



Preface

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Preface

Section:

Having served on the Editorial Committee of the *Annual Review of Entomology (ARE)* since 2001, it now falls to me and is my great pleasure to write the preface for this issue. As *ARE* is still the most influential and widely used entomological journal on the globe, this is truly an honorable job. For more than 50 years it has devotedly served the broad audience of insect scientists and other entomologists. *ARE* functions as an indispensable source of information for anyone who loves or even hates insects. It is my expectation that its importance, and that of other *Annual Reviews*, will grow in the future. Why? I believe there are several reasons for this. First, the "publish or perish" pressure on the scientific community has led to a vast increase in overall scientific output. This, in combination with the greater availability of all literature through the Internet and search engines that alert us, leads to us being overloaded with research information that is both relevant and irrelevant. How do you select between signal and noise? What is worth exploring? *Annual Reviews* can provide the answer. The reviews are written by authors who have taken the time and have the supremacy to lay out their expert knowledge with vision and authority.

The second reason I think *Annual Reviews* will increase in value is even more fundamental. Science, especially the life sciences, is changing rapidly. Monodisciplinary approaches are no longer de rigueur; interdisciplinary collaborations are in. For example, in ecology, my own research area, a challenging task is to link different levels of biological organization. Using state-of-the-art molecular techniques, ecologists try to connect the functioning of genes to that of individuals in populations, and subsequently to the functioning of entire communities whereby genomics is opening up unlimited new opportunities. We see comparable developments in the field of entomology where insects as study objects have become part of a much broader research agenda, covering a variety of disciplines. *Nature* papers with 28 authors! Get used to it: Future research increasingly demands that entomologists, ecologists, physiologists, geneticists, molecular biologists, mathematicians, and even sociologists work harmoniously together. These are wonderful developments and certainly necessary to solve complex ecological and societal problems, but it calls for major changes in knowledge acquisition: new collaborations, new jargon, broader research interests, and tons of literature. Nobody can grasp it all. Where does one start learning about a novel field? Here again, *Annual Reviews* can provide the answer.

The Editorial Committee of the *ARE* is challenged with the difficult task of making each next volume a success. We do this by inviting authors and by carefully selecting proposals we receive from them, as well as from unsolicited candidates. I am very proud and

privileged to be part of this elite team whose expertise covers the breadth of entomology. I fully enjoy our annual winter meetings, chaired by the ever-inspiring and encyclopedic May Berenbaum. In spring we receive and critically review the manuscripts, and in summer and during conferences we solicit potential contributors.

We are asking a lot from our expert authors: overview, vision, and authority. Not just a description of the contents of a bunch of papers—we disapprove of laundry lists. We want synthesis, a well-balanced view on what is out there, where the research is going, where the lacunas are, the challenges, and the constraints. As an Editorial Committee, we strive to invite or select authors who will deliver these papers. Not an easy process, but I think one that has been successful, judging by the impact factor of the *ARE*, which has increased from 7.250 in 2000 to 9.326 in 2005. In addition, the Editorial Committee has strategically and successfully aimed at increasing input from excellent non-American entomologists, and through this has achieved an enhanced coverage of the crucial literature. As the only European member on the board, I feel this is a special mission. The percentage of non-American authors has increased from 43% in 2000 to 69% in 2005.

Information technology is penetrating all aspects of research and has changed the way we collaborate, conduct our experiments, gather and store data, analyze our (often enormous) datasets, and last but not least, share and communicate our results to colleagues and the general public. So what can a publisher do to facilitate this last process of research information conveyance? The answer is clear: present our publications in a well laid-out fashion and make the content easy to grasp. Use colors and visualizations to facilitate storage in our overloaded brains.

As you have undoubtedly noticed, the present volume lives up to our demands. *ARE* is proud to present Volume 52 in a redesigned format. Even though the most influential and flourishing journal in entomology did not really need rejuvenation, I have the honor to launch this completely newborn, state-of-the-art publishing face. It has a pleasing and fresh new look with many helpful features that include glossary and acronym lists, summary points (which highlight the central points of the chapter), future issues (which note where research may be headed), sidebar (which highlights a related topic), and annotated references. I think they have done an excellent job.

Apologies to those of you that liked the gold-lettered green book, its gone! I have heard—but not experienced—that a face lift on a 51-year-old hurts at first but is soon forgotten. You may need a new bookcase or just enjoy it online. What counts most of all is high-quality content. We thank all authors for their excellent job in producing content that will keep *ARE* in its leading position.

Louise E.M. Vet
For the Editorial Committee

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