

A challenge to members of the Canadian Society of Animal Science

It is with mixed feelings that I address this letter to members of the Canadian Society of Animal Science (CSAS), through the *Canadian Journal of Animal Science (CJAS)*. As a relatively new Associate Editor, however, I feel that my thoughts may invoke action at a number of levels. Thus, I offer this letter with multiple purposes.

First, I would like to express my appreciation for the diligence and vision of the present Editor of *CJAS*, Dr. Al Schaefer, who has initiated ordered changes in the structure, content and timely publication of the journal. Under his leadership, *CJAS* has a new editorial section (Cellular and Molecular Biology), CSAS, via AIC, has initiated electronic publication of the journal, and the time required for peer-review and subsequent publication of submitted papers has decreased substantially. Dr. Schaefer has also started the process to focus all aspects of *CJAS* towards the 21st Century.

It is with the latter thought in mind that I offer my first challenge to the new Editor of *CJAS*, who will be taking over editorial duties at the first of the year 2000. I challenge you to write a perspectives paper in the first issue of your tenure, describing your vision for *CJAS* for the 21st Century. I suggest you address the status of agriculture in Canada, the position of *CJAS* in terms of impact within the world of international animal-related journals, and how you plan on leading *CJAS* to become a much higher impact journal in the few years to come. I would then implore you to hold firm to this vision.

My second challenge is to members of CSAS. I challenge you to not take high impact papers and send them to other journals. Instead, I suggest that you submit them first to *CJAS*. This journal will never become a competitive journal without such support. After looking over the contents of this journal for the past few years, it appears as though (in many cases) the same sorts of research have been done twenty different ways and published in *CJAS*. This must stop. Instead, I challenge those of you with high-risk (futuristic) research to think of *CJAS* first and other journals second.

My third challenge is to Canadian research centers that conduct animal research. While conduct of research that is

purely applied and easily incorporated into a producer's production plan is important, I challenge you to allow basic research, with long-term payoffs, to be conducted. This type of research, which presently is outside the mandates of many Canadian research agencies, represents an investment in *sustained* productivity. I suggest that a scientist's creativity will soon dry-up if he/she is always looking to conduct research that will result in some sort of patent. Alternatively, I suggest that scientists be allowed to pursue risky ideas that may lead to major scientific breakthroughs, or long-term projects that may lead to, or be incorporated in, new production regimens in the future.

My final challenge is to CSAS members in Canadian Universities. I challenge you to make partners with those scientists in other Canadian research agencies, as well as in the United States or other countries. With research dollars drying up, and technology becoming unwieldy, formation of research "teams" will facilitate the conduct of 21st Century-type research, increase the productivity of members of the "team," and lead to breakthroughs that may have never been thought of by an individual alone. The idea of an individual retaining research ideas to protect potential funding opportunities is outdated. Now is the time to reinvest in potential progress, rather than ego.

As an Associate Editor, I offer these challenges with the hope that the 21st Century brings substantial changes to the perception of research being conducted in animal agriculture in Canada and published in *CJAS*. Further, I suggest that if these challenges are even remotely adopted by a reader of this letter, then *CJAS* will profit. Finally, as the 21st Century draws near, I offer my support to CSAS and *CJAS* to insure that papers I am delegated to supervise through the peer review process be consistent with the challenges I have offered.

Dr. Michael V. Dodson
Washington State University
Pullman, Washington
Associate Editor, Cellular and Molecular Biology