

Research with Practical Benefits

Brewing science – a field sometimes ridiculed by scientists from other disciplines – has always been characterized by its proximity to the practice of brewing. Since research should not always simply be an end unto itself, this proximity is precisely what sets brewing science apart from other disciplines and should therefore be a source of pride for those in this field of study.

You may be wondering why I call attention to this? The basic principles (and objectives) of scientific work no longer seem to be self-evident. I could scarcely believe my eyes when I recently read an article in the January 8th 2014 issue of the prestigious Munich newspaper, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, entitled “More Quality, Less Waste”. The article discussed the (absence of) quality in medical research around the world. Particularly in medicine – a field we all sooner or later must place our trust in – one would hope beneficial research is being carried out!

Far from it – the authors went on to state that research has become not only unwarranted (repetition on the same topics) but also substandard (due to improperly designed experiments) and is thus being performed with dubious intent. They also stated that cutting back on the costs associated with maintaining access to scientific journals has allowed expensive research projects to be funded. The authors even submitted recommendations concerning what measures could be implemented to improve the quality of research work. A sampling of their recommendations proceeds thus: first, the practical application of the work has to be assessed! Organizations providing grant money should define their criteria for supporting research and should require results for subsequent publication. Or better yet, prior to designing the experimental trials, an urgent appeal for determining the current state of knowledge on the topic should be made. This should involve experts in the appropriate field of study, who have some knowledge of the methods to be employed. Apparently these things can no longer be taken for granted...

I am very pleased to present the BrewingScience 2013 Yearbook, a new compilation of scientific articles from the previous year, all of which meet the criteria of practical relevance, substance and significance. For this, I would like to express my gratitude to the authors and our international team of experts, none of whom has ever lost sight of these objectives. You will find a total of 22 peer-reviewed articles and a publication by the International Committee for Hop Standards on various topics in the field of brewing science – from wort production to sensory analysis – in this Yearbook, the practical benefits of which are evident. A fair amount of space has once again been dedicated to topics concerning raw materials, including the Hops Special, now in its third installment.

In conclusion, I hope that this Yearbook will provide you with fresh insight and contribute to your continuing professional development.

L. Weikmann

