

Editorial

QUALITY CONTROL

C. van OUWERKERK

Editor-in-Chief Soil & Tillage Research, Institute for Soil Fertility, P.O. Box 30003, Haren Gv (The Netherlands)

Up to the end of December 1981, several hundreds of sample copies of *Soil & Tillage Research* had been requested, the majority of which was sent to North America (46.6%) and Western Europe (26.0%) (Table I). As with requests for sample copies, subscriptions are not equally distributed over different regions of the world. In fact there is a certain parallel between sample copies requested and subscriptions. Thus, the majority of the subscriptions is in Western Europe (32.4%) and North America (29.5%). However, also Australia and New Zealand, and the Far East hold a reasonable share of the subscriptions.

Soil & Tillage Research Vol. 1 (1980/1981) contained 430 pages, distributed over 43 contributions (Table II). Scientific papers (25) took up about 80%, ISTRO-INFO and Reading Table about 10%, Editorials and Book Reviews about 5% and Short Communications about 2.5%. The majority of the papers in Volume 1 was on tillage research in western Europe (about 55%) (Table III). Eastern Europe, North America Africa, and Australia and New Zealand each held 8-9%, South America and the Far East covered about 5% and the Middle East was not represented. The papers mainly dealt with the effect of tillage on soil structure (36.1%) and on crop response

TABLE I

Relative number of sample copies requested and subscriptions to *Soil & Tillage Research* in different regions of the world, until 31 December 1981

Region	Sample copies (%)	Subscriptions (%)
Western Europe	26.0	32.4
Eastern Europe	1.4	2.6
North America	46.6	29.5
South America	5.8	6.0
Africa	5.8	6.6
Australia and New Zealand	7.2	10.3
Middle East	2.4	1.7
Far East	4.8	10.9

TABLE II

Number of pages of components of the content of *Soil & Tillage Research* Vol. 1 (1981/1982)

	Absolute	Relative (%)
Scientific papers (25)	338	78.6
ISTRO-INFO and Reading Table	42	9.8
Editorials and Book Reviews	22	5.1
Short Communications, etc.	12	2.8
Guide for Authors and Index	16	3.7
Total	430	100.0

TABLE III

Relative number of pages in *Soil & Tillage Research* Vol. 1 (1980/1981), dedicated to tillage research carried out in different regions of the world

Region	Number of pages (%)
Western Europe	54.4
Eastern Europe	7.7
North America	9.5
South America	4.7
Africa	8.2
Australia and New Zealand	9.5
Middle East	—
Far East	5.9

(17.4%) (Table IV). Tillage systems as such (12.4%) and their effect on soils and crops (4.1%) also held a reasonable share, as did ameliorative tillage (9.1%). Other aspects received only little attention (<5%) or were not represented at all (items 1, 9, 11, 14-17). It is of course hoped for that these aspects will receive more attention in future issues.

After submission, reviewing the papers which appeared in Volume 1 took on average 2 months. Only one paper could be accepted as it was, and 15 papers required one revision, which took on average 2½ months. Eight papers required two revisions, which took on average 7 months. One paper required three revisions, which took 8 months in total. On average, the process of reviewing and revision took 6½ months and the time lapse between acceptance and publication amounted to 7½ months.

Sheila Gore (1982) states that 'Circulating draft manuscripts for comment is second nature to a research worker'. However, in my experience authors seldom have this second nature and, therefore, I strongly suggest that an author asks at least two colleagues to read his draft paper critically, and that he revises the paper according to the comments made before submitting it to *Soil & Tillage Research*.

TABLE IV

Relative number of pages of papers in Soil & Tillage Research Vol. 1 (1980/1981), dedicated to different items of the scope

Item of the scope	Number of pages (%)
No. Short description ^a	
1 Soil suitability for tillage	—
2 Physical soil properties	4.7
3 Development of tillage systems	12.4
4 Effect of tillage systems on soils and crops	4.1
5 Soil deformation processes	5.3
6 Effects of tillage operations on the soil	36.1
7 Crop response	17.4
8 Effect of weather conditions	1.8
9 Weed, pest and disease control	—
10 Ameliorative tillage	9.8
11 Land preparation	—
12 Soil and water conservation	4.7
13 Tillage implements	3.6
14 Measuring methods	—
15 Energy requirements	—
16 Mathematical modelling	—
17 Environmental aspects	—

^aFor a detailed description cf. Van Ouwerkerk and Manten (1980).

For the majority of the potential authors it is of course a serious handicap that English, which is the working language of our journal, is not their mother tongue. This makes it often very difficult to achieve that the author's message is clearly understood by our international readership. However, there is a way out. For one, study a book on writing scientific papers in English (O'Connor and Woodford, 1977). Secondly, keep the wording as concise and simple as possible, 'Say it in your own words', consistently checking the exact meaning of English words and phrases with Roget's Thesaurus (1981) and double-checking with Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (1974). Finally, consult an expert in English.

When reporting on tillage experiments it should be recognized that to really understand the experiment and its backgrounds, considerable information on soil and climate, tillage implements used and crops grown, measuring methods and apparatus, and mathematical treatment of the data should be included. A useful checklist of information on field experiments was prepared by the ASAE Cultural Practices Committee (1981) 'Unfortunately, much of the current terminology (used in soil tillage research) is inconsistent, incomplete and sloganish' (SSSA Tillage Terminology Committee, 1970). Fortunately, however, there are several specialized glossaries (Buckingham, 1976; Soil Conservation Society of America, Glossary

Committee, 1976; Grevis-James and Kamel, 1977; SSSA Tillage Terminology Committee, 1978; ASAE Cultural Practices Equipment Committee, 1981) and even a dictionary (Farrall et al., 1965) on agricultural engineering. Therefore, authors have ample possibilities to check the exact meaning of the terms they use. This is very important as they undoubtedly wish to be understood by an international audience.

Illustrations should comply with high standards of legibility and comprehensibility. An excellent aid in preparing such illustrations was recently prepared by Reynolds and Simmonds (1981). Provided they are of good quality, photographs of equipment and apparatus used in the experiments can often save many words and prevent misunderstandings; therefore, they should be used freely in the manuscript.

It should be stressed that SI units should be used consistently. An even more important requirement is that relations should be dimensionally consistent (Helbig, 1981).

Only few institutions can afford an 'in-house' editor who sees to it that all, often very different, requirements with respect to the layout of journals are met. However, Elsevier now has introduced a standard 'Guide for Authors', which is printed in the first issue of each volume. It is suggested that authors also inspect a recent issue of the journal as an example of proper layout.

I sincerely hope that authors will do their utmost to provide *Soil & Tillage Research* with papers of outstanding quality on the various aspects of soil tillage (Van Ouwerkerk, 1981). In doing so they are contributing to the purpose of the International Soil Tillage Research Organization (ISTRO): 'To stimulate scientific research in the domain of soil tillage and related subjects, and to promote the application of the results of such research in agricultural practice' (ISTRO, 1982) and, eventually, foster the advancement of the science of soil tillage!

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