

## Features and Plant Health Strategies

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Every once in a while, an idea comes along at the right time and the right place to have considerable value and impact on the future. That is my interpretation of what has happened with the Features that appear regularly in *PLANT DISEASE*. I know the majority of you agree, because you check Features first when the new issue arrives on your desk. I hope to strengthen your interest by telling you how Features come about and what they are intended to do. Then I want to tell you about another challenging idea

whose time, the *PLANT DISEASE* Editorial Advisory Board believes, has come!

*PLANT DISEASE* was born to serve applied plant pathology, not just through routine—though important—publication of research articles, but through other types of articles permitting exchanges of information that evolves over time through combinations of experience, research, and observations. That is what Features strive to do—they are solicited narratives stressing the uniqueness, successes, and practical applications of some subject within plant pathology. The authors are expected to have considerable experience with the subjects and be willing to share their insights and perceptions as appropriate, to breathe life into the articles and give them special meaning. We have been fortunate with our writers—nearly 200 to date—for most of them have done an excellent job of educating us through their articles.

It is fair to say that most of us are not trained to write this kind of article, so some adjustments are necessary. Features are not literature reviews or heavily documented technical papers. They are likely to be used by teachers and by others (both inside and outside plant pathology) wanting to be up-to-date on certain practical subjects. The blend of informal writing, color illustrations, and timely topics has indeed given our Features a trademark of quality and significance.

You may be interested to know the general distribution of subjects covered during the first 3½ years of the journal's existence. Some 19 of the first 114 articles through March 1983 emphasized chemical control, 9 others could be called biological control articles, 13 dealt primarily with cultural control, another 9 could be classified as genetic control articles, and 3 dealt with regulatory matters. Diseases related to at least 29 different crops have been discussed. Of articles emphasizing pathogens, the majority have been fungal, but 8 dealt with bacteria, 17 with viruses, and 10 with nematodes. Other incitants have been included.

But, "applied" and "practical" are liberally interpreted. Several articles have shared information on teaching methods, organizations, and institutions. Some recent articles have also

enlightened "practitioners" with new techniques and new pathogens.

*PLANT DISEASE* is an international journal of applied plant pathology. Twenty-one of the first 114 articles were prepared by authors outside the United States.

A good balance of subjects and authors will continue to make the journal of greater value to all of us. *We welcome your suggestions for topics and/or authors.* Drop us a note or give us a call—maybe the reason a favorite subject of yours has not appeared to date is because it has not been considered! Some of our very best articles have come to us via this route.

While the Board is pleased with the Features thus far, a gap remains within the journal that has been difficult to fill. We expect to overcome the problem with the creation of a new section entitled "Plant Health Strategies." As the name suggests, procedures for promoting plant health and for preventing, controlling, and managing plant diseases will be emphasized.

Unlike Features, which are invited papers, articles for *Plant Health Strategies* are submitted without solicitation, just as research papers are. Growers Page is being replaced by the new section. Growers Page has been popular but, frankly, has placed a heavy burden on a few writers while failing to bridge the gap between research articles and Features—the type of article many believe either is not being published or is being distributed only through extension or grower news outlets. We are not looking for chemical evaluation studies—there is already an outlet for them. But, plant disease control success stories, including interdisciplinary approaches, properly documented and prepared, would be appropriate, for instance, and may help achieve the goal of reaching additional readers in the plant health field that the APS Long-Range Planning Committee recently set forth for *PLANT DISEASE* (66:535). Strategies for making theoretical control measures work, perhaps a combination of the chemical, cultural, and nutritional recommendations along with economic and political considerations, are other possibilities.

Guidelines for *Plant Health Strategies* were published in the July 1983 issue of *Phytopathology News*. We know that many of you have useful information in your files that needs to be made available to others, not only to share your specific knowledge and experience but also to give a big assist to the developing field of plant health. Two reviewers will examine manuscripts for appropriateness of subject matter, clarity and analysis of the problem and the approach, and adequacy and reasonableness of results and interpretation. We do not intend this section to be a repository for "inferior" research papers or a broader outlet for traditional extension publications. We know we will have to grow and learn with this new section, just as we did a few years ago with the advent of Features and 75 years ago when research articles came into being. The year of our 75th anniversary seems a fitting time to launch *Plant Health Strategies*. We hope you are supportive and *we hope you will begin planning now to become an active contributor to this new section!*

*Plant Health Strategies* is introduced in this issue (page 1047). We thank those who developed the first articles for us. Whether the section continues is up to you.