



**2010**

# **Grassland in a changing world**

**23<sup>rd</sup> General Meeting of the  
European Grassland Federation  
Kiel, Germany, August 29 – September 2, 2010**



## **Master Class C**

**Scientific writing - A course to help scientists improve their skills in writing and publishing**

by **Dr. Alan Hopkins**

Editor of *Grass and Forage Science* and agri-environmental consultant

(Former Senior Research Scientist with IGER, North Wyke, UK and Centre for Rural Policy Research, University of Exeter, UK)

Friday, 27.08.2010 – Saturday, 28.08.2010

organised by

University of Goettingen

Department of Crop Sciences

Grassland Science

### **Contact**

For all matters concerning the course and its contents:

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For all matters concerning accommodation, living and administration:

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## **Background**

Many papers submitted to journals are either rejected completely or acceptance for publication is delayed because substantial revisions are required. In some cases this is because the work has not been done to a high standard or because it fails to add significantly to the subject area, but many papers are also rejected or delayed because the authors have not written to the journal's exact requirements. This is not only a short-term disappointment for individual researchers, but it has implications for career development and the potential for research teams to attract funds for further work. Investing time in developing good 'paper-writing' skills, particularly in the context of international English-language journals, is something to consider seriously.

## **The course**

This is a two-day course led by a native English-speaking tutor who is an experienced researcher and journal editor. It will be conducted in English. Participants will need to be proficient in the English language. The group size will be less than twenty, with the sitting arranged in a seminar-room style with tables.

*The main aims of the course are:*

- To help research students and scientists develop the skills required for writing scientific papers in a time-efficient way that does justice to the author, the project and their institute or department.
- To help increase the likelihood that submitted papers are accepted for publication (and similarly, that other reports etc. meet the standards required).
- To help reduce the interval between submission and eventual publication, by reducing the need for editorial revisions.
- To improve the chances that publications attract the attention of the scientific community, thereby leading to increased citation in other future work.
- To address some of the issues faced by 'non-native' English-language authors writing for English-language publications.

*The content of the course will include the following:*

Getting started. Before you write the paper (planning, record keeping etc. that will help resolve problems later; interim publications; choosing journals).

The details of writing. The structural elements of a paper: title, abstract, key words, materials and methods, results, discussion, conclusions, references, figures and tables. We will consider the importance of planning and 'getting it absolutely right' for each of these.

After submission: the editorial process. We will discuss what happens to your paper after it has been submitted and how we can reduce potential problems. We will discuss the role of the editor and reviewers, and the how to improve the likelihood of getting a positive outcome from the reviewing process.

Future citation. How your paper is to be used in the future. Improving the citation index. The importance of the title, keywords and abstract, and the ways in which these are used by other researchers who might cite your work.

Writing review papers. These are often highly cited and in great demand by many journals.

Posters and conference abstracts. The need for simplicity and immediacy in an eye-catching style.

Writing in English. Not an 'English as a Foreign Language' crash course, but a consideration of some common faults and reference sources.

Practical exercises. Finally, and depending on how much time is left, we will look at some practical examples. The course participants will be invited to share examples of their own work for discussion (preferably submitted to the course tutor in advance), but if we have no volunteers the tutor will present other examples of scientific writing which has potential for improvement.

## **Course notes**

All participants will receive comprehensive course notes.

The course is led by Alan Hopkins who is a researcher, science editor, course trainer and consultant in agriculture and agri-environmental issues. He is currently joint Editor-in-chief of the Wiley-Blackwell Science journal *Grass and Forage Science*, has edited several books, conference proceedings and technical reviews, and has acted as adviser to a number of journals and international research review boards. Following a 30-year research career with the UK Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research (IGER), he set up GES-Consulting in 2006. He has also contributed to research and teaching at several universities and has held Honorary posts at the Universities of Reading and Exeter, where his recent research projects have included studies on regional sustainability, organic farming, and climate change and agriculture.

## **Schedule**

### Thursday, 26.08.2010

18.00 - 20.00	Arrival. welcome
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### Friday, 27.08.2010

8.00	Breakfast
9.00 - 10.30	Unit I
10.30 - 11.00	Coffee break
11.00 - 12.30	Unit II

12.30 - 14.30	Lunch
14.00 - 15.30	Unit III
15.30 - 16.00	Coffee break
16.00 - 17.00	Unit IV

#### Saturday, 28.08.2010

8.00	Breakfast
9.00 - 10.30	Unit V
10.30 - 11.00	Coffee break
11.00 - 12.30	Unit VI
12.30 - 14.30	Lunch
14.00 - 15.30	Unit VII
15.30 - 16.00	Coffee break
16.00 - 17.00	Unit VIII

#### Sunday, 29.08.2010

Transfer to Kiel

### **Travel and Accommodation**

Accommodation and seminar rooms are located in the municipal guesthouse located in the green woodland hills in the outskirts of Göttingen:

Jugendgästehaus der Stadt Göttingen  
 Herberhäuser Stieg 2  
 37085 Göttingen  
<http://www.gruppenhaus.de/JGH-Goettingen>  
 Housekeeper (mobile phone): 0178-8400424

A shuttle service from the station to the guesthouse will be provided between 17.00 and 20.00 on Thursday evening and back to the station on Sunday morning. Please note that check in and checkout at the guesthouse are only possible in this time! For the stay, 22,- € per day and guest will be charged on-site (no credit cards or cheques accepted). The environment of the guesthouse and its garden offer ample opportunities for all kinds of outdoor activities like jogging, walking, ball games, barbecues etc. Until 19.00, there is a regular bus service to the city centre (15 minutes) every 30 minutes. A car park is situated right next to the building. To help us organize the shuttle transfer, please let us know your arrival time in advance (email to [cwunder1@gwdg.de](mailto:cwunder1@gwdg.de) or telephone ++49-551-395763,).

For more information about Goettingen or the University of Goettingen, please have a look at the referring webpages:

<http://www.goettingen.de/>  
<http://www.uni-goettingen.de/>