

|| ANIMAL – OPEN SPACE

News from *animal – open space*

The winds of change are blowing! When *animal – open space* was launched in June 2021, one of the aims was to propose an alternative to the standard external peer review of manuscripts. We believe that **external peer review** contributes to but is not a guarantee of the quality of a scientific paper. We see this nowadays with papers being published by journals after a peer review of doubtful quality. Open Science thus puts a greater responsibility on the shoulders of readers. Up to now, manuscripts in *animal – open space* were reviewed by scientific editors of the journal who meticulously evaluate the content of the manuscripts, focusing on the reproducibility of the study and the associated data. In accordance to the philosophy of Open Science, the journal set up a post-publication, open commenting process that allows readers to interact with authors through the PUBPEER platform via a link called “DISCUSS THE ARTICLE”. The intention was to encourage an open discussion about the published article and replace the “hidden” reviews done by a couple of peers. Unfortunately, this reader-author interaction has not been widely used. Is the scientific community not ready yet to engage in such an open discussion? Are we too early with this approach? This remains unclear. Nevertheless, in addition to the peer-review, the goal remains to foster an open dialogue between readers and authors regarding the published article.

Authors who published their research results and the associated data in *animal – open space* support the concept of **Open Science** promoted by the journal. However, other authors have been reluctant because their institutions request them to publish research only in journals with an Impact Factor. We recently learned that *animal - open space* is not eligible for an Impact Factors because it does not have implemented an external peer review process. We regret this position, but this is as it stands now. Again, we might have been too early in trying to fully embrace Open Science. Those who rely on metrics probably put too much value on external peer review as a key to scientific quality. Our view is that it is better to have a solid open internal peer review process than to pretend to do this with a non-transparent external peer review process. But we have to face reality. Whether we like it or not, Impact Factor is still perceived as an indicator of the quality of a journal, and having an external peer review is necessary to be eligible for getting one. The journal has therefore decided to add an external peer review process to papers submitted to *animal – open space*. In line with our philosophy, the reviewers’ comments and authors’ response will be accessible to readers as supplementary material with the manuscript. As the editor-in-chief of the journal, I am excited about this new step in the development of *animal - open space*. I hope that all those reading these lines will consider this journal for future publications, especially for types of publications such as DATA PAPERS and METHOD ARTICLES. *animal – open space* will continue offering the possibility to publish not only classical RESEARCH ARTICLES but also DATA PAPERS and METHOD ARTICLES that relate to farmed or other managed animals, leisure and companion animals, and the use of insects for animal feed and human food. By the end of 2023, 54 manuscripts are published, including 5 data papers and 9 method papers. Despite being a new journal in the livestock research field, the articles published in *animal – open space* are well-perceived by the community. Especially encouraging is the fact that DATA PAPERS and METHOD ARTICLES published in 2022 have already been cited in 2023, indicating that these types of articles are highly valued by the research community.

For the first 6 months of 2024, the Article Processing Charges (APC) is waived.

Editor-in-Chief

Giuseppe Bee