
My life as an editor – Jong K. Ha

Between 1984 and 2013, I taught and researched ruminant nutrition at Seoul National University in Korea. My involvement in journal publishing began when I helped create an international journal, *Asian-Australasian Journal of Animal Sciences (AJAS)*, the official journal of the Asian-Australasian Association of Animal Production Societies (AAAP). Professor In K. Han, the first editor-in-chief, together with several leading animal scientists in AAAP regions, published the first issue of *AJAS* in March 1988. Since then, I have served the journal as an editorial board member, business manager, assistant editor and in 2001, took over as its editor-in-chief.

AJAS, the first English journal of international stature in its field from Asia, was established with the mission to serve the animal industry and academia in Australasia through efficient publication and distribution of scientific information on animal science. Initially, the journal was published quarterly but since 2000, has been a monthly. This growth was possible thanks in part to the increase in research activity in many Asian countries over the years.

The development of *AJAS* owes much to Professor In K. Han, Professor Emeritus of Seoul National University (and my adviser during my MS course). His vision and skills were essential in the creation of *AJAS*. He nourished *AJAS* from the outset until 2001, when he stepped down as editor-in-chief to take a still more prestigious position as President of the Korean Academy of Science and Technology.

When I took over the operation of *AJAS*, I was still employed by the university, making it difficult for me to find the time required to manage the journal properly. One major task I faced at the beginning was reducing the workload of handling and responding to letters and hard-copy manuscripts. Commercial online platforms were not then widely used in Korea. We were therefore required to commission a local IT company to develop a system to handle manuscript submission and review, which saved me a lot of time until the new, current submission system was adopted. Another challenge was keeping pace with publication technology. Although I did not initially have much experience in journal publishing and editing, I was aware of the tremendous developments in journal publishing worldwide. I was able to access new technologies through the efforts of the Korean Council of Science Editors (KCSE) and the European Association of Science Editors (EASE).

Publishing a small academic society journal like *AJAS* is not easy, and editors encounter many challenges in this global era. Competing with giant publishers and surviving requires constant hard work by core members of the editorial team, especially the editor-in-chief. The journal is unique in that the society grants the editor-in-chief absolute power over publication. However, the editor-in-chief must take full responsibility, looking after all aspects of the journal including manuscript handling, editing, and publication; marketing and other business development; global outreach; and maintaining the journal's reputation.

Although much remains to be done, I am very proud

to have maintained the reputation of *AJAS*, which is now an open access journal indexed by most global databases, including Web of Science, Scopus, PubMed Central, and others. We are fortunate to have maintained over 1000 yearly submissions despite several competing international animal science journals that have recently emerged from Asia.

One of my most valuable experiences as editor thus far has been my involvement in creating KCSE. Founded in September 2011, KCSE aims to improve the quality and international status of scientific journals published in Korea. Since KCSE's founding, this vision has been pursued through the concerted efforts of several academic journal editors. I have been thrilled to see KCSE grow, thanks to support from major scientific journals in Korea, into an organisation with over 280 member journals in just a little over four years. This rapid progress was possible primarily thanks to the dedication of our executive board members and to the strong support of member societies and individuals, many of whom are also members of EASE. Developing KCSE has allowed me to learn about new publishing technologies through personal communication with fellow editors and through seminars, conferences, and training sessions, where I made the acquaintance of many experts from other organisations.

A major outcome of collaborative effort by KCSE was the creation of the Council of Asian Science Editors (CASE) in 2014. For several years, KCSE prioritised scholarly exchange among editors in Asia. In 2013, 18 editors from several Asian countries gathered at the Korean Federation of Science and Technology Societies (KOFST) and agreed that an organisation dedicated to the advancement of scientific research publication across Asia was needed. Thus, CASE was conceived. After a year of preparation, the council was officially established during the Asian Science Editors' Conference and Workshop 2014 at KOFST. As a non-governmental, non-partisan, non-profit organisation, CASE aims to improve the quality of science journals published in Asia through consulting and sharing information on editing and publishing, and to become a counterpart to existing international science editors' associations.

Many editors of scholarly journals affiliated with small societies work as volunteers while holding another primary job. Few such volunteers can devote themselves fully to editorial work and take editorial positions without adequate professional preparation. From my own experience, I suggest that editors obtain as much new information as possible from various sources, such as EASE, Council of Science Editors, CASE, and other publishing organisations. Additionally, editors must fully grasp the performance metrics of their journals. Any major change in metrics should be detected and proper measures taken at an early stage. Finally, I recommend that editors make both short- and long-term development plans with achievable targets. Periodic checks will show you where you are and where you are heading.