

## **Book Review. Scientific Writing for Agricultural Researchers. A Training Manual**

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**Scientific Writing for Agricultural Research Scientists. A training Resource Manual. Anthony Youdeowei, Paul Stapleton, Rodger Obubo. 2nd edition Wageningen, The Netherlands: CTA. 2012. 191 pp.**

This is a new edition in English that shows some practical issues faced by agricultural researchers, in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) when writing scientific papers. The first edition was mostly dedicated to the role played by scientific writing in agriculture.

### Editors

Youdeowei Anthony, BS, in Zoology, 1962, at the Ibadan University, Nigeria, PhD in Agricultural Etymology, 1967, University of London, UK. He is an international consultant professor in the field of Integrated Pest Management, for the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). His expertise covers education and training in agriculture, scientific communication and design and evaluation of agricultural projects, and pesticide management. He holds the position of Director of the West Africa Research and Development Association (WARDA), and Research Director of the Federal Technological University of Abeokuta. President of the Nigerian Committee of Pesticides, member of the Board of Directors of the Pesticide Action Network, the UK. He has been awarded national and internationally, and is the author of more than 100 publications.

Paul Stapleton, BS, in Botany and Zoology. Peer reviewer and editor of one of the Biochemistry journals with the highest repute in the world, at Elsevier, the Netherlands. He also collaborated with The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO), in Australia. Later, he moved to Bogor, Indonesia, to work for a journal of Scientific Crop, with the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), where he wrote the

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popular book: "Writing Scientific Research Papers: a Guide for Non-native English Speakers". He lived in Rome for over 13 years, as chief of publications; two years in Samoa, with the South Pacific Program of Regional Environment; and four years as executive of the International Center of Communications and Public Awareness, in Lima, Peru.

Izonebi Rodger Obubo, BS. in Agricultural Planning. He worked as a specialist in research trainings at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), then he became its coordinator. He has designed and implemented training courses in agricultural technologies across Sub-Saharan Africa, before joining The Center for Technical Agriculture (CTA), in 2002). He has been an outstanding scientific author. Today, he is a special advisor to the Managing Council for Agriculture Development, providing orientation in agricultural policies. He became involved in the design of face to face courses in Africa, the Caribbean and the South Pacific. Also, he cooperated with electronic learning software at the CTA, in collaboration with FAO, Unitar and the University of Pretoria.

The publication of this book comes out of the need to prepare agriculture researchers in procedures and techniques to write and publish their results. The text reveals the agricultural research organizations and institutions, and the chains of development in the region to start a project as part of research. Organizations involved in discussions and debates on the need for training are mentioned. The aim was to organize a series of courses in scientific writing for agriculture researchers in West Africa. As a result of the debates and discussions an expert meeting was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, promoted by the Ford Foundation and the Specialized Center for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation (CTA), in 1991.

The consultation made by the editors focused on three elements: the main goal of the course; details for the curriculum course and the design of patters for instruction; the assessment of the training project proposed for three years; and the training manual. The results from the first edition of scientific writing for researchers in agriculture were used as feedback to produce this new edition of the manual as a guide for researchers, and as a training course in scientific writing. Scientific research and paper publication are two closely related activities. Formal scientific research ends with a paper publication; it is the only way to make a contribution to scientific knowledge. The aim of the editors of the new edition is to project valuable advice and instructions to farmers in Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific region, who face obstacles that jeopardize proper paper writing caused by the lack of knowledge, and finally, how to publish it.

The book makes reference to the challenge of communicating to the non-scientific community, telling about the benefits of investment in agriculture

research. They have considered and reflected on the manual's concept to achieve two goals: a guide to researchers in agriculture or other areas, interested in writing for scientific journals, and how to prepare their research reports.

The second series as a training course

The preface of the book was written by the director of the Center for Agriculture Techniques (CTA) Michael Hailu, and editors Anthony Youdeowei, Paul Stapleton, and Rodger Obubo.

It has 16 chapters, including three new chapters, which owe mostly to the large number of questions and comments from the course students, who provided significant feedback and inspired the authors to update the manual. These chapters comprise topics including the statistical results in research reports, scientific communication to a non-scientific community, and the publication of articles in online journals.

Attention to high priority issues was part of the editor's methodology to create the manual. The training sessions reveal aspects like the structural analysis of a scientific paper, planning of the writing process, observation of style and ethics in scientific writing, bibliographic citations, word usage to present research results, oral presentation of research results, poster preparation, writing of research propositions and reports, publication of articles in journals, and copyright. Two appendages were added, one offers a general guide to people who deliver training courses on scientific writing, as has been implemented in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific region for several years, by different groups. The other suggests a variety of practical exercises for use within a general framework for materials created by specialists based on this manual.

In this edition, chapter redesign is considered an invaluable strategic element, as it outlines recent development in terms of communication of scientific information, with a more comprehensive content and understanding. It also remarks the intrinsic relation between research and previous knowledge to confront citation-supported narrative.

The appendages are considered a relevant idea, because of the elements provided, concerning guidance to implement this type of course. It also allows the scientific community to extrapolate its methodology and design to other areas of knowledge, with possible adaptations for application and validation.

This book contains a valuable didactical and methodological tool for researchers willing to catch up on scientific writing. The model for the scientific writing proposed is based on the three principles that rule this area: accuracy, clarity and brevity.