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WORLD MYCOTOXIN JOURNAL 19 (2026) 1–2

World Mycotoxin Journal
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FOREWORD

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Emails. We receive lots of them each and every day, some more important than others. And yes, it can become challenging to even classify them into those categories. Do us, and yourself, a favour: regard emails from Editorial manager (EM), our online peer review system, as important ones. Lately, a trend has become apparent that more invitations to review manuscripts are needed than in the past. And the reason is *not* that more invitations are declined, the reason is that more invitations are simply ignored. Nowadays we have to invite up to 20 (!) expert reviewers until we find two who accept our invitation. On average we do not get any response from 75% of the experts invited. Think about that. Several reviewers are invited and given at least a week to respond. They never do. Two more are invited and the story goes on. It can take months after submission before manuscripts even enter review. If the system records a "decline" response, it can automatically invite the next reviewer in line, while without that information, the process is delayed. This leads to longer times till articles can finally be published and this is in nobody's interest. Please show the courtesy to decline invitations when time does not permit to review manuscripts. You also would receive fewer reminders and eventually also *your* articles would appear earlier.

The editorial team would like to inform readers that the dedicated LinkedIn page for *World Mycotoxin Journal* will be discontinued from 1 May 2026. This decision has been made due to limited capacity and insufficient regular news to maintain the page to the standard it deserves. This does not mark the end of communication about the journal though. Updates, news, and announcements will continue to be shared via the LinkedIn pages of Brill | Wageningen Academic and De Gruyter Brill Life Sciences. We encourage readers to follow one or both of these channels to stay informed about developments related to the journal. We thank our community for its ongoing support and look forward to engage with you through these platforms.

We are delighted to reveal the *World Mycotoxin Journal* Best Paper of 2025. This award is chosen by the Board of Editors from all papers published in the previous year, in recognition of outstanding contribution to the field. The article "The role of nanomaterials in detection and mitigation of aflatoxins: a novel approach to global food safety" authored by Ibrahim Saeed Gataa and coworkers was selected (Gataa *et al.*, 2025). This review highlights the innovative integration of advanced nanomaterials, including aptamer-functionalised nano-sensors, photocatalytic nanoparticles, and green-synthesised systems. It showcases how these emerging technologies surpass conventional methods in sensitivity, efficiency, and sustainability for aflatoxin management. As always the award comes with a free book from the De Gruyter Brill portfolio or an online journal subscription. We thank the authors for their contribution and congratulate them with the award.

It has become a tradition to start the first issue of the year with an open access review about recent analytical methods for mycotoxin determination (Cramer *et al.*, 2025). For the first time, methods using predictive modelling and incorporating machine learning are presented and discussed as well. The critical review is intended to guide readers to relevant research by presenting the most important developments in mycotoxin determination published in the past 12 months. Likewise, it also aims to highlight limitations of methodologies, in order to provide a fulsome assessment of current analytical developments.

I thank all authors of this issue for their contributions and hope you – the readers – enjoy reading their informative and helpful content.

Franz Berthiller
Editor-in-chief

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Published with license by Koninklijke Brill BV | DOI: 10.1163/18750796-20260001
 | ISSN: 1875-0796 (online)

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