

From the editor

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“The practice of agriculture produces important human benefits” (Haynes 1984, p. 1). So began the introduction to the first issue of *Agriculture and Human Values*, published 30 years ago. The current issue of the journal, volume 30, issue 1, thus begins the thirtieth year that this journal has been in publication.

It has been an impressive 30 years.

The journal started as a “newsletter.” Its purpose was “to provide a forum for those of us who want to develop greater dialogue among the various liberal arts and agricultural disciplines so that we can all come to have a better understanding of where we want to go in the practice of an activity that is very fundamental to human well-being” (Haynes 1984, p. 2). The first issue of the journal contained the following five invited essays: Lawrence Busch and William B. Lacy, “Agricultural policy: Issues for the ‘80 s and beyond;” Katherine L. Clancy, “Human nutrition, agriculture and human values;” Don F. Hadwiger, “Issues in agriculture;” H.O. Kunkel, “Agricultural ethics—the setting;” and William Aiken, “Value conflicts in agriculture.”

In 1987, when the Agriculture, Food and Human Values Society was organized, the journal *Agriculture and Human Values* became the official journal of the Society.¹

Richard Haynes, now emeritus professor of philosophy at the University of Florida, founded the journal *Agriculture and Human Values*. He was assisted by Ray Lanier and the following as editorial advisors (with their academic disciplines in parentheses), as reported in volume 1, issue 1: Lawrence Busch (sociology), Stanley Curtis (animal science), Richard Hare (philosophy), R.S. Loomis

(agronomy and range science), Leo Polopolus (agricultural economics), Frederick Buttel (rural sociology), Cornelia Flora (sociology), Richard Kirkendall (history), Russell Nye (American studies), Robert Rabb (entomology), John Vandermeer (biology), J. Baird Callicott (philosophy), Don Hadwiger (political science), H.O. Kunkel (college Dean), John Perkins (biology & history of science), and Bill Stout (agricultural engineering). I admit to being impressed by the interdisciplinary breadth of the original editorial board. As impressive is our current editorial board, I don’t think it matches the diversity of academic disciplines Professor Haynes tapped to establish the journal.

Professor Haynes wrote an editorial in 1997 in which he reflected on the origin of the journal, outlined its scope, and articulated a vision for influencing scholarship, policy and agricultural practice (see Haynes 1997). In that essay Professor Haynes explained two reasons why this journal was needed. The first was because previous work by applied ethicists examined moral dilemmas in agriculture, but did so under the assumption that the institutional context was fixed. In effect, they would seek answers to this question: Given the institutional context, what course of action is best justified from the perspective of various ethical frameworks? Professor Haynes questioned the assumption of fixed institutional contexts, systems and structures. “What is objectionable about this approach,” he wrote, “is that it assumes as backdrop the legitimacy of the institutions and their current practices that define the contexts in which such [moral] conflicts arise. What it does not propose is an analysis of alternative practices that might avoid such conflicts altogether” (Haynes 1997, p. 2). Thus,

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¹ See the Agriculture, Food and Human Values Society’s official website, at <http://afhvs.org>, for a history of the Society and the role of the journal in the Society.

an emphasis of alternative “visions” and “structures” of contemporary agriculture and food systems is an important and defining characteristic of articles published in this journal.

The second reason was the belief that progress would be made in improving practices, policies and perspectives only when scholarship merged the search for facts with a critical assessment of the values underlying them. Professor Haynes wrote that “the relatively newly emerging field of the social studies of knowledge (of science and technology) was starting to reveal both the background value commitments of the various sciences, including the humanities, and the distorted view of their own history that disciplinary texts promoted, again, including the humanities.” For this reason, a journal was needed “to emphasize our belief that agricultural practices reflect value choices, and these choices should be critically examined rather than uncritically assumed” (Haynes 1997, p. 2), hence the journal name *Agriculture and Human Values*.

Articles submitted to *Agriculture and Human Values* should therefore “critically [examine] the values, relationships, conflicts and contradictions within contemporary agricultural and food systems and ... [address] the impact of agricultural and food related institutions, policies, and practices on human populations, the environment, democratic governance, and social equity.”²

Agriculture and Human Values publishes research articles, discussion pieces, in-the-field reports, literature reviews and book reviews. The journal also publishes special issues and symposia on selected themes thought by the editor to be of interest to the journal’s readers.

Research articles may be either theoretical or empirical and “must address one or more issues that have been raised in the relevant literature and be thought by its reviewers to make some significant contribution to that body of literature toward a resolution of those issues” (Haynes 1997, p. 5). Research articles must fall within the aims and scope of the journal. Just because the paper has an agriculture or food theme does not mean it is a good fit. I receive a lot of submissions to this journal. Indeed, the number of papers submitted in 2012 to *Agriculture and Human Values* increased by nearly 10 percent over the previous year. Therefore, I need to be discriminating in the articles that I send to reviewers. Lack of fit with the journal’s aims and scope is the most common reason I reject articles without review.

Discussion pieces should provide critical commentary on previous articles published in *Agriculture and Human Values*. In 1997, Professor Haynes lamented that “less progress” was made in fostering interdisciplinary dialogue

among scholars of previously published research. Although common within the discipline of philosophy, “the practice of engaging previously published essays in critical discussion” is less common in the sciences and humanities (Haynes 1997, p. 3). Professor Haynes suggested that this might be due to a (mistaken) belief that once a paper has made it through the peer review process it has passed the point of critical analysis. I admit that I have been somewhat lax in ensuring that discussion pieces critically examine previous work. I intend to be more vigilant in this regard in the future.

In-the-field reports “describe current research, education, or curriculum development projects, including case studies, when such projects are thought by the editors to hold a special interest for our readers.” The focus here is on reports that “report on or make observations about some practice, but do not attempt to illuminate the practice in terms of a body of theoretical literature” (Haynes 1997, p. 5). Like regular research articles, in-the-field reports are subjected to peer review. Sometimes it is difficult to determine whether a submitted paper ought to be a regular research article or an in-the-field report. I often reject papers submitted as in-the-field reports because they do not contain an adequate conceptual or theoretical development or show a clear connection to existing literature, if I believe such conceptual or theoretical foundations currently exist and ought to be considered. It is a subjective call, which can be frustrating to prospective authors who have their submissions of in-the-field reports rejected without review.

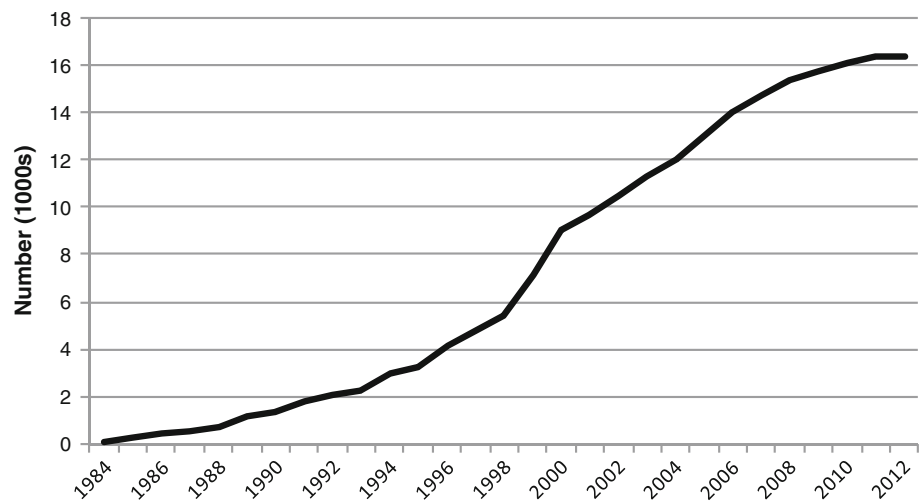
Literature reviews describe the state of knowledge and gaps that exist in our understanding of issues relevant to the aims and scope of this journal. *Book reviews* provide brief summaries and evaluations of books dealing with agriculture, food, and human values themes.

Finally, *special issues and symposia* present papers on a common theme. Often these are guest edited. The distinction between a special issue and a symposium is one of quantity. A special issue devotes an entire issue of the journal to the proposed theme, while a symposium devotes only part of an issue. I tend to favor symposia so that I can publish regularly submitted papers in each issue of the journal—part of my desire to keep the publication backlog as short as possible.

What is the value of research articles, discussion pieces, in-the-field reports, literature reviews, book reviews and special issues and symposia published in *Agriculture and Human Values*? Has this journal made an impact, especially consistent with the vision outlined by Professor Haynes in his 1997 review essay? An objective answer to these questions is difficult to provide, because it depends in part on how we define value and assess impact. However, there is some evidence suggesting that scholars perceive the journal to have value. For example, the Journal Citation Reports, which calculates citation impact factors for major academic science

² This description of the journal is printed on the insight front cover of each issue of *Agriculture and Human Values* and is available on the journal’s online website at <http://www.springer.com/journal/10460>.

Fig. 1 Cumulative citations of articles published in *Agriculture and Human Values* between 1984 and 2012, in thousands. Source Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.com>) and author calculations



and social science journals,³ currently ranks *Agriculture and Human Values* in the first quartile in each of the three subject categories in which it lists the journal.⁴ In addition, Fig. 1 presents the total number of citations to articles published in the journal between 1984 and 2012, as of December 2012 and as reported in Google Scholar.⁵ The graph shows clearly an increasing trend of citations during the first fifteen years of the journal's existence, something that economists might describe as increasing marginal returns. One explanation for this is that there was a growing realization among scholars that the journal filled a critical void in existing academic research. The slight leveling in recent years could reflect the fact that more recently published articles have not yet been fully integrated and reported in subsequent academic work. I'm not ready to concede that we have reached a point of decreasing marginal returns, which some economists have said applied to economic research generally (Pannell 2012). I am curious to see how much the line shifts upward after another year of outstanding research published in *Agriculture and Human Values*.

Speaking of which, this issue contributes to the legacy of interdisciplinary scholarship that has made *Agriculture and Human Values* great. It begins with a paper by Bitzer, Glasbergen, and Arts, who develop a conceptual model of how partnerships among multinational companies, NGOs, and governments can improve on the ability of Peruvian smallholder farmers to access livelihood enhancing marketing

opportunities. Terstappen, Hanson, and McLaughlin review the fair trade literature to identify how fair trade networks affect gender, health, labor and concerns about fairness and equity. Groenewald and Bulte study a Mexican agrarian community in order to explore how different types of trust interact with different household capital endowments to affect household adaptation and coping strategies. McGuire, Morton, and Cast report on a study of US farmers that investigates how a farmer's identity evolves to incorporate conservationist identities and specific conservation practices. Sumberg, Thompson, and Woodhouse articulate the implications of a new political agronomy, focusing particularly on how neoliberalism, participatory research, and environmentalism affect agronomy research. Pole and Gray survey members of a community supported agriculture group in New York in order to determine whether social and community considerations are important motivators for joining a CSA. Gilbert explains how efforts to increase biodiversity can amplify trends toward the deskilling of home and community gardeners. Alston and Whittenbury use Australian agriculture as the vehicle for exploring the effect of climate change on gender roles and relations in farm families. Finally, Galt, et al. report on how an interdisciplinary undergraduate course in a California university affected students' ability to reflect on food systems, sustainability and related issues. Book reviews and list of books available for review complete this issue of the journal.

³ Impact Factor for a particular year is calculated as the ratio of the number of citations to articles published in the journal in the previous 2 years to the total number of articles published in those years.

⁴ These categories are Sociology, Multidisciplinary Agriculture, and History & Philosophy of Science.

⁵ See <http://scholar.google.com>, using a search for articles published in *Agriculture and Human Values* restricted to each year. For example, as of December 2012, there were 56 citations to papers published in 1984, 187 citations to papers published in 1985, for a cumulative total of 243, and so forth for each year through 2012.

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