

## GUEST EDITORIAL

### REMINISCENCES OF THE FOUNDER

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I wish to thank the Editorial Board for inviting me to write a few words on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the Journal of Tropical Forest Science. It was during my term as Director-General of the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) that I suggested to the FRIM Directorate that FRIM should have its own scientific journal as an outlet for publication of scientific research articles by FRIM scientists. This is in view of the fact that we had made a policy that all FRIM research officers should publish at least two refereed scientific papers a year and thus an outlet for publication which is recognized worldwide must be made available. At that time, there was no well-known forestry science journal dedicated to tropical forestry research. The Directorate unanimously agreed that it should be a refereed journal devoted to the development of tropical forests and forest products. The year was 1988. An Editorial Board was subsequently appointed amongst our international contacts in the forestry science community worldwide. So was started the Journal of Tropical Forest Science (JTFS).

Later, when the number of contributions became too large for the JTFS to handle alone, another journal, the Journal of Tropical Forest Products (JTFP) was started in 1994 dedicated to forest products research. Unfortunately, due to a change in circumstances, JTFP did not survive past 2003 and once again papers on forest products were incorporated into JTFS.

I retired from FRIM in October 1995. Nevertheless, I am proud to note that JTFS has grown from strength to strength and that many contributors are from overseas, which reflects that the journal has been recognized by the forestry scientific community worldwide as a respectable publication. I also note that the

waiting time for authors has now been shortened quite considerably, but I encourage the Editors to work towards shortening it further.

It is my ardent hope that JTFS will continue to grow in the future. For FRIM to be recognized as a top forestry research institution in the world, and not just for tropical forestry, JTFS should expand its coverage to allow and encourage the publication of not only tropical forest science topics, but also those with global implications especially related to the wide spectrum of environment protection, biodiversity and sociology, all of which are inextricably linked to forestry. This will hopefully promote scientific and research collaboration between tropical scientists and their temperate peers.

As a relatively young research institution (FRIM was established in 1985 and 23 years is relatively young for an institution), FRIM needs to accelerate its publication rate but this can only be done if its scientists are producing results and writing scientific articles. Thus, FRIM scientists must commit themselves to publishing their results regularly. Being a peer-reviewed journal, JTFS ensures that all papers are critically evaluated. The process of getting reviewers is not easy but must be done. The reviewers, together with the JTFS Editorial Advisory Board which comprises distinguished leaders in the field of forestry and forest products, ensures that this process is upheld.

The Consulting Editor, Dr. Francis Ng, was the person who undertook the initial launching of JTFS and JTFP during our time together at FRIM. Francis is an excellent scientist, a wonderful writer, both scientific and non-scientific, and a dedicated and committed scientist and researcher. Francis heads the screening committee of JTFS to ensure that only quality manuscripts get reviewed. This

is to ensure that the peer review system does not get overburdened and to establish consistent standards for authors to meet.

Now that Malaysia has two Schools of Forestry, one at Universiti Putra Malaysia and the other at Universiti Malaysia Sabah, there is no reason why JTFS cannot continue to prosper and become the icon for forestry science of the world. The two schools should generate a demand for new knowledge through research and be a source of articles based upon their own research efforts.

I am happy to see that JTFS now accepts special articles on issues of general forestry interest, which it publishes in the Guest Editorial section. Perhaps JTFS should now consider reinstating the Letters to the Editor, which are linked to the papers published in the journal

and meant for the exchange of different views and opinions.

Finally, I wish all tropical forestry scientists the very best in their research endeavours, and if and when they succeed, JTFS shall definitely prosper.

*Dato' Seri Dr. Salleh was the Director-General of FRIM from 1985–1995 and President of the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO) from 1991–1995. He was on the initial Boards of CIFOR, INBAR and APAFRI. He is the President of the Malaysia Nature Society, Executive Director of TropBio Forest Sdn. Bhd. and Secretary-General of the Academy of Sciences Malaysia. He has is also Deputy Chairman of the Sultan Mizan Royal Foundation.*