

# 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE JOURNAL APSTRACT: THE HISTORY OF AN OPEN ACCESS JOURNAL

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The idea initiating the birth of the journal APSTRACT was initiated by András Nábrádi, during a 2005 AGRIMBA<sup>1</sup> executive board meeting held in Aberdeen, UK. AGRIMBA is an open international network of academics and professionals from universities and related institutions dealing with education and research in agribusiness (Csapó et al., 2010). Currently, the Network is especially active in Central and Eastern Europe (Heijman, 2015). The main objective of the Network is to set standards based on best practices for programmes it oversees and to accredit them on the basis of these standards. The International MBA Network was established in 1995, by founding members from Wageningen University, Scottish Agricultural College, the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague, Warsaw Agricultural University, University College Cork and the University of Wolverhampton. Between 2000 and 2009, the following universities joined the Network: Humboldt University Berlin, the University of Debrecen, Arkansas State University, the Agricultural University of Ukraine, the Timiryazev Academy in Moscow, the University of Belgrade and the University of Zagreb (Heijman, 2015). The Universities of Belgorod (Russia) and Kazan (Russia) has also joined the network last year.

At the time the idea was initially circulated, it was unclear whether the Journal would be published or not, who would finance it and who would manage it. There was some scepticism concerning the proposed title, as well. András Nábrádi's idea for one was not easily accepted by some of the partnership. Later, it turned out that the title of the Journal "APSTRACT" was a very good idea, since almost everybody noticed it and believed that it is a mistyping thus they easily remembered it. It also has to be emphasised that the Journal APSTRACT is the first result on the list to appear in a Google

search using that keyword! The first issue was published after one and a half years of preparatory work by the Agroinform Publishing House in 2007, with the financial support of the University of Debrecen. The scientific journal was registered by The National Media and Info Communications Authority, in Hungary, in 2008, under Registration No. 163/800/3/2008, with the founders listed in the foundation documents as Mr. Bence Bolyki and Dr. András Nábrádi. Four issues per year were proposed by the founders, which is still considered to be a minimum requirement by the editors.

*APSTRACT (Applied Studies in Agribusiness and Commerce)* publishes high quality contributions on topics related to Agribusiness and Commerce and provides managers, researchers and teachers with a forum where they can publish and acquire research results, case studies and reviews, which are important to the global food chain. Submitted manuscripts should be related to the economics of agriculture, natural resources, environment or rural development. Later, the editors considered it important to broaden the range of topics; therefore, tourism, tourism management, economic questions of the health industry and sport management - as a new field of applied economics - have been added to the list of original topics.

Papers should have a practical orientation and demonstrate innovation in analysis, methods, or application. Topic areas include production economics and farm management, agricultural policy, agricultural environmental issues, regional planning and rural development, methodology, marketing of agricultural and food products, international trade and development, tourism management and sports management. Research on a significant economic component, analyses of problems connected to research, extension, and teaching of the International MBA Network in Agribusiness and Commerce are also encouraged.

#### **The original aims of the founders are still valid:**

- The **editor in chief** should be a highly recognised **expert**.
- The Journal should be published **in Hungary/by a Hungarian publishing house**.
- **Representatives of institutions active in MBA educa-**

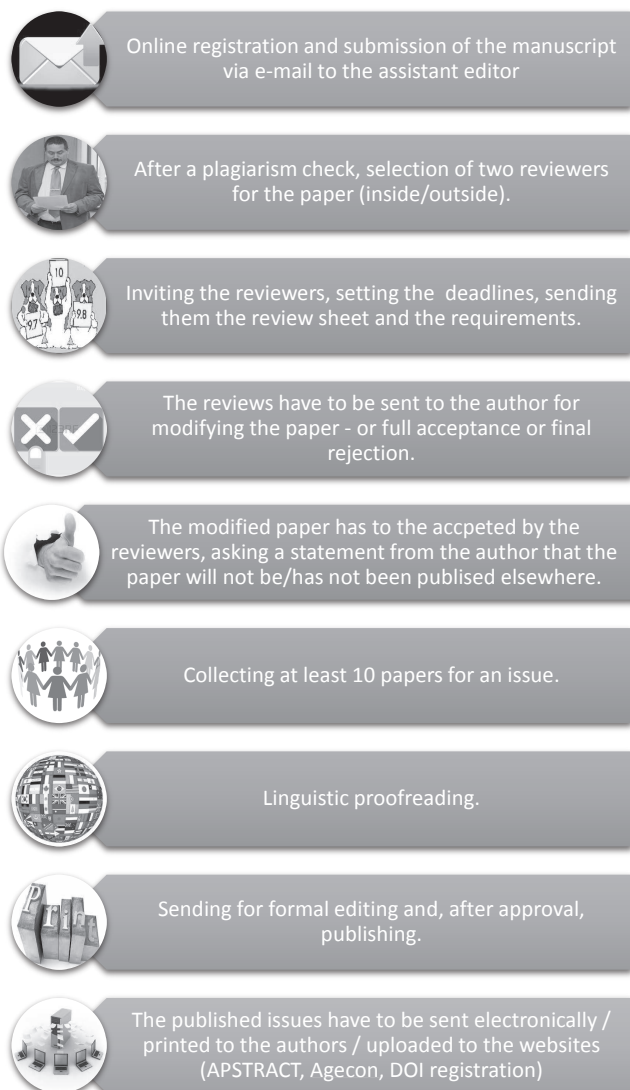
1 "The AGRIMBA network was established in 1995, as a successful Tempus project, by Warsaw Agricultural University (now Warsaw University of Life Sciences, WULS) and the Czech Agricultural University, Prague (now Czech University of Life Sciences, Prague, CULS). Since that time, the network has developed into an efficient means for young managers to update their knowledge of management, mainly in Central and Eastern Europe. An MBA is not only a way of improving the business skills of students, but also an effective way of intensifying the participating teaching staff's (mainly academics) contacts with the globalised world of agribusiness and their colleagues from the participating institutions (ICA 2016)."

tion should be involved among the “executive” members of the editorial board.

- Honorary editorial board members should be accepted at MBA Board meetings after nomination (nomination can be done via e-mail, as well)
- Only “double-blind,” reviewed papers should be accepted.
- Primarily members of the editorial board should be the peer-reviewers.
- Possibility should be provided in the Journal to publish abstracts and key-notes of noteworthy non-MBA events/conferences.

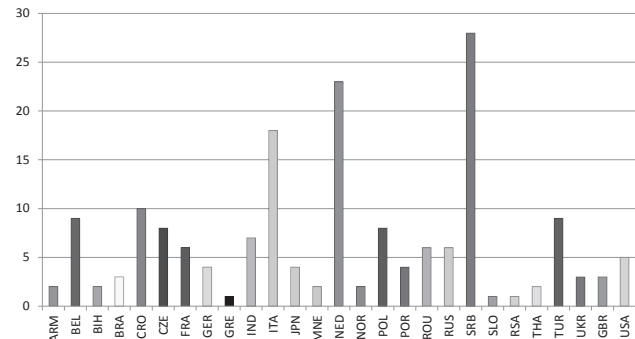
During the 10 years of its existence, the Journal has continuously developed, improved and tried to automate its operation, in order to serve better the needs of authors and readers and shorten the publishing time. Figure 1, a flow chart, shows the operational steps of the Journal.

Figure 1.: Flow-chart of the operational steps of APSTRACT



During the previous 10 years, more than 380 scientific papers from more than 30 countries have been published in the Journal. Most papers have been written by Hungarian authors, for whom APSTRACT is considered to be an outstanding Journal, representative of Hungarian agro-business higher education. A significant number of papers have been sent to the Journal from Serbia, the Netherlands, Italy and Croatia (Figure 2).

Figure 2.: Papers published in APSTRACT by the nationality of authors



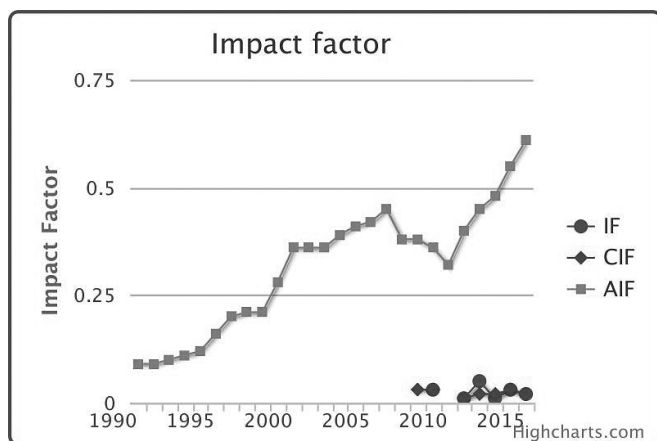
The popularity of the Journal has increased not only among AGRIMBA members, but also among the PhD students and researchers of Hungarian and foreign - mainly European - business higher education institutions. More and more organisations and libraries have registered the Journal, such as the American AgEcon Search website, which was later selected by the editorial board as the repository of the Journal. This means that all the papers are stored in this database first. Further organisations recording, noting, following APSTRACT:

- RePEc
- Cabell' Dictionary
- LogEc
- IDEAS
- ECONBiz
- DRJI (Directory of Research Journals Indexing)

The increasing popularity led to the following result in 2009: the impact factor calculated by CITEC/REPEC (2016) became 0.03. Until that time, it had fluctuated between 0.01 and 0.05. This is a considerable result for a relatively small agribusiness journal.

The average impact factor per issue also shows an increasing tendency, reflected by the figures of the previous 10 years. Figure 3 illustrates this trend.

Figure 3.: Impact factor of APSTRACT by REPEC/IDEALIS



IF: Impact Factor: C2Y / D2Y  
 AIF: Average Impact Factor for series in RePEC in year y  
 CIF: Cumulative impact factor

Source: CITEC/REPEC (2016)

Table 1.: Main abstract reading index of APSTRACT REPEC/IDEALIS

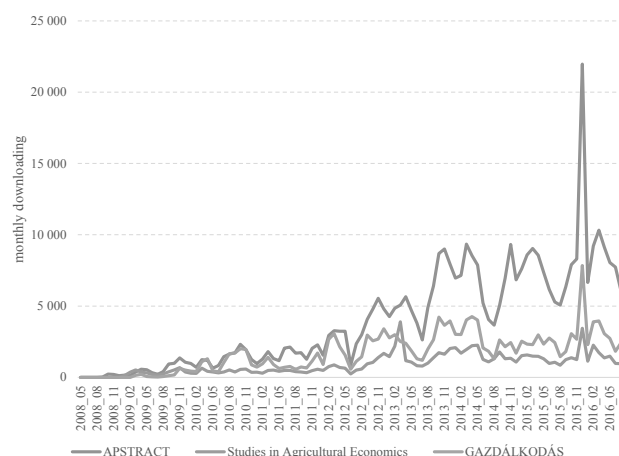
Year	IF	AIF	DOC	CDO	CCU	CIF
2009	0.03	0.03	63	95	3	0.03
2010	-	0.32	26	121	0	-
2011	0.01	0.40	38	159	1	0.01
2012	0.05	0.45	65	224	5	0.02
2013	0.01	0.48	67	291	5	0.02
2014	0.03	0.55	40	331	9	0.03
2015	0.02	0.61	42	373	9	0.02

IF: Impact Factor: C2Y / D2Y  
 AIF: Average Impact Factor for series in RePEC in year y  
 DOC: Number of documents published in year y  
 CDO: Cumulative number of documents published until year y  
 CCU: Cumulative number of citations to papers published until year y  
 CIF: Cumulative impact factor

Source: CITEC/REPEC (2016)

The Journal publishes scientific papers mainly in the field of social sciences and, within them, in the field of economics of agriculture and management. In this area, there are two main competitor journals in Hungary: *Gazdálkodás* (published in Hungarian language) and *Studies in Agricultural Economics* (published in English). It is important to mention the competition, since it has a great impact on the performance of a journal.

Figure 3.: Download statistics of scientific journals published in Hungary in the field of economics of agriculture

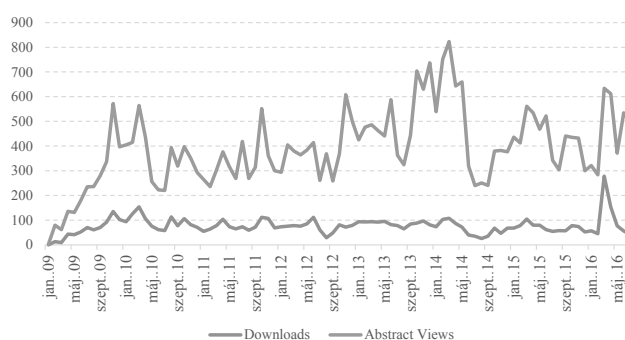


Source: AgeconSearch (2016)

Downloading statistics of AgEcon Search can be seen on Figure 3. As can be seen, in the previous 10 years, APSTRACT has continuously increased its leading position in terms of downloads started from the AgEcon system. This result underscores the increased international popularity of the Journal during the previous few years.

On another indexing page (system of LogEc), paper downloads show quite a fluctuating trend. Extreme figures can be seen mainly between September and January (Figure 4).

Figure 4.: Download and view statistics of APSTRACT papers by the LogEc system



Source: Logec/Repec (2016)

As a summary, the following success factors can be highlighted from the previous 10 years of the Journal:

- 10 published years so far, min. 4 issues/year since 2009 (quarterly), including joint issues (approx. 80 pages/quarterly, 40 papers/year on average).
- Number of published papers: 380, from authors from 30 countries of the World.
- Editorial board of the Journal involves MBA leaders and internationally recognised experts from 17 countries.
- Committed editorial board and support from the Faculty (University of Debrecen Faculty of Economics and Business).

**In order to maintain or improve this success, the Journal has to face the following future challenges:**

- Continuous maintenance and **development of the website**
- Increasing, developing web marketing activities
- Looking for further **international professional reviewers**
- Meeting **deadlines** (reviewers and authors)
- **Increasing REPEC/IDEALIS impact factor**
- Maintaining and **increasing the interest of authors in the Journal**

Trusting the further activity of the enthusiastic, professionally outstanding and committed editorial and reviewer boards, we can be sure that the Journal will be able to achieve the goals set for it, provide young researchers and MBA students with a safe start, and ensure professional recognition for researchers active in the field of business and management in the long run. All these elements were in fact the original expectations of the founders. A considerable change happened in the life of the Journal in 2015. The leadership of the University of Debrecen Faculty of Economics and Business decided to take over the publishing rights from *Agroinform* and to provide 100% financial support to cover the expenditures of the Journal, as well. Also, the website of the Journal got a new design, logo and became user friendly.

In closing, we would like to extend our thanks to those who have done a lot for the achieved success of the Journal: to the first editor in chief of APSRTACT, Dr. Mark Cochran, who is currently Vice President for Agriculture of the University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture; to Professor M.J.M. Heijman from the University of Wageningen, who was the second editor in chief between 2008-2015. The current editor in chief, since 2016, is Dr. Johan van Ophem, also from the University of Wageningen. Since 2005, the deputy editor in chief position and management of the Journal has been held by Dr. András Nábrádi. The associate editor's tasks have been covered by Dr. Krisztián Kovács for 3 years.



Without the contributions of these individuals, the scientific journal “APSTRACT” (Applied Studies in Agribusiness and Commerce) would not have been maintained.

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