

Some practical tips for authors

Jack Peerlings

Former editor of the European Review of Agricultural Economics



Target Group

- This presentation is giving some tips for authors that submit articles to journals.
- Experienced authors will recognise my tips.

Tips on:

- Topics
- Do not annoy the editor and reviewer
- References
- Best time to submit
- Other tips / warnings

Tips: topics

- A good paper contains an original topic and preferably also methodology.
- Topics originate from detecting omissions in the literature OR a societal problem that needs to be resolved (policy papers, issues addressed in EU projects).
- Indicate in the introduction explicitly what the aim of the paper is and what the contributions to the literature are. Indicate also how the research question is going to be answered (i.e. methodology: theory and methods).
- Original methodology includes first applications in the field of agricultural economics.

Tips: topics

- There are many papers that just give another application of a certain methodology. This is not enough to justify publication in a high reputation journal. For example, the ERAE got in my time as editor many papers on efficiency with no novelties in methodology.

Tips: do not annoy editor and reviewer

- High reputation journals have the luxury to be able to reject papers. So, the paper should be perfect (from your point of view before you submit).
- Let your paper check by a native speaker or use AI programs like ChatGPT. The quality of English is often poor which makes rejection likely.
- Include an abstract and pay attention to it. Poorly written and structured abstracts can already lead to a desk reject.
- Stick to the 'normal' structure: introduction, theory, data, model, results, conclusions, critical reflection on own research.

Tips: do not annoy editor and reviewer

- Try to help the reader and manage his or her expectations by clearly indicating the structure of the article and contents of each section.
- Be complete but avoid too many formulas (you can refer to the literature or additional documents).
- Stick to the journal requirements (length, way of citing, etc.)
- Avoid long papers.
- Avoid self-citations (reviewers should also avoid promoting their own articles).

Tips: do not annoy editor and reviewer

- Take the reviewer serious, he or she is always right (even if he or she is not). Always be respectful.
- Invest in a good rebuttal.
- Three rounds of comments is common for high reputation journals.
- Editors support their reviewers because they are the main asset of the journal. Complaining will not help.

Tips: references

- Make that you are aware of and cite the most recent literature.
- Realise that not including references from agricultural economics journals makes the editor doubt whether this is a paper that is suitable for the journal. The editor will also think that the paper has been rejected by other more suitable journals.
- Be aware that editors (can) select reviewers from the reference list. However, editors will in general not be able to select top scientists that are not in the field of agricultural economics.

Tips: best time to submit

- Just before summer and Christmas holidays many authors set a deadline for themselves to submit a paper. However, the larger inflow of articles makes that editors more easily desk reject as it is more difficult to find reviewers. Moreover, reviewers can be more selective in their reviews because they also want to go on holiday.
- A similar peak can be observed around congresses.

Other tips / warnings

- A translation of a paper is not an original contribution.
- Be careful where you publish. Publishing in predatory journals can harm your career.

Success

Questions?



To explore
the potential
of nature to
improve the
quality of life