

Dear ASFMRA Members and Friends of Agriculture:

Congratulations! You are ready to review the most up-to-date collection of papers addressing agricultural consulting, rural appraisal, and farm management topics in the world. This issue of the *Journal of the ASFMRA* contains an excellent collection of articles documenting research, field studies, practices, and methodologies presented by the leading academic, appraisal, management, and consulting leaders of agriculture. This *Journal* joins its predecessors in providing our membership and the agri-business community with topics on cutting edge issues and concepts for your review and consideration.

The Editorial Committee was presented with the largest number of submissions seen in many years. The papers contained herein are the best of the best of those submitted. We have worked with the authors to ensure that each article was formatted to be the most understandable for our readers.

We have grouped the papers into two categories: "Professional Forum and Perspectives" and "Research and Case Studies," however, you might find a little overlap between these two categories in some of the topics. The latter category includes some real-life examples of how some of our professional associates have handled unusual assignments.

You will find papers on livestock, crop, management, financial, and educational topics. Some articles address livestock operations (beef and dairy) while others evaluate crop issues (sugar beets, legumes, rice and soybeans). One article takes an in-depth look at "reconciliation" and another discusses what topics students should be taught. Several papers focus on various financial topics (economics of the grain industry, profits and risks, and rates of return). Two papers look at the dairy industry (transfer plans and future planning). And we have papers on precision farming and a report on French producers. How's that for variety?

The authors of this issue include experienced appraisers and farm managers, practicing agricultural consultants, and university professors and students. Several of the manuscripts were written by our own ASFMRA members.

The Editorial Committee repeats its challenge to all readers to join our elite list of highly acclaimed authors. You are invited to share some of your experiences and wisdom! Most of us have encountered at least one unusual problem or situation that required original and/or unique thinking to develop workable solutions. If it was new for you, chances are it will be interesting and useful to others. Ask the 2002 Gold Quill Award winners LeeAnn E. Moss, Ph.D., A.R.A. and Peter J. Barry, Ph.D, about the satisfaction of seeing their "wisdom" in print - and the surprise they had when we told them about the award! It is worth the time to follow their lead.

The Editorial Committee thanks you for your continued interest in the ASFMRA, agriculture, and the entire agricultural community.

Donald A. Fisher, ARA  
Chair, Editorial Committee