

EDITORIAL 2

Handling Comments, Replies and Responses to Published Papers

An area of frequent uncertainty in scientific journals is the editorial policy for handling comments and further responses directed toward an earlier published paper. The Editors of the *Journal of Applied Meteorology* encourage commentary on any prior papers which have flaws or can be materially supported or enhanced with added information. However, such comments, ensuing replies to the comments and subsequent responses, can be the source of agitation, confusion and unhappiness. The Editors of JAM have developed a procedure to follow in the handling of comments and replies.

A "comment" is defined as a relatively short paper offering criticism, supplementary material or approval of findings in previously published JAM paper(s). In general, for a manuscript to be considered as a comment on a published article, the manuscript must be offered within two years after publication of the original article. After two years, the findings of the original paper may be somewhat outdated or superseded and the comments may not be realistic or even appropriate.

When a comment is received, the Chief Editor will route it to the topical Editor who handled the original paper. That Editor can decide whether, in the interests of time and in consideration of the content, to review the comment himself or to seek outside reviews. After the Editor judges the comment to be acceptable (which can be after revision and any subsequent editing), the Editor will send a copy to the author (only the senior author of a multi-authored paper) of the paper commented upon for information and possible action.

The author(s) of the original paper will then have two months from the date of the Editor's letter to prepare and submit a "reply" to the comment. This time limit applies only if the author wishes to reply and to have it appear with the comment in the same issue of the JOURNAL. The reply will be quickly reviewed by the Editor involved (who has held the comment for two months). The reply will not be accepted for publication without editorial review and consideration.

If a reply is submitted to JAM by the original author *after* two months of being informed by the Editor, it would, if it is acceptable to the Editor, appear in a later issue of JAM. However, no reply to a comment-focused paper will be considered for publication if it is submitted more than 12 months after the comment is accepted for publication.

In the interests of space and reasonable scientific development, the Editors will not accept any further (fourth round) responses or second comments, either by the commentors or by the authors of the original paper. Thus, the limit to most discussions will consist of 1) the original paper (author A), 2) a comment on it within 2 years (author B), and 3) a reply within 1 year of comment (by author A). In other words, the author of the original paper will have the last opportunity.

If two or more different comments on a single paper are submitted at about the same time, each comment will be considered for publication if the Editor believes the points are sufficiently different to justify individual publication. If their contents are judged to be quite similar, the Editor can choose for publication the comment received first and reject the later one(s). In any case, the author of the original paper will be informed by the Editor and allowed to review and reply to all comments accepted for publication. The author will be encouraged to combine his replies to all comments into a single reply.

The Editor who handled the review and acceptance decision of the original paper will be responsible for the comments and the replies that address that paper. However, the Chief Editor reserves the right to intercede and adjust any of the above guidelines. Everyone should recognize that because of the frequent unusual circumstances involved in controversy over scientific articles, such guidelines must be somewhat flexible because of timing or other unforeseen circumstances.

Stanley A. Changnon, Jr.

Editorial on Reviewers

The quality of the articles appearing in the *Journal of Applied Meteorology* is heavily dependent on the voluntary reviews by hundreds of dedicated scientists. The editors of JAM appreciate this effort and we hope the authors and entire membership of the Society recognize the time and effort given freely to improving many papers and to sustaining the quality of this JOURNAL.

In an effort to partially recognize these contributions, we have listed below the names of those who were solicited and returned reviews of one or more papers for JAM during 1977. We hope our system has not erroneously omitted anyone and beg your indulgence if your name is omitted. It should be noted that these are reviewers that served the new editorial staff (Changnon, Semonin, Hales, McQuigg and Silverman). Any reviewers in 1977 who assisted the previous editor, Dr. Robert Rapp, are not listed because we have no records of these activities.

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