

## Preamble

# 50 years publishing on tropical forages - from *Tropical Grasslands* and *Pasturas Tropicales* to *Tropical Grasslands-Forrajés Tropicales*

MICHAEL PETERS<sup>1</sup>, ROBERT CLEMENTS<sup>2</sup>, JOSÉ LUIS URREA-BENITEZ<sup>3</sup> AND LIU GUODAO<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), Nairobi, Kenya.

<sup>2</sup>Consultant.

<sup>3</sup>International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), Cali, Colombia.

<sup>4</sup>Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences (CATAS), Hainan, PR China.

## Creation of Tropical Grasslands-Forrajés Tropicales

The online journal *Tropical Grasslands-Forrajés Tropicales* (ISSN official abbreviation *Trop. Grassl.-Forrajés Trop.*) was created in 2012 as a successor to the former journals, *Tropical Grasslands*, published during 1967–2010 by the Tropical Grassland Society of Australia Inc., and *Pasturas Tropicales*, published during 1979–2007 by the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). *Tropical Grasslands* was an important vehicle for disseminating the work of authors from all countries on research and development in the assessment, management and utilization of pastures and fodder crops in tropical agriculture, as well as reviews in these topics ([Pulsford 2010](#)). During the 44 years of production, 160 issues were produced, 18 of which were proceedings of conferences on tropical pastures ([Tropical Grasslands 2010](#)). On the other hand, *Pasturas Tropicales*, directed at Spanish speakers and focusing initially for Latin American audiences was first published as *Pastos Tropicales*, being essentially a newsletter. Scientific publication became increasingly important for the journal and from 1986, its 8<sup>th</sup> volume, the name was changed to *Pasturas Tropicales*, which was published as an imprint journal until 2007.

The name of the new journal *Tropical Grasslands-Forrajés Tropicales* indicates both its bilingualism (English or Spanish, with abstracts in both languages) and the desire to continue the tradition of both former journals ([Schultze-Kraft et al. 2013](#)).

The initial steps to establish the journal were made possible through a seed money grant received from an anonymous donor in memory of Dr. José M. Toledo, leader of the former CIAT Tropical Pastures Program in the 1980s. During the 5-year period 2013–2017, the journal was sponsored by grants from the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences (CATAS) and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR). Since 2019, CATAS has been the

sole sponsor and co-publisher. An official foundation ceremony was held at CATAS on 13 December 2012 in Danzhou, Hainan, PR China. CATAS has continuously afforded grant support since 2013 and the journal is currently published in association with CATAS. This allows publication without any article submission and processing charges. Dr. Liu Guodao, CATAS Vice president serves as co-chair of the Management Committee, and and Dr. Huan Hengfu, CATAS Senior researcher, serve as member of the Journal Editorial Board.

The inaugural issue of the journal was presented at the 22nd International Grassland Congress, 15–19 September 2013 in Sydney, Australia ([Schultze-Kraft et al. 2013](#)), and was the result of a co-publication agreement with the Organizing Committee. It contained those papers relevant to tropical pastures and forages that were presented at the Congress, including keynote papers, presented papers and poster papers.

## Characteristics of the journal

The main features of the journal are that it is international, published online only, open access (no charges for subscription or publication fees), bilingual (English and Spanish), peer reviewed and guided by an Editorial Board composed of the world's leading tropical forage scientists. Further information on the journal is available at its website ([www.tropicalgrasslands.info](http://www.tropicalgrasslands.info)). All issues of the former journals *Tropical Grasslands* and *Pasturas Tropicales* can also be accessed there. *Tropical Grasslands-Forrajés Tropicales* follows the publication series of the Australian CSIRO *Tropical Agriculture Genetic Resources Communication* (ISSN 0159-6071) published during 1980–2000. By kind permission of CSIRO, the issues that deal with (sub)tropical forages can be accessed on the website as well.

The journal is published every four months by CIAT in Cali, Colombia, with three issues: the first published

on January 30<sup>th</sup>, the second published on May 31<sup>st</sup> and the third published on September 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **The editors Lyle Winks and Rainer Schultze-Kraft**

Since its inception *Tropical Grasslands-Forrajés Tropicales* has counted on two dedicated editors, Rainer Schultze-Kraft and Lyle Winks. Without their dedication, ideas and work ethics for almost 10 years the creation and continuity of the journal, with increasing standards and distribution would not have been possible.

**Prof. Dr. Rainer Schultze-Kraft** is a forage scientist with 50 years of experience. Receiving his PhD on forages from the University of Giessen, Germany in the 70s, he moved on to CIAT working on forages until the late 80s. After that he received a call from the University of Hohenheim, Germany, to continue his academic work on tropical forages there until his retirement in the early 2000s, when he became a CIAT Emeritus Scientist. His work on tropical forages - with a focus on tropical forage legumes - has received worldwide scientific recognition across the tropics in Asia, Africa and the Americas. He acted as Managing and Spanish Editor of the journal.

**Lyle Winks** is an agricultural scientist, who specialised in ruminant nutrition and worked as a researcher in the Queensland Department of Primary Industries (QDPI) for almost 30 years. He published numerous papers on pasture-based beef production in north Queensland, and became Director of the Beef Cattle Husbandry Branch of QDPI (1984-92), supervising its research throughout the State. From 1992-2010 he was the Editor of *Tropical Grasslands*, publishing 18 volumes (74 issues) during that time. He currently runs a beef production enterprise in SE Queensland. He acted as English Editor of the journal.

### **Current status of the journal**

By June 2021, *Tropical Grasslands-Forrajés Tropicales* had published 334 papers. These included 177 in special issues (115 contributions to the International Grassland Congress 2013 and 62 contributions to the International Leucaena Conference 2018) and 157 in regular issues.

The journal is indexed in all major abstract and citation databases of peer-reviewed literature. The Journal is indexed in the core collection of Science Citation Index Expanded and two additional indexes of Clarivate Web of Science, which provides the best-known impact factor indicator (formerly: ISI Journal Impact Factor). The current Journal Impact Factor is 0.611 (2020) and 0.897

(5-yr IF). The journal is also indexed in Scopus, and the CiteScore for 2020 was 1.50, making considerable progress since 2017 (0.90), 2018 (1.00) and 2019 (1.30). CiteScore is the way Scopus measures the impact of its indexed journals. The SCImago Journal & Country Rank is a portal that includes the journals and country scientific indicators developed from the information contained in the Scopus® database (Elsevier B.V.). These indicators can be used to assess and analyze scientific domains. For 2020, the Journal had a score of 0.26, and in 2019 was ranked in the second highest value amongst the set of agronomy journals ranked by Scimago Journal Rank (Q2).

Since 2018, the Journal is indexed in SciELO, a bibliographic database, digital library, and cooperative electronic publishing model of open access journals. SciELO was created to meet the scientific communication needs of developing countries (with a focus on Latin America) and provides an efficient way to increase visibility and access to scientific literature. In 2019, the Journal was included in the National Bibliographic Index (Publindex) of the Colombian Ministry of Science Technology and Innovation, based on indicators and standards of scientific quality at the international level. In the 2020 classification the journal was ranked as “A2”, in accordance with the fulfillment of the internationally recognized evaluation criteria for scientific publications related to the processes of editorial management, evaluation, visibility and impact. In 2019, the Journal was also included in the Regional Online Information System for Scientific Journals of Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal (Latindex), a network of institutions that work jointly to gather and disseminate information of serial scientific publications produced in Latin America.

SHERPA RoMEO (S/R) is an online resource that aggregates and analyzes publisher open access policies from around the world, and uses different colors to help highlight publisher's archiving policies. In 2018, the journal reached the classification as a RoMEO Green Journal, the highest open access category. Updated annually, the Information Matrix for Journal Analysis (MIAR in Spanish) database gathers key information for the identification and analysis of journals. The system creates a correspondence matrix between the journals and the databases and repositories that index or include them. The ICDS (Composite Index of Secondary Dissemination in Spanish) is an indicator that shows the visibility of the journal in different scientific databases of international scope. A high ICDS means that the journal

is present in different information sources of international relevance. The ICDS 2020 was 10.3. The Journal is also accepted/registered in several major databases/networks (EBSCO, ROAD, AGRIS, CABI, DOAJ and Google Scholar), by which international visibility is increased. The Journal's current Google Scholar h-index is 20; the i10-index is 50.

### Authors

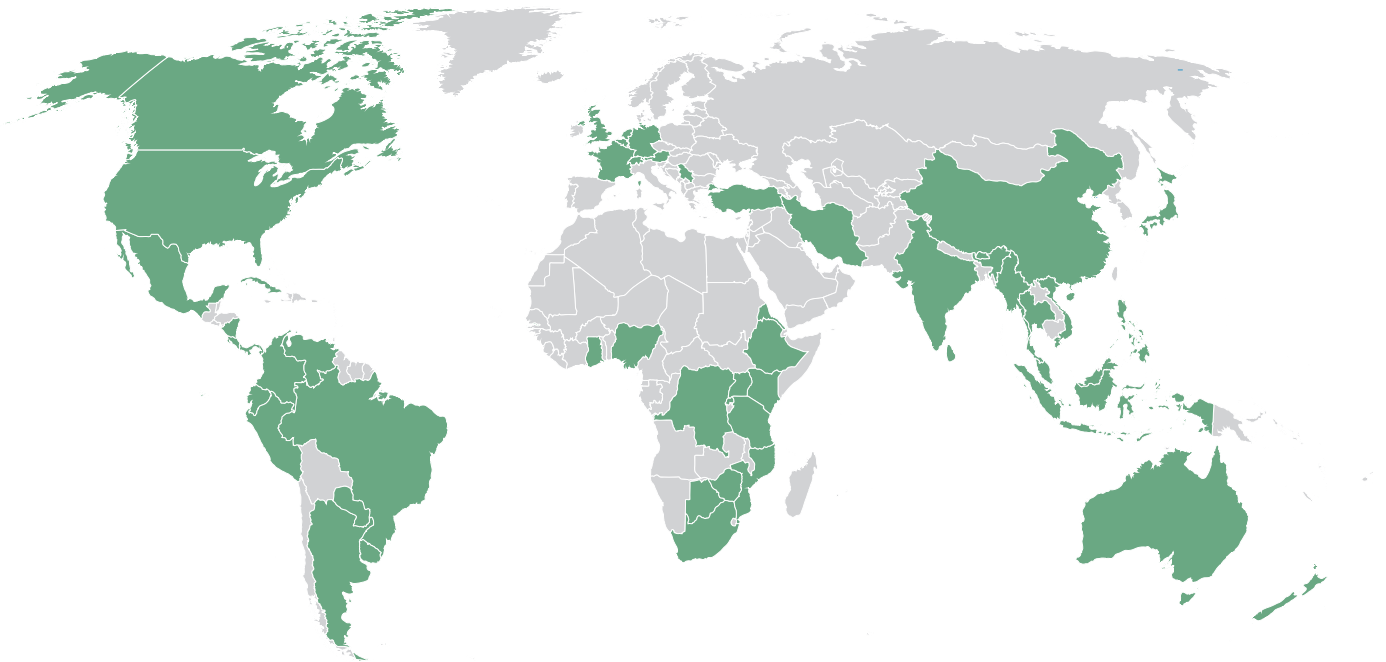
With the mission of providing high-quality tropical forage knowledge to a wide group of stakeholders in the tropics and making it accessible to the less developed countries ([Urrea-Benítez et al. 2020](#)), 78% of the 1,837 authors who have published in the journal so far are from the global tropics (Africa, Asia, Latin America). The authors came from 52 countries (Figure 1).

### Reception Web metrics

The number of total visits and the number of unique visitors to its website have been increasing steadily. In

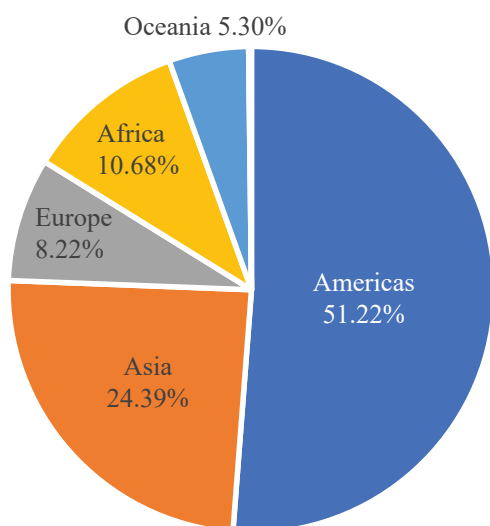
2020, the back end (the part that connects to the database and the server that uses the website) of the website was upgraded, to a newer and safer server. This also included the purchase of HTTPS certificates to establish secure connections. However, this also made the former statistics provided by AWStats/CIAT IT become obsolete and from this year the website is keeping track of the user statistics via Google Analytics. Recent statistics indicate 69,552 pageviews for the year 2020, while for the first six months of 2021 (i.e. until June 2021) the number of visits increased to 56,186 pageviews.

Users of the journal are worldwide, with currently half from the Americas and 25% from Asia (Figure 2). The number of users from Africa is steadily increasing as internet access is becoming more widespread, critical for an online journal. Open Access allows unrestricted use of the journal. Of interest is also the analysis of the operating system from where people are browsing the website, as an indicator of the main language of the users. While English, Spanish, Portuguese, Spanish and Chinese speakers are well represented, francophone users are so far under-represented (Figure 3).

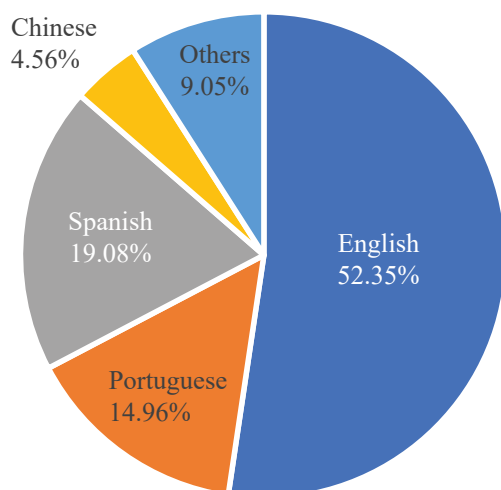


**Figure 1.** Countries of the authors published in the journal by June 2021. Source: Google Analytics.

*Disclaimer: The designations employed and the presentation of the material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of Tropical Grasslands-Forrajes Tropicales concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.*



**Figure 2.** Location of users of the journal by continent. Source: Google Analytics.



**Figure 3.** Main language of the users of the journal based on the browser/operating system. Source: Google Analytics.

## Outlook

The journal is in a transition period to the new editors, Dr. Jean Hanson, English and Managing Editor and Dr. Danilo Pezo, Spanish Editor. Both have worked with

the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) for many years and have long and broad experience in tropical forages. Jean Hanson is an Emeritus fellow with ILRI in Ethiopia and Danilo Pezo is currently working with CATIE in Costa Rica. The new editorial team will continue to be well supported by Jose Luis Urrea, Communications Specialist at The Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, Colombia.

In the coming year the new editorial team will work on further modernizing the journal including a fully automatized submission and review process. Further effort will be placed on increasing the quality and number of contributions and the reach of the journal to the global south, in particular Asia and Africa. In addition, an assessment of how to increase utilization from Francophone countries will be initiated aiming to maintain *Tropical Grasslands-Forrajeres Tropicales* as the foremost journal on tropical forages at the global level.

## References

(Note of the editors: All hyperlinks were verified 20 September 2021).

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