

Journal of Food Protection Management Committee

Names of Members Present: Ian Young (Chairperson), Theresa Bergholz (Vice Chairperson), Angela Anandappa, Cathy Cutter, Daniel Unruh, Doris D'Souza, Eliza Mammadova, Jen Wood, Jim Hartman, Joshua Gurtler, Judy Luther, Karen Everstine, Kathleen O'Donnell, Lauren Jackson, Laura Strawn, Manan Sahrma, Martin Deplessis, Panos Sakndamis, Ruth Petran, S. Balamarugun, Sarita Raengpradub, Yvonne Masters.

Board/Staff Present: Manan Sharma, Lisa Garcia, Dina Siedenbourg.

Visitors: Jim Hartman.

Number of Attendees: 22.

Meeting Called to Order: 3:00 P.M. EST, Sunday, July 27, 2025.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Balamurugan Sampathkumar.

Old Business: The meeting started at 3:00 P.M.. Ian Young gave a brief introduction followed by the committee Members and attendees introducing themselves. Following the introduction, Ian appointed Balamurugan Sampathkumar as the recording secretary. Next, Ian sought approval of the minutes of the meeting of 2024 from the committee Members. A motion was passed unanimously to approve the minutes.

Manon Sharma provided a brief Executive Board update to the committee. Following this, Jen Wood from Elsevier provided an update on *JFP* metrics, performance, and marketing initiatives over the past year. Overall, the metrics indicate strong and improving performance since the transition to Elsevier. Submissions were up 14% since last year, and accepted articles were up 18%. The rejection rate of 39% is staying steady compared to prior years. When reporting on country-specific trends, it was noted that submissions from the USA and China were slightly down compared to last year, the reasons for which are unclear. It was suggested that there is an opportunity to encourage more submissions to the journal from China specifically. The speed of review of articles was reported to be very fast, and the editors were thanked for keeping the time-to-first decision very low and competitive. Both the CiteScore and the Journal Impact Factor improved since last year, with the latter increasing from 2.1 to 2.8. It is expected that this will continue to increase next year as well due to high citations of articles in the most recent year. Jen noted that the editor-invited reviews in particular are receiving a high number of citations and helping to improve the journal's impact factor. Jen then reported on Elsevier's marketing campaign and initiatives for the journal. Upcoming initiatives include author testimonial video interviews and videos to be recorded during IAFP 2025, which will be promoted on the website and social media. The latter have now shifted to BlueSky and LinkedIn, with WeChat used in China.

Panos Skandamis then provided the Scientific Editors' Report. Overall, he praised the increased submissions in the last year and the increasing quality of submissions. He provided an overview of the three current special issues for the journal. The "Advancements of Machine Learning and AI in food safety" issue is now at 16 articles. Two upcoming issues based on international conferences will also be available over the coming year: the 21st International Symposium on Problems of *Listeria* and Listeriosis (ISOPOL) and the 13th International Conference on

Predictive Modelling in Food Congress (ICP.M.F.C.). It was noted that the editor-invited reviews have now been placed in a special collection on the Elsevier website: Critical Reviews in Food Protection. Panos expressed his interest to review and update how the journal scope is written on the Elsevier website. Specifically, he noted that food safety research is changing very quickly and believes that prospective authors may not think their new areas of research would be included in the scope of the journal based on how the journal scope is currently worded and written. He provided examples of article topics that might fit this category, including food quality characteristic studies using advanced instrumentations, and bioinformatics and metabolomics with relations to food safety. He noted that the editors would work on some updated wording for the website.

Joshua Gurtler then provided an update on the editor-invited reviews. He noted that 11 confirmed reviews are being written, and three are under consideration. He believes that several of these could attract a high number of citations. Joshua also provided a list of potential topic areas for new reviews to the PDG chairs to solicit potential interest and proposals from IAFP Members at the 2025 Annual Meeting. Joshua then reviewed the metrics for editor-invited reviews, which at the time of preparation had achieved an average of 53.6 citations per review article. It was noted that the journal should not only rely on these reviews to improve its impact factor, but it is helpful to get the journal moving in the right direction for now. The editors were hopeful that as the impact factor goes up, the quality of the submissions will also go up.

Ian noted that the committee is looking for a new Vice Chair, as his term as Chair will end next year and Teresa will move into the Chair role for the IAFP 2026 Annual Meeting. It was noted that two Members have already expressed interest. An election will be held later in the year or early next year. Ian noted that Co-Editors Joshua Gurtler and Doris D'Souza terms are

currently ending on Dec. 31, 2025. A motion was introduced and passed unanimously to reappoint the co-editors for another term.

New Business: The committee discussed ideas to increase the number of submissions to the journal and continue to improve its impact factor. It was suggested that marketing could focus on government scientists due to the competitive open-access fee prices of *JFP* compared to other food science journals. It was noted that despite their issues, journal metrics are still a very important determining factor for journal selection and submission among many prospective authors. Panos noted that the recent increase in impact factor has been the highest ever for the journal. There was some discussion about whether open-access fees could be further reduced, and Jen noted that the fee structure is very competitive and designed not to be too low as to raise questions about journal quality. It was noted that there is a discount program for authors from lower-income countries. Jen suggested that at a future IAFP or other event an author workshop with the editors could be useful as an opportunity to interact with them, promote the journal, and ask questions about how to write a strong manuscript for *JFP*.

The committee then discussed whether and how to connect with researchers and promote more submissions to the journal from underrepresented regions (e.g., Asia, Africa). It was suggested that bringing in additional editorial board Members from these regions might help to promote more global submissions. However, there was some concern noted about the quality of current submissions from certain regions. The committee briefly discussed the potential use of AI screening tools to help with technical and suitability checks of submissions in the future, as is currently being used by other journals. Jen noted that Elsevier is currently developing such a tool that may be available next year. The editors noted that the quality and grammar of submissions overall has improved in recent years. There was some discussion about whether authors are declaring AI use in their submissions as per journal policy, but there is no reliable way to currently assess this.

The committee then discussed opportunities to enhance journal marketing. Eliza from Elsevier noted that *JFP* is currently doing well in terms of marketing metrics, and they are adapting to new social media platforms and tools (e.g., BlueSky). Finally, Manon raised an additional agenda item to clarify with the editors whether all general interest papers are peer-reviewed, and the editors confirmed that all *JFP* articles are peer-reviewed.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. The Committee recommends the reappointment of Joshua Gurtler and Doris D'Souza as Scientific Co-Editors for another term.

Next Meeting Date: July 26, 2026, New Orleans, LA.

Meeting Adjourned: 4:30 P.M.

Chairperson Name: Ian Young.