



Celebrating reviewers—The 2020 Manfred Kroger Outstanding Reviewer Award winner

Congratulations to Professor Zhimin Xu of Louisiana State University, the winner of the 2020 Manfred Kroger Outstanding Reviewer Award for IFT's Scientific Journals. Some of the many accolades that can be said for Professor Xu's contributions are that he has reviewed 61 manuscripts over the past 15 years, which reflects agreeing to 98% of our reviewer requests. I asked Professor Xu several questions about being a reviewer, and here are his answers:

What would you tell a young scientist about the rewards of being a reviewer?

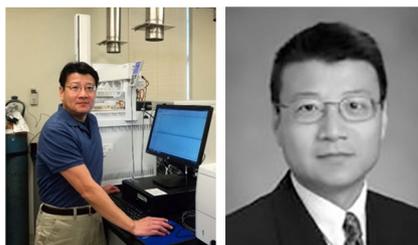
Xu: Basically, the rewards of being a reviewer are having an opportunity to learn what researchers of other research groups are working on and how good the research quality and capability of your peers are.

Can you briefly share your overall process in reviewing a manuscript?

Xu: First, I would judge the potential significance and novelty of the reported study to that research area. Then, I would carefully go through the experimental design because it involves in the validation of their results. The results explanation and discussion of a manuscript are also important to the assessment for its quality and contribution to the research field.

You have a stunning record of agreeing to 98% of the reviewer requests you receive. What motivates that level of dedication, and how do you fit it into an already busy schedule?

Xu: I just try my best to work with Editors for improving the quality of research articles published in JFS [*Journal of Food Science*]. Thus, more valuable and reliable information in the latest food research area can be shared by food scientists and the general public.



Zhimin Xu

Professor Xu's comments perfectly reflect the duties, rewards, and benefits of being a reviewer. Establishing the "significance and

novelty" is the essential gatekeeping function of reviewers. Likewise, once a reviewer is convinced the manuscript is addressing an appropriate topic, the next step is to determine if the experimental design properly addresses the hypothesis or objective raised in the introduction. Finally, a fair and constructive review reveals ways to make a manuscript better, thus "improving the quality of research articles published in *JFS*."

In 2019, we sent out 10,028 reviewer requests for the *Journal of Food Science*. About a third of those resulted in submitted reviews. With a goal of three reviews per manuscript, that means that editors on average send out nine reviewer requests per manuscript. Unfortunately, that does not tell the whole story because reviewer requests can exceed twenty and fail to obtain three reviewers, and reviews can be late or inappropriate.



Xu's 2020 Manfred Kroger Outstanding Reviewer Award

When I read Dr. Xu's comments about being a reviewer it became apparent why he is our 2020 winner of the Manfred Kroger Outstanding Reviewer Award. He sees reviewing as benefiting his research knowledge and contributing to the science of food. We need more reviewers like Professor Xu how about you?

Sincerely,
E. Allen Foegeding, Ph.D.
Editor in Chief,
IFT Scientific Journals