EDITORIAL REPORT

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I am glad to report an improvement in meeting submission dates this year. Fifty percent of the papers were received within a few days of the requested submission date and all but three contributors gave notice in May if they were unable to submit on time. It is largely thanks to those who made an effort that we were able to edit and print a record number of 64 papers and have the pre-prints despatched 10 days before the conference.

Unfortunately the situation was marred by a few authors who took 2 to 5 weeks to resubmit edited papers, some of whom paid the penalty in that their papers have not appeared.

The return of galley proofs could have been more prompt. Again most authors co-operated by prompt return but a few let the team down by undue delay. Where authors are away from their offices they should make arrangements for a colleague to read and return their proofs.

The greatest editorial problem is to maintain some resemblance of meeting the Society's 2000 word length limitation. I believe the Society can best serve the agricultural research community by early publication of research findings and this can be done satisfactorily, in most circumstances, in 2000 words. Excess length generally arises through excessively numerous and complicated tables which do not enhance the readability of most papers. Apart from the fact that excessive length is generally unnecessary it adds considerably to the cost of printing. This latter problem could, however, be solved by making a page charge on authors who exceed the 2000 word limit or a four pages allowance.

Presentation of figures has improved though further consideration could be given to proportions of figures. Where possible they are printed to read across the page so that the horizontal axis will be reduced to 10 cm and the vertical height will determine page space occupied. This should be the minimum possible compatible with clarity. Reduction to page size reduces not only the lettering size but also line thickness. Figures can usually stand considerable reduction providing the lettering is large and the lines thick enough.

It is gratifying to see the recommendation of the "Standardisation Committee" has been adopted by a number of authors and hopefully this trend will continue. Further editorial work could be saved if authors would, as requested, underline scientific names of plants and insects and refrain from the use of capital letters for common names of chemicals in tables.