

Editorial

The future of Bio-Based and Applied Economics

DANIELE MORO¹, FABIO GAETANO SANTERAMO², DAVIDE VIAGGI³

¹ Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Piacenza, Italy

² Università degli Studi di Foggia, Italy

³ Università di Bologna, Italy

Bio-Based and Applied Economics, the official journal of AIEAA (Associazione Italiana di Economia Agraria ed Applicata), was founded in 2011 and published the first issue at the beginning of 2012. BAE is now a well-established international journal, currently indexed in several scientific databases, including ISI-Web of Science and Scopus. Its citation performances have been ever growing and are expected to grow further during the next years. Years from 2012 to 2019 have been characterised by major changes in the profession and in the editorial practices. The choice to give the journal a thematic focus on one of most innovative aspects of the profession (the emerging Bioeconomy), as well as encouraging contribution from all the most traditional areas, has been a distinguishing appreciated choice. Several other new topics have meanwhile emerged in the economic literature, such as ecosystem services, climate change, digitalisation and the circular economy, accompanied by new approaches to study complex human, firms and markets behaviour. The academic context has changed even more dramatically. Publishing has become more competitive and provides continuous stimuli to operate in new and more effective ways. The Open access approach (chosen by BAE since the beginning) is becoming the new normal for publications; authors are expecting quick reactions and timely decisions; linkages with social media and diffusion of the papers published has become a key strategic feature.

BAE has always tried to keep pace with changes in the surrounding environment, but 2019 will represent a major milestone in this direction. This editorial is aimed at presenting the state-of-art of Bio-Based and Applied Economics (BAE) and the main changes that have led to a major reorganization of the Journal.

BAE continues to be a free open-access on-line journal promoted by AIEAA, and to welcome contributions on the economics of bio-based industries at large. The Journal is open to topics related to agriculture, forestry, fishery and food, and is also open to submissions of related disciplines, such as resource and environmental economics, consumer studies, regional economics, innovation and development economics.

In order to face the challenges listed above, and to deal with a fast-increasing number of submissions, coupled with a higher quality of submitted manuscripts, BAE has gone through a deep reorganization of the Board. The team is now composed by two Editors in Chief, responsible of the overall management of the Journal, one Managing Editor and three Associate Editors that oversee the peer-review process. The editorial team also

includes an editorial assistant that helps managing submission, proofs, and dissemination of information related to BAE through media and social networks.

Apart from the renewal of the editorial structure, BAE has been interested by a major transition to a new online platform, which provides improved services for authors and readers of the Journal. The new platform is designed to be more user-friendly and to increase the visibility of manuscripts hosted in BAE.

The editorial strategy has been improved as well. The new Board is working to ensure a faster process from submission to publication. First, the Board has started a more explicit policy on **suggested reviewers**: each author is asked to suggest a list of potential reviewers (that do not have conflicts of interests) that are likely to be willing to review the submission. Second, the EIC and the AE are encouraged to complete a timely **review process** by following a protocol designed to having a first (editorial) decision within fifteen days and, for papers sent out for revision, a first round completed in three months. A third change is the inclusion of **junior reviewers**, a new strategy that is expected to have good impact on the process. In addition, the Board has started again to publish a very limited number of **invited papers**, authored by emerging or widely recognized experts. The rationale of publishing a limited number of invited papers is to guarantee space to host articles on topics that are considered of particular interest for the readers of BAE. The Board will also renew the tradition of open calls for **Special Issues** that will now be managed by guest editors, in charge of proposing the theme of the Special Issue and of managing the entire review process, under the constant supervision of the EIC. The Journal will encourage proposals for **Review Articles** that are likely to provide a valuable synthesis on the state of art on selected topics. Last but not least, BAE has now **social media** profiles (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter) that help communicating news and events related to the Journal. We believe these changes will provide a strong input to the growth of BAE.

The future of our profession will be certainly characterised by even faster changes in the topics, in the scale of analysis and in the methods able to match the emerging new problems. The dialogue with society will also become more important as well as the ability to valorise the role of research in a world characterised by a high amount of information, but difficulties with interpretation and growing complexity of processes leading to action.

This will affect the whole policy of AIEAA, looking at the perspective role of scientific associations as key actors in a context of worldwide transformations. And, of course of BAE, being one of the flagship initiatives of the Association. In turn, the ability of BAE to be an active actor in detecting and promoting scientific debate on such new issues, as well as taking up the challenges and the opportunities, and anticipating (or even leading) transitions, will be key for the future of the journal.

In such a dynamic context, the changes listed above are for sure not definitive, rather a key step for enabling BAE to ensure timely and proactive adaptations to the future. Further changes are expected already in 2020, with a partial renewal of the editorial board as well as with initiatives boosting the connection with the associates and with the scientific community.