relevant libraries, universities and research institutes, since this journal is included in the package of a large number of scientific e-journals of our field delivered by Ingenta, irrespective of the distribution of the hard copies. Contrary to what has sometimes been anticipated, the electronic publishing seems to strengthen the position of small scientific periodicals, when taking the advantage of these new possibilities. The technological advances make *Agricultural and Food Science* (34 published articles in 2004) equally available as larger journals.

The prerequisite for the success of a scientific journal is the high quality of the articles published. This is guaranteed by the editorial process. All our papers are peer-reviewed by two or three experts. I want to thank all the referees of 2004 for their devoted work for the journal and for science. Their names are listed at the end of the fourth issue of volume 14. In 2004, we had altogether 111 referees. Their geographical distribution is quite diverse: 23 from Finland, 63 from other European countries, 20 from North America and five from the other continents. The editorial board continues to make its best to offer an attractive outlet for research results to scientists and a source of useful information to the experts within the agricultural, environmental and food sectors. I invite you to visit our home page (<http://www.mtt.fi/afs>) for instructions to authors, checking what has been published in this journal and what will be published in the forthcoming issues.