**Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement**

For all parties involved in the act of publishing (the author, the journal editor(s), the peer reviewer and the publisher) it is necessary to agree upon standards of expected ethical behavior. The ethics statements for *Rural Sustainability Research* are based on the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors.

**Editor Responsibilities**

**Accountability**

The editor of a peer-reviewed journal is responsible for deciding which articles submitted to the journal should be published, and, moreover, is accountable for everything published in the journal. In making these decisions, the editor may be guided by the policies of the journal’s editorial board as well as by legal requirements regarding libel, copyright infringement and plagiarism. The editor may confer with other editors or reviewers when making publication decisions. The editor should maintain the integrity of the academic record, preclude business needs from compromising intellectual and ethical standards, and always be willing to publish corrections, clarifications, retractions and apologies when needed.

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The editor should evaluate manuscripts for intellectual content without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, ethnic origin, citizenship, or political philosophy of the author(s). The editor will not disclose any information about a manuscript under consideration to anyone other than the author(s), reviewers and potential reviewers, and in some instances the editorial board members, as appropriate.

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The editor and any editorial staff must not disclose any information about a submitted manuscript to anyone other than the corresponding author, reviewers, potential reviewers, other editorial advisers, and the publisher, as appropriate.

**Disclosure, conflicts of interest, and other issues**

The editor will be guided by COPE’sGuidelines for Retracting Articles when considering retracting, issuing expressions of concern about, and issuing corrections pertaining to articles that have been published in *Rural Sustainability Research*.

Unpublished materials disclosed in a submitted manuscript must not be used in an editor’s own research without the express written consent of the author. Privileged information or ideas obtained through peer review must be kept confidential and not used for personal advantage.

The editor is committed to ensuring that advertising, reprint or other commercial revenue has no impact or influence on editorial decisions.

The editor should seek to ensure a fair and appropriate peer review process. Editors should recuse themselves (i.e. should ask a co-editor, associate editor or other member of the editorial board instead to review and consider) from considering manuscripts in which they have conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships or connections with any of the authors, companies, or (possibly) institutions connected to the papers. Editors should require all contributors to disclose relevant competing interests and publish corrections if competing interests are revealed after publication. If needed, other appropriate action should be taken, such as the publication of a retraction or expression of concern.

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Editors should guard the integrity of the published record by issuing corrections and retractions when needed and pursuing suspected or alleged research and publication misconduct. Editors should pursue reviewer and editorial misconduct. An editor should take reasonably responsive measures when ethical complaints have been presented concerning a submitted manuscript or published paper.

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Peer review assists the editor in making editorial decisions and, through the editorial communication with the author, may also assist the author in improving the manuscript.

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Any invited referee who feels unqualified to review the research reported in a manuscript or knows that its timely review will be impossible should immediately notify the editor so that alternative reviewers can be contacted.

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Reviews should be conducted objectively. Personal criticism of the author is inacceptable. Referees should express their views clearly with appropriate supporting arguments.

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Reviewers should identify relevant published work that has not been cited by the authors. Any statement that an observation, derivation, or argument had been previously reported should be accompanied by the relevant citation. A reviewer should also call to the editor's attention any substantial similarity or overlap between the manuscript under consideration and any other published data of which they have personal knowledge.

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Authors reporting results of original research should present an accurate account of the work performed as well as an objective discussion of its significance. Underlying data should be represented accurately in the manuscript. A paper should contain sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the work. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behavior and are unacceptable.

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The authors should ensure that they have written entirely original works, and if the authors have used the work and/or words of others that this has been appropriately cited or quoted.

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An author should not in general publish manuscripts describing essentially the same research in more than one journal or primary publication. Parallel submission of the same manuscript to more than one journal constitutes unethical publishing behavior and is unacceptable.

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Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the reported study. All those who have made significant contributions should be listed as co-authors. Where there are others who have participated in certain substantive aspects of the research project, they should be named in an Acknowledgement section.

The corresponding author should ensure that all appropriate co-authors (according to the above definition) and no inappropriate co-authors are included in the author list of the manuscript, and that all co-authors have seen and approved the final version of the paper and have agreed to its submission for publication.

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All authors should disclose in their manuscript any financial or other substantive conflict of interest that might be construed to influence the results or their interpretation in the manuscript. All sources of financial support for the project should be disclosed.

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