

THREE YEARS WITH THE JOURNAL OF FOREST ECONOMICS

Three years have passed since we announced the launch of the JOURNAL OF FOREST ECONOMICS. Since then, three volumes, each with three issues, have been published.

Starting a journal for a section of economics is not a risk-free enterprise. We knew that there already existed scientific journals where articles on forest economics were published, and the most common question three years ago was if there was enough supply of good papers, and enough demand for them, to motivate a special journal. After all, forest economics is a limited scientific field with limitations on resources, researchers and potential readers. The decisive question was whether this field was large enough to breed one more scientific journal.

After three years we are certain that the answer is yes. We receive a steadily increasing number of submitted papers, presently at a rate of just over one per week. As we publish 12–15 papers a year, this also means that our rejection rate has increased to about 70%. This high rate is of course unfortunate in the sense that many good paper can not be published for reasons of limited space. On the other hand, we think that our three years show a steady increase in the average scientific standard of the articles included in our journal.

The vast majority of the submitted manuscripts originates in North America and the Nordic countries. These two areas account for about 40% each. The rest, 20%, is distributed evenly over all other areas, Asia, Africa, Oceania, South America and Europe. This heavy concentration in two geographical areas is neither optimal nor desirable, and one of our goals for the next three years is to increase the coverage of forest problems in areas outside these two. Specifically, we will try to increase the number of articles dealing with economic problems in the tropical forests.

About one third of the articles published from 1995–1997 dealt with problems related to the forest industry or trade. Seven dealt with various aspects of forest policy, such as taxes, regulations and subsidies, and five articles had the multiple use of forests as their subject. Only three dealt with traditional forest management problems and also three

with forestry and economic development. Finally, four articles were bibliographical portraits of outstanding forest economists.

Regarding the number of subscribers, we have reached our initial goal, which was about 200. This is of course a small figure, but it still means that we cover most of the major scientific institutions with research in forest economics. Since we have not made any serious effort to reach readers outside the scientific institutions, we think that 200 subscribers after three years is a quite satisfactory figure. The important statistics on the number of citations is missing for the simple reason that the normal time-lag is three years, i.e. the time period of our existence.

Summarising these three years, it has been a period of hard work, but most of the practical work surrounding the production of a scientific journal has run smoothly. We are deeply grateful to all the referees, within and outside the editorial board, who have helped us with the most difficult part of all, namely the evaluation process.

We now look forward to the next three years in our development. This second step will include a broadened editorial board and, we hope, a doubling of the numbers of subscribers. Presently, we have no plans to increase the number of published articles per year. Should, however, the number of submitted papers of high standard increase well over the present level, it might be necessary to publish four issues per year. In the next period, we also hope to receive more articles from outside the area of the boreal forests. We also plan to publish special issues with conference papers, the first in 1998 with selected papers from the International Symposium on Forest Resource Economics, September 1997.

In short, we hope that the next three years will be as successful as the first three, and that our readers and authors will find the Journal of Forest Economics interesting enough to follow us also in this second step in our development.

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