

Editor's preface

PGR: C&U is now one year old. In human terms, it has spent the year establishing its identity, and is now learning how to walk. We enter our second year convinced of the value that the journal has in linking the breadth of activities and knowledge that go under the label of plant genetic resources, as confirmed by the increasing flow of manuscript submission. The coverage, both intellectually and geographically, of the material we have published in volume 1 has been broad. It has ranged from a discussion of the meaning of agricultural sustainability itself, to a detailed analysis of the protein components of the maize grain; and has included authorship from four of the world's five continents. Our editorial board has expanded to include representatives from Asia, Africa, the Americas and Europe. This encourages us to think that the need for, and interest in a mouthpiece for the PGR community is widespread across both discipline and locality, which was the motivation for launching the journal at the outset.

In our second year, we will produce three issues of the journal, but above this, we are in the post-planning stage for a special issue devoted to the topic of medicinal plants in the context of PGR. Thanks largely to the efforts of our guest editors Prof Umesh Lavania and Dr Monique Simmonds, there has been an outstanding response to this project, and we are optimistic that this special issue, when it appears in 2005, will represent a substantial contribution to what is currently a hot topic worldwide.

Science seldom stands still, but sometimes too much hurry can result in losing sight of what is valuable in the rush for novelty. Biotechnology in plant improvement is a case in point. Plant genetic resources has been a recognised topic for many years, and has seen a number of magic bullets come and go. We would be wise to consider 'omics technology as a powerful tool to improve our understanding of plant variation, rather than as an end in itself. I believe that *PGR: C&U* has so far lived up to this philosophy in its choice of content, and hope that our readership too thinks along these lines.

A journal is only as good as its content, and unlike a popular newspaper, the content of an academic journal is the product of its readership. Now that we have established the journal as a going concern and a quality product, I am optimistic that you, the reader, will see the benefit of publishing your own contribution in PGR here. We look forward to hearing from you.

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