

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first issue of *The International Journal of Agricultural Management*, or IJAM for short.

One way of defining IJAM would be in terms of its origins, combining the strengths and reputations of the *Journal of Farm Management* and the *Journal of International Farm Management*. The former was the British old stager, with more than forty years' service under its belt, wise and experienced but perhaps a little tired. The latter was an energetic youngster by comparison, making good use of new communication technologies and catering much more for the wider community of agricultural and associated professionals across the world. By bringing them together under a new name, the strengths could be built on and the weaknesses minimised to create something bigger and better.

To think merely in these terms would be missing the real point, though. The new journal reflects a determination on the part of its two sponsoring organisations – the Institute of Agricultural Management and the International Farm Management Association – to provide an authoritative reference point for agricultural and rural land managers and associated professions, wherever they operate. The task faced by these professionals is both more critical and more complex than it has ever been, with the requirement for businesses to be sustainable in environmental and social terms, as well as providing a living for their owners and employees in an unpredictable economy. They deserve the best in terms of scientific, economic and technical updating, and we intend to provide just that.

There will be challenges. The target readership includes farmers and farm managers, growers, land managers, environmentalists, consultants, advisers, administrators, educators, researchers, students and those who formulate and/or implement government policy for rural areas. Each group has different needs and interests, and a delicate balance will be needed between learned articles meeting high academic standards (likely to be based on theory and research) and more applied, practice-oriented contributions (though still of high professional standard). Not everyone will appreciate the international sweep of IJAM, as opposed to a single-country orientation, but we hope most will quickly appreciate the enormous benefit of learning from our fellow professionals around the world. Looking 'over the fence' – seeing how others deal with the same problems in different circumstances – is a wonderful stimulus to creativity and innovation in management (*viz* the powerful impact of Nuffield and other travel scholarships over the years).

In preparing this issue we have leaned heavily on the output of the International Farm Management Congress in New Zealand in March 2011, in order to get us off the starting blocks quickly. The Proceedings of the Congress include an abundance of valuable papers deserving a wider audience. First, though, we have introductions to the two sponsoring organisations by two stalwarts of IAgM and IFMA respectively, Richard Cooksley and Philip James. In the one refereed paper in this issue (there are many more in the pipeline for future issues), Daniel May addresses the issue of innovative capacity in agricultural business, and the factors that influence it in turbulent market conditions. From the IFMA Congress, we have papers on the relative strengths of agricultural sectors in South Africa; adoption of record-keeping by farmers in Ghana (with perhaps some lessons for similar efforts in richer countries); technology transfer in New Zealand; the work of the Canadian Farm Business Council (wouldn't the rest of us like one of those...?); and financial analysis in the USA.

We are keen that IJAM should include a variety of article types (see www.tinyurl.com/64pdky4), including short professional updating pieces. The first of these, by Peter Kettlewell, addresses the economics of using film antitranspirant on wheat. Last but not least, the first of our book reviews, a UK-based text on taxation of diversified farm businesses: not exactly bedtime reading, perhaps, but a valuable reference.

A journal is only as good as its authors, so please take a look at the call for papers. As well as one-off papers in the various categories, we are aiming to produce occasional issues built around a specific theme. Calls are under way for issues relating to internet and social media in agricultural management, and agricultural marketing in a global economy, and we would be glad to hear further proposals, via editor.ijam@gmail.com.

I would finally like to pay tribute to the other members of the Editorial team, John Gardner (NZ) and Carl Atkin (UK) who have played a vital part in developing the new journal, and who have provided constructive criticism and reassurance at the appropriate moments. We are delighted at the quantity and quality of offers to serve on the Editorial Board (see www.tinyurl.com/5w3kjus), and are grateful to its members for both the prestige they lend the Journal, and their willingness to advise and to review contributed articles.

Martyn Warren