

Editorial

**Scholarly progression**

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In 2015 the Journal of Dairy Research created its “Our JDR” Community site, building a network of dairy researchers that now numbers more than 3,500. As part of its service to contributors, the Journal started to operate its own purpose-built Submission and Peer Review system through that site, replacing a completely ad-hoc process of submission by personal email to the Editor. One of our objectives when we devised the process was to maintain that personal touch, and it is still the case that I, as Editor, see every manuscript that is submitted to the Journal. It has been an enjoyable task, but one of fairly considerable magnitude: in those intervening years we have received and evaluated around 3,000 manuscripts, so we can claim to have a certain amount of experience! Another reason for creating an online submission and evaluation portal was to keep abreast of the times, and that remains an important objective. Research is (or should be) a dynamic and evolving process, one that continuously breaks new ground. The new ground that this Journal has helped to break is to be found all over the world, but especially in South America, the Indian sub-continent, the Middle East and Asia. It is a source of considerable satisfaction to me that we are helping a new generation of dairy researchers to establish themselves in geographical areas that only a few decades ago would have been stony ground for research. During my time at Copenhagen the Department adopted a “lighthouse” strategy, the idea being that the light would shine a route to the future. I was somewhat amused by the notion that a lighthouse, whose true purpose was to keep ships away from treacherous areas rather than guide them to safe harbour, was to be used to illuminate our research path. I would have preferred the metaphor of a searchlight or perhaps a laser\*, and I believe that we owe it to these young and able researchers to illuminate the path to new and ever more exciting discovery. So we cannot afford to stand still. At some point in the not too distant future, new and fresh blood should

take over the running of the Journal, bringing novel ideas and insight to the task. For that to happen, our Heath Robinson publishing system needs to be replaced. The software has many virtues, not least its adaptability and, I believe, user-friendliness. However, it only remains fit for purpose by virtue of its creator (me!) being there to oil, grease and generally maintain the mechanisms. Change is needed. Over the last few months we have been working quietly behind the scenes with our colleagues at Cambridge University Press (CUP) to put in place the “Our JDR” Scholar One software. Those who have published with us recently will be aware that a restricted version of this has been in use for some time, and may have wondered why their Submitted, Peer Reviewed, Revised and already Accepted manuscript had then had to be “submitted” again, to that new system. I can reveal the answer! For us (me, primarily!) it represented a gentle slope on an otherwise steep learning curve of gaining familiarity with a proprietary software of which I previously had only limited experience. For CUP, it allowed an easier passage of the manuscript through into their systems from ours. Having shown that it would work, CUP then developed a full-function test site and some of our Editorial Board members (EBM) are now busy pushing dummy manuscripts through that system. The testing will complete early in the New Year and the complete set of functionalities, some of which have been specifically developed for us, will then be transferred to the Our JDR site. Assuming that all goes to plan, the system will go live in March 2024 and from that point on, all submissions and peer reviewing will be done through Scholar One. So, you may ask, *How will this affect me?* Many authors will already be familiar with Scholar One, perhaps through its alternative name of Manuscript Central. Whether you find it easier or less easy than our current system is very much a frame of mind issue: personally I hate the time involved in learning a new software but usually enjoy the process of doing so, and that is the case here. Setting up a personal profile takes a little time but is a one-off process, although regrettably Scholar One does not yet have a way of transferring profiles from Journal to Journal, so you will need to create an account with us. You will use the same account for submitting your own manuscripts and evaluating others for us as a referee. *How will it affect my manuscript?* Currently, submitted manuscripts are Validated by the Editor and, if found suitable, assigned to an EBM for a general

scientific assessment (Progression). Articles that pass this stage then go to External Peer Review. If that review is favourable, there is usually some revision to be done, after which the EBM will make a Recommendation to publish. The Final Decision to do so is taken by the Editor. This process is depicted in Figure 1, and alongside it is the new Scholar One version. Do not worry if it is too small to read easily, it is essentially the exact same process of Validation, Progression, Recommendation and Final Decision. As your manuscript passes through this procedure you will receive updates and be able to track it online, much as you do at the moment. Our “free to publish” policy will remain in force, and we will continue to offer the hybrid option of Open Access either at no cost (if your Institution has a read and publish agreement with CUP) or on payment of a fee. *So will I notice any difference?* Our familiar two cows will still be keeping an eye on you from the top of the webpage, but in all other respects it will look very different. In addition, you will be dealing more directly with the EBM responsible for your manuscript. Don’t worry, you’ll soon get used to it, and we will be here to help as always. *Will this affect my “in progress” submission?* No: all manuscripts submitted to our current system before the Scholar One launch will progress through it as normal. *Will I have the option of still submitting to the old system after the Scholar One launch?* Only if there is sufficient demand (so tell us!) and even then, only for a limited period of time. *What will happen to the Our JDR Community site?* In the short term, nothing, apart from the removal of pages associated with Submission and Peer Review. The Community will remain and hopefully continue to grow in size and strength. In the longer term it will find a new platform, but that is a story for another Editorial. So, all that remains for now is one last question. *What can I do now?* If you wish to, please go ahead and create your Profile on the Our JDR Scholar One site, which is <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/our-jdr> We particularly encourage members of the Peer Review Pool and others wishing to referee for us to do this, as the information you enter will automatically be entered into our keyword database that EBM search when allocating manuscripts to referees. But (there is always a but!), for the time being, please take note of this statement from the new software’s home page: *“This site is for the processing of accepted manuscripts only. Please see the [Journal of Dairy Research Community site](#) page for details on submitting new*

*manuscripts*". We mean it! Any manuscript submitted to this new site before its official launch will automatically be rejected and you will be redirected to the current submission platform.

Figure 1. The current (in-house) and new (Scholar One) versions of the Our JDR online Submission and Peer Review process

