

JOURNALS ETHICAL STANDARDS

All authors, reviewers, and editors and co-editors are required to conform to the following ethical rules. In case of any doubts regarding the Ethical Standards, do not hesitate to contact the Executive Editors of the journal *Agricultura Tropica et Subtropica* (ATS).

The ATS's Ethical Standards are in accordance with the COPE standards (<https://1url.cz/CeRKq>), particularly the Code of Conduct and Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors.

The ATS is the GDPR's personal data controller. In connection with the editorial processes, these are personal data (name, surname, degree, institution, email address, and dedication) of authors, lecturers, editors, and associate editors, which are processed only to a necessary extent. ATS is obliged to monitor not only the type of recorded personal data, but also the purpose for which the data are recorded, processed and transferred to other entities, and for what purpose those entities will use them. The purpose of the processing of personal data within the ATS is to ensure an independent assessment of the quality of the scientific article.

Authors' Responsibilities:

The Authors are expected to be aware of, and comply with the best practice in publication ethics, especially with regard of authorship, dual submission, plagiarism, figure manipulation, competing interests, and compliance with the standards of research ethics.

- The Author(s) must carefully read and then follow the **Instructions for Authors** before the submission of the manuscript.
- The Author(s) must provide three declaration documents: 1) **Declaration of Authorship** (<https://1url.cz/feRKu>; that the submitted manuscript or any of its parts is currently not being considered for publication elsewhere or has already been published, or, if so, the relevant works must be cited in the manuscript), 2) **Open Access Licence** (<https://1url.cz/2eRK1>), and 3) **ATS Submission Form** (<https://1url.cz/OeRKJ>).
- The Author(s) must ensure that the manuscript is original, prepared to a high scholarly standard and fully referenced using the prescribed referencing convention.
- The Authors must ensure that all authors participated actively in the manuscript preparation and contributed substantially to study planning, data collection or interpretation of results and wrote or critically revised the manuscript and approved its final submitted version.
- The Authors must ensure that all persons listed as authors of the manuscript are aware of and have agreed to be listed, and no person who meets the authorship criteria has been omitted.
- The Author(s) must ensure that all the Authors participating in the preparation and writing of the manuscript agree to the manuscript publication in the journal any amendments arising from the peer review, and that the names of the Authors, their affiliations and the email address of the corresponding author will be published together with the article.

- The Author(s) must accurately acknowledge the funding sources related to the submitted manuscript.
- The Author(s) must carefully read all the conditions included in the copyright form and to accept the copyright during the submission process.
- The Author(s) must declare that all the data used in the manuscript were acquired following the ethical research standards. They must ensure that all the experiments performed comply with the current laws and regulations and World Medical Association (WMA; <https://1url.cz/zedPo>) relating to the transport, housing and use of animals in research, if applicable.
- The Author(s) must declare any potential conflict of interest at any state during the publication process.
- The Author(s) must cooperate with the editors in the correction or retraction of the manuscript if necessary.
- The Author(s) must immediately inform the editors whenever any obvious error in the published manuscript is identified.
- The article must always be formatted according to the ATS's requirements before the first insertion into the system. Should the article fail to comply with the editorial guidelines, it may be rejected by the Editor of the ATS.
- The Author(s) must indicate use of generative AI to draft text, generate hypotheses, write or debug code for data analysis, translate extensive text from another language, or create/modify figures, diagrams, and images.

Obligations of Editors-in-Chief and Associate Editors:

- The Editor-in-Chief and Associate Editors are appointed by the Rector of the Mendel University in Brno, Czech Republic. The Editor-in-Chief is subordinate to the Publishing Board. The Associate Editors are subordinate to the Editor-in-Chief.
- The Editor-in-Chief holds ultimate responsibility for the editorial direction, content, and integrity of ATS and has the authority to approve the submitted publication or reject it (refers to the first evaluation of the manuscript after its submission).
- To ensure a timely, rigorous, and expert peer-review process, the Editor-in-Chief regularly delegates operational and decision-making authority to Associate Editors (based on their specific disciplinary expertise, methodological background, or geographic region). This policy outlines the framework for routine delegation and the strict protocols required for ethical recusals.
- Upon assignment, the Associate Editor acts as the "Handling Editor" for the manuscript. They are responsible for conducting initial desk screenings, securing independent peer reviewers, assessing reviewer feedback, and communicating with authors regarding revisions. Under routine delegation, the Associate Editor provides a formal publication recommendation. The Editor-in-Chief retains final authority to approve or reject the manuscript, ensuring overall balance and scope.

- The Editor, Associate Editor, and Editors are required to avoid any conflict of interest.
- To ensure absolute impartiality and transparency, editorial responsibility must be fully and independently delegated to an Associate Editor whenever the Editor-in-Chief faces a real or perceived conflict of interest. A conflict of interest exists if a submission is authored or co-authored by: **1)** The Editor-in-Chief, **2)** a current or recent (within the past three years) research collaborator or co-author of the Editor-in-Chief, **3)** a close personal relation or family member of the Editor-in-Chief, **4)** the editorial staff must excuse themselves from processing any manuscript if they have any conflict of interest with any of the authors or institutions related to the manuscript.
- Protocols for Conflict-of-Interest Delegation: **1)** the Editor-in-Chief must recuse themselves immediately upon submission. They will not be involved in selecting reviewers, viewing reviewer identities, or accessing editorial discussions regarding the manuscript; **2)** The delegated Associate Editor is granted sole and absolute decision-making authority for the manuscript. Their final decision to accept or reject the paper is binding and cannot be reviewed, altered, or overridden by the Editor-in-Chief.
- Associate Editors acting under delegated authority are bound by the same ethical standards as the Editor-in-Chief, in strict alignment with the guidelines set forth by the COPE (<https://1url.cz/CeRKq>). If a delegated Associate Editor identifies a conflict of interest with an assigned manuscript, they must decline the assignment immediately so that the Editor-in-Chief can reassign the piece to an alternative, neutral member of the Editorial Board.
- The Editor (both Editor-in-Chief and Associate Editors) must confirm the receipt of the submitted manuscript within ten working days and ensure an efficient, fair and timely review process.
- The Editor makes editorial decisions promptly and will communicate them clearly and constructively.
- The Editor must identify the manuscripts that are fully within the scope and aim of the ATS.
- The Editor must treat all the submitted manuscripts equally, irrespective of the race, gender, religious belief, ethnic origin, citizenship or political philosophy of the Author(s).
- The Editor must approve the review process and publication of manuscripts of the highest quality only.
- The Editor and the editorial staff will not disclose any information about a manuscript under consideration or its disposition to anyone other than those from whom professional advice is sought.
- The Editor must respect the intellectual independence of Author(s).

- The Editor must ensure a minimum of two relevant reviewers for every article (applies to the manuscript that successfully passed the initial technical review and has been approved by the Editor only) submitted. To ensure objectivity in case of conflicting reviewers' comments, the manuscript must be reviewed by a third independent reviewer from another institution, or the Editor must decide as the third reviewer. As relevant can only be considered a review which is written in English and contains at least a brief statement about article orientation, originality and scientific / research value, article goal, methodology, achieved results, discussion, references and quality of professional English. The Editor must appoint appropriate reviewers for the manuscript (which has been approved for the review process), considering the area of expertise of the reviewer.
- The Editor must assign the reviewers carefully. For the proper ways how to spot potential manipulation of the peer review process see the COPE Flowchart (<https://publicationethics.org/guidance/flowchart/all-flowcharts>)
- The Editor must ensure all the reviewers' identities are kept confidential. Applies to the manuscript that successfully passed the initial technical review and has been approved by the Editor only.
- The Editor must not use any part of the content of the submitted manuscript for his or her own future research, as the submitted manuscript has not been published yet, except with the consent of the author.
- The Editor must respond immediately and take proper action when an ethical problem occurs concerning a submitted or published manuscript.
- The Editor must follow the COPE flowcharts (<https://publicationethics.org/guidance/flowchart/all-flowcharts>) in cases of suspected misconduct or disputed authorship.

Review Process:

The ATS journal review process is a “**single blind**” process, which means that the reviewers' identities are concealed throughout the review process. The reviewers are assigned by the Editor of the ATS or Associate Editor, the suggestions for the reviewers may come from the authors (at the time of the manuscript submission, they suggest at least three potential reviewers) and from other assigned reviewers. The assignment of reviewers by the Editor or Associate Editor is subject to control or even control by individual responsible Editors, who check that there is no conflict of interest. Any suspicion of conflict of interest is immediately reported to the Publishing Board.

Reviewers' Responsibilities:

- The Reviewer(s) must only agree to review the manuscripts for which they have the subject matter expertise required to carry out a proper assessment and which they can assess promptly.
- The Reviewer(s), after receiving the invitation to review the manuscript, must immediately notify the Editor(s) whenever he or she feels unqualified to review the

assigned manuscript or see difficulties to meet the deadline for the completion of the review. After the article has been accepted, the Reviewer(s) must prepare the review within 3 months at the latest.

- Reviews written by Editors, Associate Editors and Reviewers must always be written in English and must contain comments on article orientation, originality and scientific / research value, article goal, methodology, achieved results, discussion, references and quality of professional English.
- The Reviewer(s) must inform the Editor(s) if there is any possible conflict of interest related to the assigned manuscript. For example, in case the reviewer is invited to review the manuscript of his or her colleague from the same institution etc.
- In case the Reviewer(s) cannot review the manuscript, he or she is asked to suggest another expert from the field of expertise. However, he or she must not delegate the review to his or her colleagues without notifying the Editor(s).
- The Reviewer(s) must confidentially treat the manuscript and not use any part of the content of the reviewed manuscript for their future research, as the reviewing manuscript is not published yet.
- The main task of the Reviewer(s) is to help improve the quality of the manuscript with the appropriate care and attention, review the manuscript objectively and be constructively critical.
- The Reviewer(s) must inform the Editor(s) whenever he or she finds similarities between the reviewed manuscript and another article, either published or under consideration by another journal.

Procedures for Dealing with Unethical Behaviour:

All allegations of ethical misconduct are taken seriously, and a full investigation will take place. All suspected ethical misconduct will be addressed according to the Core Practices and COPE flowcharts (<https://publicationethics.org/guidance/flowchart/all-flowchartsrecommendations>).

Identification of Unethical Behaviour:

- Misconduct and unethical behaviour may be identified and brought to the attention of the Editor(s) and Publisher at any time, by anyone.
- Whoever informs the Editor or Publisher of such conduct must provide sufficient information and proof for the matter to be investigated. All allegations will be taken seriously and treated equally until an appropriate decision or solution is reached.

Investigation and Resolution:

The Editor is obliged to take appropriate action in case any suspicion of any misconduct is discovered and reported by anyone. He/she may discuss his/her decision with the Publisher if

required. This obligation is applicable to both published and unpublished articles. The Editor(s) and Reviewer(s) must prepare review comments which have an educational rather than punitive effect.

Minor Breaches:

- Minor misconduct should be dealt without the need to be consulted more deeply. In any event, the Author(s) must be allowed to respond to any allegations and must be given the chance for a reasonable explanation.

Serious Breaches:

- Serious misconduct might require that the Employer(s) of the Accused be informed. The Editor(s), in consultation with the Publisher, must make the decision whether to involve the Employer(s), either by examining the available evidence themselves or by further consultation with a limited number of experts.

Final resolutions (in increasing order of severity) may be applied individually or in conjunction with:

- informing and educating the Author(s) or Reviewer(s) where a misunderstanding or misapplication of acceptable ethical standards is significant;
- a more detailed warning letter to the Author(s) or Reviewer(s) covering the misconduct to inform about the possible future consequences;
- publication of an editorial detailing the misconduct;
- sending an official letter to the Head of the Author's or Reviewer's department or funding institution;
- formal retraction or withdrawal of a publication from the ATS, in conjunction with informing the Head of the Author or Reviewer's department, Abstracting & Indexing services and the readership of the publication. Imposing a formal embargo on contributions from an individual for a certain period;
- reporting the case and outcome to a professional organisation or a higher authority for further investigation and action.

Authorship:

The authors of the manuscripts submitted to the ATS journal must fulfil all the following criteria:

1. Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of the data for the work; AND
2. Drafting the work or critically revising it for important intellectual content; AND
3. Final approval of the version to be published; AND
4. Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

Contributors who meet fewer than all **four** of the above criteria for authorship should not be listed as authors, but they should be acknowledged.

Authors are expected to carefully consider the list and order of the authors before submitting their manuscript and provide the definitive list of authors at the time of the original submission.

Any addition, deletion or rearrangement of author names in the authorship list should only be made before the manuscript has been accepted and only if approved by the ATS journal Editor. To request such a change, the Editor must receive the following from the corresponding author or authors: **(a)** the reason for the change in the author list and **(b)** written confirmation (e-mail, letter) from all the authors that they agree with the addition, removal or rearrangement.

In the case of the addition or removal of an author or authors, this includes confirmation from the author or authors being added or removed. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Editor consider the addition, deletion or rearrangement of the authors after the manuscript has been accepted. While the Editor considers the request, the publication of the manuscript will be suspended. If the manuscript has already been published in an online issue, any requests approved by the Editor will result in a corrigendum.

Conflict of Interest:

All the authors must disclose any financial and personal relationships with other people or organisations that could inappropriately influence (bias) their work. Examples of potential competing interests include employment, consultancies, stock ownership, honoraria, paid expert testimony, patent applications/registrations, and grants or other funding. Authors must disclose any interests: A summary declaration of interest statement must be listed in the title page file.

Care and Use of Animals:

The ATS requires all research animal activity to be performed in compliance with national and local laws and regulations, following ethical rules. The authors should state explicitly that institutional animal care and use approval was obtained before the commencement of the study. Authors should make it clear that experiments were conducted in a manner that avoided unnecessary discomfort to the animals using proper management and laboratory techniques. Methods of euthanasia must be described; types and dosage of the anaesthetic agents must be specified. Experiments should be conducted in accordance with the principles and specific guidelines presented for example at http://www.who.int/tdr/publications/laboratory_practice/en.

Conflict of Interest:

Any conflict of interest must be declared.

Appealing Against Rejection from the ATS Journal:

The authors have the right to appeal against rejection from the ATS. To lodge an appeal, please contact the Chairman of the ATS's Editorial Board.

To be considered, appeals must directly address the reasons given for the initial rejection decision. If referee reports were included with the rejection letter, then these criticisms must be responded to in the appeal. Appeals that do not address the reviewers' criticisms, or which dismiss them out of hand, will not be considered.

Appeals are then sent to the Editor of the ATS for consideration. More complicated cases might be passed to the Editorial Board. If successful, an appeal can lead to the article's review being resumed. The article may ultimately be published following any revisions the Editor feels are necessary. However, if the appeal is rejected, then the original rejection decision is upheld, and no further consideration of that article is possible.

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