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Where Do Agricultural Economists Publish and How Do They Assess Journal Quality? A Survey in Austria, Germany and Switzerland

Fabian Thomas[1,*], Roland Herrmann[2], Jens-Peter Loy[3], Klaus Salhofer[4], Ramona Teuber[2], Martin Banse[5], Ernst Berg[6], Nadja El Benni[7], Linde Götz[8], Sebastian Hess[9], and Jochen Kantelhardt[10]

[1]Department of Environmental Economics, School of Business Administration and Economics and Institute of Environmental Systems Research, Osnabrück University, Germany

[2]Institute of Agricultural Policy and Market Research, Justus Liebig University Giessen, Germany

[3]Department of Agricultural Economics, Kiel University, Germany

[4]Institute of Sustainable Economic Development, BOKU University, Vienna, Austria

[5]Thünen Institute of Market Analysis, Braunschweig, Germany

[6]Institute of Food and Resource Economics, University of Bonn, Germany

[7]Research Division Sustainability Assessment and Agricultural Management, Agroscope, Switzerland

[8]Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies, Halle (Saale), Germany

[9]Institute of Agricultural Policy and Markets, University of Hohenheim, Germany

[10]Institute of Agricultural and Forestry Economics, BOKU University, Vienna, Austria

*Correspondence: Fabian Thomas, fabian.thomas@uni-osnabrueck.de

Abstract: When selecting journals as publication outlets, researchers face trade-offs between journals' quality, reputation, audience and publication speed. Beyond citation-based metrics such as the Journal Impact Factor (*JIF*) or the Journal Citation Indicator (*JCI*), survey-based journal rankings can serve as an important tool to guide authors' decisions about where to submit manuscripts for publication. This article presents the results from a 2023 survey of 304 agricultural economists from Austria, Germany and Switzerland, who evaluated 160 journals by scientific quality, review quality and reputation. The survey is an update of the 2009 GEWISOLA/ÖGA journal ranking (Dabbert et al., 2009; Herrmann et al., 2011). We compute again a quality index (*QI*), based on researchers' perceptions of scientific and review quality, but apply it to the current situation of a strongly growing and proliferated journal market. As agricultural economists are increasingly involved in multi- and interdisciplinary research, our use of a publication-citation indicator leads to a much broader set of journals. Results indicate a higher average *QI* across journals than in the 2009 journal ranking, a similar group of leading journals, and reputation as a key driver of journal choice. We find and discuss discrepancies between the *QI* and *JIF* and inconsistencies between publication patterns and perceived quality. For the 66 journals appearing in both rankings, the average *QI* increased substantially while the *QI*s are highly correlated between the two surveys. In a robustness check, we use mean-centered scores to compute an adjusted *QI*, which does not substantially alter the ordering of journals.

Keywords: Agricultural Economics, Survey-Based Journal Assessment, Publishing, Impact Factor, Journal Ranking

1 Introduction

Publications in peer-reviewed journals are a primary base for evaluating researchers' scientific performance. Journal choice, therefore, plays a crucial role in shaping academic careers, affecting promotion, salaries, funding acquisition and professional prestige (Kassas et al., 2025; Rigby et al., 2015; O'Keefe, Wang, 2013; Hilmer, Hilmer, 2005). When deciding where to publish, researchers consider multiple factors beyond citation-based impact metrics, such as acceptance rates, target audiences, average time until publication, fit with journal scope, and reputation (Kassas et al., 2025; Durmuşoğlu, Durmuşoğlu, 2021; Finger et al., 2022; Rigby et al., 2015). Thus, researchers face a range of trade-offs when selecting a journal. For instance, a certain number of scientific publications is particularly important at the beginning of a career. However, publishing in a journal with a high impact factor usually takes longer, partly because the acceptance rate is much lower (Finger et al., 2022). For policy-oriented research, other aspects such as societal impact may outweigh impact factor considerations (Rigby et al., 2015). In this context, open access has emerged as an increasingly important criterion for authors, as it facilitates broad dissemination and accessibility as well as a fast publication of research findings.

Open access publishing is frequently discussed as a major component of open science, which aims at accessibility, transparency and replicability of scientific results, data and methods (Finger et al., 2025). In recent contributions, societal benefits from a change of the scientific system towards open access and open science have been stressed (Cole et al., 2024), challenges for a successful change towards open access have been identified, and preconditions for successful quality assurance have been elaborated (Finger et al., 2025; Hüttel, Hess, 2025). In response, many journals have introduced open access policies and editors have introduced explicit rules regarding data availability and the use of artificial intelligence (Hüttel et al., 2025).

At the same time, the academic journal market has expanded tremendously, increasing both opportunities and uncertainty about journal quality (cf. Hanson et al., 2024; Caviglia-Harris, 2023 for economics). For example, the number of journals listed in SCImago Journal & Country Rank increased by almost 90% between 1999 and 2019, driven largely by the growth of open access publishing. Many open access journals offer shorter review and publication times (Piwowar et al., 2018) and publish more articles per journal (Thelwall, Sud, 2022). The rapid growth of the journal market has also been driven by the rise of so-called "predatory" publishers, defined by Grudniewicz et al. (2019) as "entities that prioritize self-interest at the expense of scholarship". Typical article processing charges paid by authors, together with the advertising of short review and publication times, are used as part of an expansive market-share strategy. According to Hanson et al. (2024), this contributes to an "increasing publication workload per scientist" and is accompanied by a lack of rigor in the peer-review processes of predatory journals.

Given the growing complexity of the journal landscape and the diversity of publication criteria, community-based assessments of journal quality provide valuable complementary information. Survey-based evaluations can enhance transparency and reflect the perspectives of researchers within specific disciplines and regions, which is important since perceptions of journal quality vary across fields and countries (Rigby et al., 2015). This study pursues two main objectives. First, we aim at analyzing in which journals members of the agricultural economics community in German-speaking countries publish most frequently, and which journals they cite most often. Second, we aim at providing an updated, survey-based quality assessment of journals in the broader field of agricultural economics by replicating the approach of Dabbert et al. (2009) and Herrmann et al. (2011) and updating the GEWISOLA/ÖGA ranking from 2009. For this purpose, we conducted a survey among the members of the German Society for Economic and Social Sciences of Agriculture (GEWISOLA), the Austrian Society for Agricultural Economics (ÖGA) and the Swiss Society for Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology (SGA) in 2023. The results are intended to help scientists in journal selection and to complement existing citation-based metrics. They also provide insights into how perceptions of journal quality have

evolved since 2009 and into the motivations and criteria guiding publication decisions among GEWISOLA, ÖGA, and SGA members.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows: Section 2 describes the methodology and data, including journal selection, the survey design, participant recruitment, and data analysis. The empirical results are presented in Section 3. Section 4 discusses our major findings with a focus on changes over time by comparing the 2023 survey results with the ones from 2009. Concluding remarks, the relevance of survey-based approaches and suggestions for future research follow in the last Section.

2 Methodological Approaches and Data Analysis

2.1 Journal Selection

The first step in preparing the survey was to compile a list of journals to be evaluated by respondents. The aim was to identify the most relevant journals for agricultural economists, while keeping the list concise enough to be manageable in a survey. To achieve this, we considered two main criteria: (i) the journals in which members of our scientific community publish most frequently and (ii) the journals most often cited in their work.

To identify relevant journals, we created a list of all journal articles published between 2015 and 2020 by members of relevant research institutions in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. In total, 32 institutions were included (27 from Germany, three from Austria, and two from Switzerland - for a full list see Table A1 in the Appendix). A journal article co-authored by several members of the same institution was counted only once, while an article co-authored by members across several relevant institutions was counted repeatedly. This process yielded over 4,000 articles published in approximately 1,000 different journals.

We applied two criteria to reduce the number of journals: (i) the journal has to be indexed either in the Web of Science Master Journal List by Clarivate or in the Scopus® database by Elsevier,[1] and (ii) there had to be at least three publications in the journal from members of the included institutions between 2015 and 2020. As a result, the number of journals was first reduced to 700 (criterion (i)) and then to 240 (criterion (ii)).

Next, we analyzed citation patterns by researchers in our field. For this purpose, we used the Web of Science Core Collection, focusing on the 21 journals included in the Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE) in the category “Agricultural Economics and Policy”. We filtered for articles published between 2015 and 2020 with at least one author possessing an affiliation with an Austrian, German or Swiss research institution and identified 701 articles with 37,043 references. The number of articles and the number of references for all 21 journals is shown in Table A2 in the Appendix. Moreover, we counted the number of references for each of the 240 remaining journals received.

To rank journals by their influence within the field (Outreville et al., 2022), we computed a publication-citation index (I) for each of the 240 journals. The publication-citation-index for journal *z* (I_z) is derived by giving both dimensions, the number of publications (P_z) and the number of references (F_z), the same weight. To account for the fact that there are commonly more references than publications, we downscale the number of references for each journal by the ratio between the total numbers of these two dimensions $\left(\frac{\sum_z P_z}{\sum_z F_z}\right)$:

[1] As one reviewer rightly pointed out, since being incorporated in these lists usually takes time, we potentially loose some relatively new journals which will have an impact factor in the future. Most notably, the more recently established Open Science journal of the European Association of Agricultural Economists "*Q Open*" is therefore not part of our ranking.

$$I_z = P_z + \frac{\sum_z P_z}{\sum_z F_z} F_z \quad (1)$$

Journals with an index value $I_z \geq 7.5$ were included in the final list, resulting in 151 journals. In addition, we included eight highly cited "anchor journals" that did not meet the publication threshold: *American Economic Review*, *Econometrica, Journal of Development Economics*, *Journal of Political Economy*, *Journal of Econometrics*, *Review of Economics and Statistics*, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *Journal of Marketing Research*. We also included the Swiss *Journal of Socio-Economics in Agriculture* as anchor journal for the Switzerland-based members. This resulted in a final list of 160 journals, matching the number used in the 2009 ranking (Herrmann et al., 2011).

Although the total number of journals remains the same as in 2009 (see Table A3 in the Appendix), only 66 journals appear in both lists. This shift reflects both the substantial expansion of the journal market over the last two decades and considerable changes in the set of journals that members of the community typically consider relevant. The two journal lists differ markedly in disciplinary scope and thematic coverage. The recent list is highly interdisciplinary, spanning agricultural and food economics, environmental and resource economics, ecology, sustainability science, climate research, food science, nutrition, and consumer behavior, and also includes major multidisciplinary science outlets such as e.g. *PNAS* or *Nature Sustainability*. In contrast, the 2009 list was more narrowly economics-focused, emphasizing agricultural and applied economics, general economics and econometrics, agribusiness, and rural sociology. It also contained a substantial number of German-language, regionally-oriented journals (e.g. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, *Zeitschrift für Betriebswirtschaft*, and *Perspektiven der Wirtschaftspolitik*), which are mostly absent from the current list. Another difference is the publisher landscape, particularly the presence of journals from the Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute (MDPI) in the current list (e.g. *Sustainability, Land, Water*). By contrast, the 2009 list contained no MDPI journals.

2.2 Participant Recruitment

The survey was implemented as an online questionnaire in English to enable participation for all researchers of the relevant institutions. It was programmed using the software "Unipark" at Kiel University. After a pretest and subsequent adjustments, the survey link was sent to the members of GEWISOLA, ÖGA and SGA in March 2023. Additionally, professors with an agricultural economics focus at universities and universities of applied sciences in Germany, Austria and Switzerland as well as heads of research institutions or departments in this field were contacted to promote participation. The survey was also announced in the GEWISOLA newsletter. Two reminder messages were sent via the same mailing lists and the survey was closed on October 31st, 2023.

2.3 Questionnaire

The questionnaire design was based on the survey from 2009 (as presented in Dabbert et al., 2009, and Herrmann et al., 2011) to ensure comparability. While the journal assessment part basically replicates the approach in Herrmann et al. (2011), new features were also introduced. In addition to assessing journals, we also explored the motivations behind researchers' publication choices, allowing us to address whether and why submission behavior may deviate from perceived journal quality. This aspect is discussed further in Section 4.

The questionnaire, including the consent form, is available in the GJAE Journal Data Archive (https://doi.org/10.15456/gjae.2026065.1013382515). [2] It consisted of two parts. The first part focused on the evaluation of journals from our predetermined list. Respondents were first

[2] Please note, that the survey for the first GEWISOLA-ÖGA Ranking was in German, while the new survey is in English to enable participation for all researchers.

asked to indicate their familiarity with each journal as a reader, submitting author, or reviewer (Section A). Specifically, respondents were asked whether they had read at least one article, submitted at least one manuscript to it, or served as a reviewer for each journal since 2015. In the subsequent Sections, respondents assessed three dimensions of journal quality (Sections B to D), namely

(i) the scientific quality of published articles (Section B);
(ii) the reputation (Section C); [3]
(iii) the scientific quality of the review process (Section D).

In Section D, a note was included to clarify that the scientific quality of the review process encompasses both the quality of the comments received as well as the level of scientific rigor required. In all three Sections, respondents provided their assessments using a 10-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*extremely low*) to 10 (*extremely high*). The 10-point rating scale was chosen to maintain comparability with the 2009 survey.

Only respondents with experience as a reader, submitter and/or reviewer for a journal could participate in the assessment. The following rules applied: readers could assess the scientific quality of published articles and the reputation, but not the scientific quality of the review process. Submitters and reviewers, however, could assess all three dimensions – scientific quality of articles, reputation, and the scientific quality of the review process.

The second part of the questionnaire, included in Section E, focused on exploring the motivations and objectives guiding respondents when deciding where to submit their academic work. A growing body of theoretical and empirical literature on authors' submission behavior shows that the optimal submission sequence for an article depends on individual objectives. For example, Salinas and Munch (2015) show that authors often face a tradeoff between a higher impact factor and minimizing publication time, particularly when balancing multiple objectives.

In Section E, respondents rated the importance of various factors relevant to publication decisions, including the scientific level of a journal ("high impact factor"), its reputation ("high reputation in my field") and factors influencing opportunity costs ("probability of rejection"; "open access"; "quick and timely review process" and "quick and timely publication after acceptance"). These factors were evaluated on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not important at all*) to 7 (*very important*).

Finally, Section F collected information on respondents' sociodemographic and academic profiles, including gender, age, scientific qualification, professional position and peer-reviewed publications per year. To capture research subfields, we followed Cei et al. (2022) but added the field of rural sociology and replaced "Econometrics in agricultural and resource economics" by the more general category "Research methods".

2.4 Journal Quality Assessment

Following the approach of Herrmann et al. (2011) we calculated a quality index for each journal z (QI_z) based on two of the three assessed journal dimensions, i.e.

- respondents' assessment of the scientific quality of the journal z (SQ_z);
- respondents' assessment of the scientific quality of the review process (review process quality) of the journal z (RQ_z).

[3] Please note, that in the first GEWISOLA-ÖGA Ranking participants were asked about the "relevance" rather than the "reputation" of a journal. However, neither of these two dimensions was used to derive the final ranking.

For deriving QI_z, average assessments of SQ_z and RQ_z were used to avoid assigning systematically higher weights to the scientific quality of the journals (as more participants rated SQ_Z than RQ_Z):

$$\overline{SQ}_z = \frac{1}{n_z}\sum_{i=1}^{n_z} SQ_{zi} \tag{2}$$

and

$$\overline{RQ}_z = \frac{1}{m_z}\sum_{i=1}^{m_z} RQ_{zi} \tag{3}$$

with n_z = number of respondents assessing *SQ* of journal *z*, and m_z = number of respondents assessing *RQ* of journal *z*. Furthermore, two conditions were set for journals to be considered for receiving a *QI* value:

Condition 1: to limit the influence of individual assessments and mitigate bias from a low number of available assessments, the condition $n_z + m_z \geq 10$ must hold.

Condition 2: to ensure the relevance of the journals being included, at least one submission to a journal must have been indicated by the respondents. Hence, the number of submissions to a journal *z* must be greater than zero.

In general, the scientific quality (*SQ)* and the review process quality (*RQ*) were weighted equally. However, to account for lower reliability of $\overline{RQ}_z$ when few review quality assessments are available (m_z), a weighting factor was applied for cases with ten or less assessments.

Therefore:

$$QI_z = (1 - a_z)\overline{SQ}_z + a_z\overline{RQ}_z \tag{4}$$

with

$$a_z = \begin{cases} 0.5 \; for \; m_z > 10, \\ 0.05 m_z \; for \; 0 \leq m_z \leq 10. \end{cases}$$

This approach implies equal weights for *RQ* and *SQ* if there are at least ten assessments of *RQ* available for a given journal. The weight for *RQ* continuously decreases with the number of assessments, approaching 0.05 if only one assessment is available. The threshold of ten assessments seems reasonable since the average number of *RQ* assessments is 16, while the average total number of assessments is 65. In total, 81 journals have fewer than ten *RQ* assessments.

All analyses were carried out in STATA 19 or Excel.

3 Results

In Section 3.1 we present the most influential journals within the field of agricultural economics and continue with the profiles of the survey respondents in Section 3.2. In subsequent Sections 3.3 and 3.4, we provide quality assessments and assessments of the reputation of the journals, respectively.

3.1 Most Influential Journals

Based on our data, the six journals in the sample in which members of our 32 institutions have published most often (see Table A3) are *Sustainability* with 151 publications, *Berichte über*

Landwirtschaft (N = 135), *German Journal of Agricultural Economics* (N = 109), *Land Use Policy* (N = 89), *Ecological Economics* (N = 79) and *European Review of Agricultural Economics* (N = 70). The mean number of publications in all 160 journals is 15.2, the median is 8.

The six journals which were found most often in the references of 701 articles published by researchers from Germany, Austria and Switzerland in the 21 sampled SCIE journals are the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* with 1251 citations, *Food Policy* (742), *Agricultural Economics (638), World Development* (584), *Journal of Agricultural Economics* (486), and *European Review of Agricultural Economics* (471). The mean number of references given to our 160 journals is 81.1, the median is 331. The correlation coefficient between the number of publications and the number of citations is positive but relatively low with 0.24.

Equally weighting publications and citations, the six most influential journals in the agricultural economics research field are *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* with an I_z of 310.5, *Food Policy* (I_z = 217.8), *Agricultural Economics* (I_z = 187.8*), European Review of Agricultural Economics* (I_z = 183.5), *Journal of Agricultural Economics* (I_z = 178.1), and *World Development* (I_z = 175.8)[4].

3.2 Profile of Respondents

In total, data from 304 respondents were included for further analysis. Most respondents were male (62.5%), followed by female respondents (36.2%) and respondents from a diverse gender (1.3%). Approximately one third of respondents were under 35 years of age and another third were between 35 and 44 years of age. Just over half (53.2%) had a PhD degree as their highest qualification, around 23% a Master's degree and 22% a Habilitation.

In terms of affiliation, 63.5% of respondents indicated that they were affiliated to a university, followed by a research institution (27.6%) and a university of applied sciences (7.6%). The remaining 1.3% indicated administration or other.

Regarding publication frequency, Figure 1 illustrates that most respondents indicated publishing one to two papers per year (53%). Around one quarter of our respondents stated to publish three to five papers per year. We also have respondents in our sample who have never published a paper so far (7.9%).

[4] As noted by a reviewer, ***World Development*** is not a narrowly defined agricultural economics journal but a highly interdisciplinary outlet with a primary readership in development studies and (human) geography. Its prominence in citation-based analyses may therefore reflect both the strong engagement of agricultural economists in development research and the journal's high publication volume, which - other things equal - increases the likelihood of being cited.

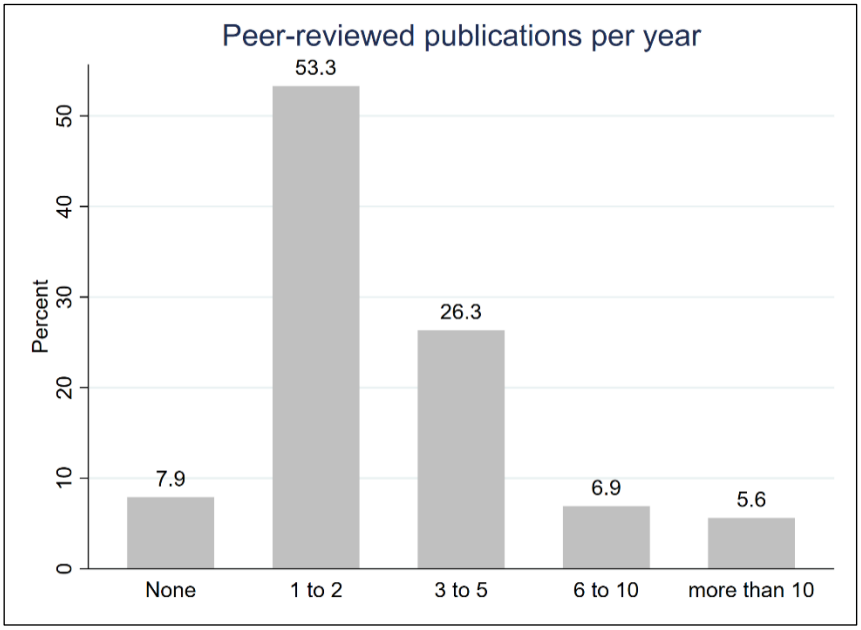

Figure 1. Respondents' publication frequency with respect to peer-reviewed publications

Source: own calculation based on survey data

Regarding research subfields, most respondents indicated agricultural policy (42.8%), followed by environmental economics (33.2%), production and farm management (31.3%), food and consumer economics (25.3%) and agricultural markets (19.1%). Respondents could select multiple research fields.

3.3 Respondents' Assessments of Journal Quality

The main results of the survey-based quality assessment are presented in Table 1. Of the 160 journals, 152 met the inclusion criteria outlined in Section 2.4 and received a *QI* value.

Journals from the fields of economics and econometrics are ranked first with the highest QI_Z: *Journal of Political Economy* (1), the *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (2), the *American Economic Review* (3), *Econometrica* (4), the *Journal of Econometrics* (5), and the *Review of Economics and Statistics* (6). Several general Science journals also rank very highly, including *PNAS* (9), *Science* (10), *Nature Climate Chan*ge (11) and *Nature Communications* (16). More social science-orientated journals such as the *Journal of Business Ethics* (14) and *Sociologia Ruralis* (17) can be found in high ranks as well. Among journals explicitly from the field of agricultural economics, the top three are the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* (7), the *European Review of Agricultural Economics* (18), and *Food Policy* (19).

Table 1. Main results of the quality assessment[a)]

Rank no.	Journal	Mean *SQ* (sd)	Mean *RQ* (sd)	Number of assessments $(\boldsymbol{n_z + m_z})$	Quality Index *QI*	Mean *R* (sd)
1	*Journal of Political Economy*	9.69 (0.69)	9.67 (0.58)	42	9.69	9.68 (0.85)
2	*Quarterly Journal of Economics*	9.65 (0.73)	9.67 (0.58)	63	9.65	9.80 (0.54)
3	*American Economic Review*	9.60 (0.80)	9.80 (0.45)	112	9.65	9.78 (0.64)
4	*Econometrica*	9.56 (0.81)	9.00 (1.41)	81	9.50	9.76 (0.66)
5	*Journal of Econometrics*	9.35 (0.90)	10.00 (0.00)	48	9.41	9.30 (1.10)
6	*Review of Economics and Statistics*	9.31 (1.02)	8.00 (2.00)	48	9.11	9.43 (0.94)
7	*American Journal of Agricultural Economics*	8.95 (1.44)	8.67 (1.87)	231	8.81	9.29 (1.31)
8	*Journal of Productivity Analysis*	8.54 (1.10)	9.33 (1.03)	34	8.77	8.56 (1.37)
9	*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*	8.89 (1.21)	8.45 (1.37)	86	8.67	9.38 (0.79)
10	*Science*	9.12 (1.41)	8.00 (3.12)	114	8.67	9.71 (0.97)
11	*Nature Climate Change*	8.91 (1.38)	8.36 (1.50)	89	8.64	9.38 (0.86)
12	*Journal of Development Economics*	8.91 (1.54)	8.30 (2.45)	67	8.61	8.97 (1.59)
13	*Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*	8.47 (1.23)	8.61 (0.85)	67	8.54	8.47 (1.45)
14	*Journal of Business Ethics*	8.86 (1.23)	7.67 (2.07)	20	8.50	9.00 (1.20)
15	*European Journal of Operational Research*	8.50 (0.89)	8.33 (1.53)	19	8.48	8.73 (1.10)
16	*Nature Communications*	8.49 (1.48)	8.18 (2.13)	122	8.33	9.12 (1.13)
17	*Sociologia Ruralis*	8.04 (1.27)	8.60 (1.30)	72	8.32	8.08 (1.30)
18	*European Review of Agricultural Economics*	8.41 (1.42)	8.21 (1.83)	261	8.31	8.74 (1.35)
19	*Food Policy*	8.37 (1.30)	8.14 (1.63)	291	8.25	8.76 (1.26)
20	*Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*	8.15 (1.46)	8.33 (1.05)	62	8.24	8.23 (1.43)
21	*Environmental Modelling and Software*	7.79 (1.59)	8.78 (1.09)	33	8.24	7.95 (1.65)
22	*World Development*	8.17 (1.36)	8.20 (1.76)	146	8.18	8.52 (1.56)
23	*Journal of Agricultural Economics*	8.13 (1.33)	8.09 (1.53)	235	8.11	8.49 (1.14)
24	*Journal of Business Research*	8.31 (2.09)	7.57 (0.53)	23	8.05	8.73 (1.33)
25	*Agricultural Economics*	8.09 (1.33)	7.96 (1.56)	251	8.02	8.28 (1.31)
26	*Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning*	7.83 (1.37)	8.60 (0.55)	28	8.02	7.82 (1.30)
27	*Conservation Letters*	8.02 (1.44)	8.00 (1.22)	45	8.02	8.00 (1.63)
28	*Journal of Economic Psychology*	7.38 (1.83)	9.50 (0.55)	27	8.02	7.65 (1.87)
29	*Global Environmental Change*	8.02 (1.32)	8.00 (1.56)	73	8.01	8.38 (1.49)
30	*European Journal of Marketing*	8.00 (1.54)	8.00 (1.41)	19	8.00	7.86 (1.41)
31	*Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*	7.85 (1.47)	8.12 (1.47)	151	7.99	7.75 (1.55)
32	*Ecology and Society*	7.89 (1.53)	8.00 (1.65)	82	7.94	7.83 (1.61)
33	*Nature Sustainability*	8.56 (1.46)	7.30 (2.70)	135	7.93	9.13 (1.14)
34	*Agriculture and Human Values*	7.64 (1.44)	8.17 (1.52)	110	7.90	7.58 (1.39)
35	*Journal of Marketing Research*	8.11 (2.05)	7.00 (3.16)	23	7.88	7.84 (2.34)
36	*Land Economics*	7.82 (1.37)	7.94 (1.70)	89	7.88	7.68 (1.46)
37	*Annual Review of Resource Economics*	7.96 (1.70)	7.75 (1.86)	89	7.86	8.48 (1.59)
38	*Environmental Research Letters*	8.11 (1.32)	7.60 (1.58)	57	7.85	7.83 (1.45)
39	*Trends in Food Science and Technology*	7.67 (1.35)	8.50 (0.58)	19	7.83	7.13 (1.31)
40	*Journal of Peasant Studies*	7.74 (1.50)	8.00 (2.24)	41	7.83	7.80 (1.88)

Rank no.	Journal	Mean *SQ* (sd)	Mean *RQ* (sd)	Number of assessments ($n_z + m_z$)	Quality Index *QI*	Mean *R* (sd)
41	*Environmental Management*	7.83 (1.21)	7.80 (1.10)	41	7.83	7.80 (1.04)
42	*Conservation Biology*	7.75 (1.54)	8.50 (0.71)	26	7.82	8.08 (1.38)
43	*Social Indicators Research*	7.55 (1.69)	9.33 (0.58)	14	7.81	7.00 (2.04)
44	*Technological Forecasting and Social Change*	7.96 (1.26)	7.67 (1.15)	35	7.81	7.82 (1.59)
45	*GCB Bioenergy*	7.67 (1.41)	10.00 (0.00)	10	7.78	8.00 (1.67)
46	*Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy*	7.54 (1.55)	7.94 (1.71)	135	7.74	7.57 (1.6)
47	*Livestock Science*	7.64 (1.86)	8.00 (1.73)	19	7.73	6.87 (2.07)
48	*Journal of Rural Studies*	7.51 (1.55)	7.95 (2.15)	135	7.73	7.69 (1.46)
49	*Climate Risk Management*	7.57 (1.54)	8.00 (1.63)	28	7.72	7.64 (1.50)
50	*Environmental and Resource Economics*	7.94 (1.18)	7.50 (2.68)	77	7.72	8.11 (1.27)
51	*Ecological Economics*	7.72 (1.40)	7.70 (1.51)	236	7.71	7.90 (1.41)
52	*Environmental Science and Policy*	7.53 (1.41)	7.88 (1.20)	48	7.70	7.00 (1.49)
53	*Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews*	7.69 (2.10)	7.71 (0.95)	20	7.70	7.46 (2.07)
54	*Climate Policy*	7.67 (1.24)	8.00 (1.41)	32	7.70	8.06 (1.12)
55	*Journal of Development Studies*	7.58 (1.65)	7.75 (1.86)	73	7.67	7.62 (1.74)
56	*Energy Economics*	7.58 (1.51)	7.71 (1.64)	62	7.65	7.77 (1.58)
57	*Journal of Environmental Management*	7.77 (1.71)	7.50 (1.67)	81	7.64	7.71 (1.76)
58	*Agricultural Systems*	7.63 (1.55)	7.59 (2.03)	184	7.61	7.81 (1.63)
59	*Journal of Economic Surveys*	7.34 (1.75)	8.17 (0.98)	38	7.59	7.50 (2.03)
60	*Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics*	7.42 (1.52)	7.70 (1.70)	79	7.56	7.13 (1.57)
61	*Forest Policy and Economics*	7.26 (1.32)	7.71 (1.83)	48	7.48	7.38 (1.43)
62	*Global Food Security*	7.76 (1.44)	7.20 (2.15)	43	7.48	8.42 (1.46)
63	*Empirical Economics*	7.30 (1.42)	8.00 (0.71)	38	7.48	7.20 (1.51)
64	*Food Security*	7.38 (1.61)	7.56 (1.82)	56	7.47	7.63 (1.44)
65	*World Economy*	7.46 (1.61)	7.50 (2.65)	28	7.47	7.55 (1.90)
66	*Precision Agriculture*	7.37 (1.55)	7.54 (2.33)	51	7.45	7.15 (1.72)
67	*Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*	7.32 (1.19)	8.50 (0.71)	33	7.44	7.27 (1.28)
68	*Renewable Energy*	7.57 (1.74)	7.14 (2.19)	21	7.42	7.27 (2.00)
69	*Aquaculture Economics and Management*	7.43 (0.79)	7.33 (2.08)	10	7.41	7.57 (0.79)
70	*Remote Sensing of Environment*	7.33 (2.12)	8.00 (2.83)	11	7.40	7.55 (1.97)
71	*Biomass and Bioenergy*	7.50 (1.82)	7.14 (1.86)	35	7.38	7.32 (1.67)
72	*Ecosystem Services*	7.16 (1.60)	7.58 (2.11)	55	7.37	7.39 (1.87)
73	*Agricultural Water Management*	6.96 (1.36)	8.60 (1.14)	28	7.37	6.77 (1.54)
74	*Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*	7.39 (1.29)	7.33 (1.50)	95	7.36	7.26 (1.48)
75	*Appetite*	7.08 (2.06)	7.60 (1.38)	94	7.34	7.12 (1.97)
76	*Energy Research and Social Science*	7.40 (2.16)	7.22 (1.79)	24	7.32	7.20 (2.11)
77	*Environment, Development and Sustainability*	7.31 (1.69)	7.30 (2.16)	39	7.31	7.07 (1.41)
78	*International Journal of the Commons*	6.93 (1.90)	8.17 (1.17)	20	7.30	6.93 (2.02)
79	*Climatic Change*	7.77 (1.29)	6.83 (1.85)	59	7.30	7.62 (1.40)
80	*Journal of Land Use Science*	7.40 (1.35)	7.00 (1.79)	31	7.28	7.25 (1.86)
81	*Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*	7.50 (0.97)	7.00 (2.06)	25	7.28	7.25 (1.39)
82	*Food Quality and Preference*	7.33 (2.36)	7.18 (2.39)	81	7.26	7.15 (2.36)

Rank no.	Journal	Mean *SQ* (sd)	Mean *RQ* (sd)	Number of assessments ($n_z + m_z$)	Quality Index *QI*	Mean *R* (sd)
83	*Meat Science*	6.90 (1.73)	8.00 (1.55)	27	7.23	6.57 (1.72)
84	*Agribusiness*	7.04 (1.37)	7.42 (1.35)	160	7.23	6.82 (1.59)
85	*Waste Management*	7.25 (1.71)	7.00 (2.83)	14	7.22	6.78 (1.99)
86	*NJAS - Wageningen Journal of Life Sciences*	6.95 (1.57)	7.71 (2.21)	50	7.22	6.59 (1.86)
87	*International Journal of Consumer Studies*	7.52 (1.25)	6.92 (1.00)	39	7.22	7.17 (1.11)
88	*Scientific Reports*	7.23 (1.92)	7.17 (1.47)	50	7.21	7.50 (2.04)
89	*China Economic Review*	6.92 (1.44)	7.83 (1.33)	31	7.19	7.04 (1.88)
90	*Journal of Risk Research*	7.23 (1.09)	6.50 (0.71)	15	7.16	7.00 (1.04)
91	*Applied Energy*	7.00 (1.55)	7.60 (1.67)	21	7.15	7.44 (1.97)
92	*Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*	7.07 (1.53)	7.33 (1.51)	21	7.15	6.75 (1.73)
93	*Public Health Nutrition*	7.10 (1.86)	7.13 (1.13)	28	7.11	7.29 (1.72)
94	*Computers and Electronics in Agriculture*	6.68 (1.94)	7.53 (1.91)	58	7.11	6.93 (1.72)
95	*Regional Environmental Change*	7.36 (1.06)	6.82 (1.40)	44	7.09	7.34 (1.41)
96	*Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics*	7.29 (1.72)	6.86 (2.52)	130	7.08	7.32 (1.68)
97	*European Journal of Agronomy*	7.13 (1.36)	6.00 (0.00)	17	7.07	7.50 (1.59)
98	*Land Use Policy*	7.29 (1.68)	6.84 (2.38)	247	7.07	7.35 (1.77)
99	*Journal of Socio-Economics in Agriculture*	6.89 (2.09)	8.00 (1.41)	11	7.00	6.75 (1.67)
100	*Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension*	6.75 (1.57)	7.50 (1.97)	22	6.97	6.57 (1.70)
101	*Economic Modelling*	7.41 (1.54)	6.50 (2.37)	47	6.95	7.34 (1.62)
102	*Energy Policy*	7.55 (1.62)	6.35 (1.66)	70	6.95	7.57 (1.57)
103	*Poultry Science*	6.75 (1.91)	8.50 (0.71)	10	6.93	5.67 (2.00)
104	*Applied Economics*	7.08 (1.63)	6.76 (2.33)	109	6.92	7.12 (1.61)
105	*Agricultural and Food Economics*	7.17 (1.47)	6.67 (1.76)	86	6.92	7.07 (1.65)
106	*Journal of Dairy Science*	6.84 (1.90)	7.00 (2.24)	47	6.91	6.90 (1.94)
107	*British Journal of Nutrition*	7.00 (1.94)	5.00 (0.00)	10	6.90	8.22 (2.22)
108	*Ecological Indicators*	7.20 (1.20)	6.44 (2.74)	49	6.86	7.53 (1.59)
109	*Agricultural Finance Review*	6.63 (1.61)	7.05 (2.13)	68	6.84	6.51 (1.64)
110	*Applied Economics Letters*	6.79 (1.75)	6.88 (2.47)	70	6.84	6.83 (1.98)
111	*Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*	6.72 (1.88)	7.00 (1.69)	33	6.83	6.71 (1.78)
112	*PLOS ONE*	6.81 (1.89)	6.76 (2.05)	217	6.78	6.85 (2.09)
113	*Journal of Agricultural and Food Industrial Organization*	6.50 (1.47)	7.29 (2.06)	27	6.78	6.21 (2.07)
114	*European Journal of Development Research*	6.58 (1.74)	6.89 (1.76)	33	6.72	6.50 (2.00)
115	*Journal of International Development*	6.88 (1.82)	6.33 (1.51)	22	6.71	6.60 (1.80)
116	*British Food Journal*	6.35 (1.62)	7.00 (1.58)	126	6.68	6.43 (1.70)
117	*China Agricultural Economic Review*	6.51 (1.70)	6.83 (2.25)	47	6.67	6.44 (1.95)
118	*Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics*	6.94 (2.47)	6.29 (3.26)	52	6.62	6.80 (2.29)
119	*Food Control*	6.43 (1.99)	7.67 (1.15)	10	6.61	6.71 (1.80)
120	*Bio-based and Applied Economics*	6.36 (1.60)	6.86 (1.95)	32	6.53	5.81 (1.80)
121	*Journal of Integrative Agriculture*	6.14 (1.57)	8.33 (2.08)	10	6.47	6.14 (1.77)
122	*Energy*	6.55 (1.65)	6.29 (2.50)	29	6.45	6.38 (1.86)
123	*Studies in Agricultural Economics*	6.22 (1.93)	8.50 (0.71)	20	6.45	6.71 (2.02)
124	*Water (Switzerland)*	6.40 (2.12)	6.40 (2.41)	15	6.40	5.56 (2.46)
125	*Journal of Cleaner Production*	6.77 (2.17)	6.00 (2.66)	198	6.38	6.67 (2.31)

Rank no.	Journal	Mean *SQ* (sd)	Mean *RQ* (sd)	Number of assessments ($n_z + m_z$)	Quality Index *QI*	Mean *R* (sd)
126	*Journal of Food Products Marketing*	6.36 (2.06)	6.40 (1.52)	16	6.37	6.25 (2.01)
127	*Outlook on Agriculture*	6.33 (1.64)	6.29 (2.43)	34	6.32	6.28 (1.57)
128	*International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability*	6.50 (1.34)	4.67 (3.21)	17	6.22	6.53 (1.87)
129	*German Journal of Agricultural Economics*	5.99 (1.78)	6.46 (2.01)	235	6.22	5.25 (1.96)
130	*Journal of Policy Modeling*	6.46 (1.69)	5.25 (3.10)	28	6.22	6.30 (1.53)
131	*EuroChoices*	5.70 (1.77)	6.39 (1.50)	116	6.05	5.68 (1.85)
132	*Data in Brief*	6.05 (2.22)	6.00 (2.83)	53	6.03	5.45 (1.98)
133	*Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*	5.82 (1.63)	7.50 (2.12)	19	5.99	5.76 (1.75)
134	*Forests*	5.80 (2.30)	6.75 (3.86)	14	5.99	5.20 (2.66)
135	*GAIA*	5.81 (1.72)	6.00 (1.96)	61	5.91	5.98 (1.94)
136	*International Food and Agribusiness Management Review*	5.95 (1.52)	5.84 (1.42)	57	5.89	5.94 (1.58)
137	*Journal of Environmental Psychology*	6.20 (2.75)	5.44 (3.17)	29	5.86	6.44 (2.81)
138	*Organic Agriculture*	6.03 (1.50)	5.67 (2.53)	50	5.85	5.71 (1.71)
139	*Journal of International Food and Agribusiness Marketing.*	5.92 (1.26)	5.50 (2.08)	17	5.84	6.42 (1.78)
140	*Journal of Consumer Protection and Food Safety*	5.64 (2.11)	6.50 (2.08)	15	5.81	4.70 (2.58)
141	*African Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*	5.69 (1.44)	6.00 (2.00)	36	5.80	5.75 (1.38)
142	*Journal of Agriculture and Rural Development in the Tropics and Subtropics*	5.75 (2.30)	5.67 (3.06)	15	5.74	5.18 (2.40)
143	*Austrian Journal of Agricultural Economics and Rural Studies*	5.15 (2.22)	5.89 (2.23)	80	5.52	4.94 (2.19)
144	*International Journal on Food System Dynamics*	5.38 (1.81)	5.36 (1.91)	37	5.37	5.42 (1.64)
145	*Resources*	5.56 (3.24)	4.20 (2.77)	14	5.22	5.89 (3.10)
146	*Nutrients*	5.06 (2.19)	6.00 (1.73)	20	5.20	4.13 (1.89)
147	*Landbauforschung*	4.65 (1.98)	6.00 (1.41)	24	4.92	3.74 (1.69)
148	*Land*	5.27 (2.59)	4.55 (3.02)	82	4.91	4.71 (2.72)
149	*Agriculture (Switzerland)*	4.85 (2.17)	4.57 (2.41)	40	4.71	4.25 (2.19)
150	*Ernährungs Umschau*	4.38 (1.52)	4.75 (2.12)	40	4.53	4.29 (1.83)
151	*Sustainability*	4.45 (2.05)	4.23 (2.57)	258	4.34	3.93 (2.32)
152	*Berichte über Landwirtschaft*	4.02 (1.59)	3.28 (1.99)	165	3.65	3.66 (1.83)
153	*Psychology and Marketing*	8.20 (1.32)	.	10 ($m_z = 0$)	.	8.43 (0.98)
154	*Animal Welfare*	6.40 (1.51)	.	10 ($m_z = 0$)	.	5.75 (1.49)
155	*Earth's Future*	8.00 (1.41)	.	< 10	.	7.75 (1.50)
156	*International Journal of Wine Business Research*	5.20 (1.64)	3.00 (0.00)	< 10 and $N_{submit} = 0$	.	4.67 (1.63)
157	*Social Science and Medicine*	8.40 (1.52)	7.50 (2.12)	< 10	.	6.60 (2.30)
158	*Systemic Practice and Action Research*	7.14 (2.12)	6.50 (2.12)	< 10	.	7.00 (1.91)
159	*Environment and Behavior*	7.15 (1.63)	.	13 ($N_{submit} = 0$)	.	7.62 (1.12)
160	*Wine Economics and Policy*	6.93 (1.21)	.	14 ($N_{submit} = 0$)	.	6.23 (1.96)

[a)] The table includes mean values and standard deviations of the three journal quality dimensions per journal, the total number of assessments available and the final quality index. *R* denotes reputation, *SQ* denotes scientific quality and RQ denotes review process quality.
Source: own calculation based on survey data

To further summarize these journal quality and reputation measures, aggregate descriptive statistics are presented in Table 2. The calculations are based on the journal-specific arithmetic means of the quality index (*QI*), its components – scientific quality (*SQ*) and review quality (*RQ*) – and reputation (*R*), as reported in Table 1. The distribution of these journal-specific means is summarized using mean values and measures of dispersion. In addition, the table reports correlations between reputation (R) and QI, as well as its components (SQ and RQ), across journals.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics on reputation and quality[a)]

Statistical indicator	*SQ*	*RQ*	*QI*	*R*
Arithmetic mean	7.23	7.32	7.23	7.20
Median	7.33	7.50	7.31	7.27
Standard deviation	1.07	1.18	1.05	1.25
Coefficient of variation	14.75	16.14	14.46	17.43
Correlation coefficient: *R* and ….	0.97	0.72	0.94	-

[a)] The statistical indicators are computed for the mean values of *SQ*, *RQ*, *QI and R,* across the first 152 journals shown in Table 1.
Source: own calculation based on survey data

Overall, the distribution of journal assessments is left-skewed indicating most journals received relatively high ratings. Notably, a large share of journals has a mean assessment above 5.5, i.e. at the right-hand side of the Likert scale. The median *QI* across all journals is 7.31, indicating that 76 journals (50% of the sample) achieve a *QI* of 7.31 or higher. This number increases for lower thresholds: 98 journals have a mean *QI* of 7.0 or higher, and 143 of the 152 journals achieve a mean *QI* of 5.5 or higher. A similar pattern is visible for the individual components of the *QI*. The median *SQ* is lower (7.33) than the median *RQ* (7.50). A plausible reason for the left-skewed distribution might be that the journal list already excluded a considerable number of journals with lower quality.

Table 1 shows a broad set of journals in agricultural economics and neighboring disciplines which are perceived by the respondents as being of high, good or solid scientific quality. This is illustrated further in Table 3, which focuses on the subset of “core” agricultural economics journals. The subset includes all journals in the Web of Science Core Collection in the category “Agricultural Economics and Policy” which are part of our ranking plus the journal of the Austrian association ÖGA (*Austrian Journal of Agricultural Economics and Rural Studies)* and the Swiss national anchor journal (*Journal of Socio-Economics in Agriculture)*. Table 3 reveals that among these core journals, five have a mean *QI* of 8.00 or higher, nine fall between 7.00 and 7.99, seven between 6.00 and 6.99, and three between 5.50 and 5.99.

Table 3. Ranking of core journals

Name of the journal	*QI*
American Journal of Agricultural Economics	8.81
European Review of Agricultural Economics	8.31
Food Policy	8.25
Journal of Agricultural Economics	8.11
Agricultural Economics	8.02
Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics	7.99
Annual Review of Resource Economics	7.86
Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy	7.74
Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics	7.56
Aquaculture Economics and Management	7.41
Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics	7.36
Agribusiness	7.23
Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics	7.08
Journal of Socio-Economics in Agriculture	7.00
Agricultural and Food Economics	6.92
Agricultural Finance Review	6.84
British Food Journal	6.68
China Agricultural Economic Review	6.67
Studies in Agricultural Economics	6.45
German Journal of Agricultural Economics	6.22
EuroChoices	6.05
International Food and Agribusiness Management Review	5.89
African Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics.	5.80
Austrian Journal of Agricultural Economics and Rural Studies	5.52

Source: own calculation based on survey data

A list of journals with a high or good scientific quality can also be derived for specialized fields such as environmental and resource economics and environmental science. This is an important field with growing importance for our members: 31% of our respondents see one of their research fields in “Environmental economics”, 21% in “Resource economics and conservation”. A substantial share of the new journals which were not included in the first survey has this focus. In environmental and resource economics, there are six journals with a *QI* above the median (7.31) including *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management* (8.54), *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning* (8.02), *Global Environmental Change* (8.01), *Annual Review of Resource Economics* (7.86), *Environmental and Resource Economics* (7.72), and *Ecological Economics* (7.71). Moreover, more than 10 multidisciplinary journals of environmental science are in the same upper range of *QI* such as *Environmental Modeling and Software* (8.24), *Conservation Letters* (8.02), *Ecology and Society* (7.94), *Environmental Research Letters* (7.85), *Environmental Management* (7.83), *Conservation Biology* (7.82), *GCB Bioenergy* (7.78), *Climate Risk Management* (7.72), *Climate Policy,* and *Environmental Science and Policy* (both 7.70).

Only a small share of journals – those ranked between 144 and 152 – received assessments with a *QI* below the midpoint of the Likert scale. Among these nine journals, five belong to the MDPI: *Resources* (5.22), *Nutrients* (5.20), *Land* (4.91), *Agriculture* (4.71), and *Sustainability* (4.34). In addition, three German journals (*Landbauforschung*, *Ernährungs Umschau,* and *Berichte über Landwirtschaft)* also received mean *QI* values below 5.5.

Finally, we compare the *QI* with selected metrics from the Journal Citation Reports™ of Web of Science: The 2023 Journal Impact Factor (*JIF*), the 5-Year *JIF* (2019 - 2023), the category-normalized Journal Citation Index (*JCI*), and the *QI* from the first ranking by Herrmann et al. (2011). Table 4 shows positive and statistically significant Pearson correlation coefficients between all five indices. The correlation between the current *QI* and the *JIF* is 0.38, only slightly

smaller than the 0.43 reported in the first survey. The correlation coefficient between the *QI* and the 5-year *JIF* is 0.42, while – as expected – the highest correlation is with the *JCI*, which accounts for disciplinary differences in citation frequencies.[5] The correlation coefficient between the new and the old *QI* is relatively high with 0.85, although only 66 journals appear in both rankings.

Table 4. Correlation coefficients between the new and the old QI and selected Web of Science indicators

		QI	*JIF*	*JIF5*	*JCI*
JIF	**Corr.coeff.**	**0.38**			
	P-value	0.000			
	N obs.	147			
JIF5	**Corr.coeff**.	**0.42**	**0.98**		
	P-value	0.000	0.000		
	N obs.	145	152		
JCI	**Corr.coeff.**	**0.47**	**0.91**	**0.93**	
	P-value	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N obs.	146	153	151	
QI old	**Corr.coeff.**	**0.85**	**0.44**	**0.49**	**0.46**
	P-value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N obs.	66	62	62	61

Source: own calculation

Survey responses on publication motivations complement our journal-level results. Respondents ranked "highest reputation in my research field" as the most important submission criterion (M = 6.1, SD = 1.1), followed by "Journal has a readership I want to reach" (M = 5.3, SD = 1.6), "high impact factor" (M = 5.3, SD = 1.3), "quick and timely review process" (M = 5.2, SD = 1.51), "open access" (M = 4.7, SD = 1.7) and "quick and timely publication after acceptance" (M = 4.4, SD = 1.8). The motivations "probability of rejection" and "low publishing costs" tend to be less important (M = 4.2, SD = 1.5 and M = 3.9, SD=1.8, respectively).

3.4 Reputation and Quality

Table 1 also reports the arithmetic means of reputation (*R*) for all journals. Although reputation does not enter the *QI*, it is relevant to examine whether the assessments of reputation and scientific quality differ systematically. The correlation coefficient between *R* and *QI* is 0.94 (Table 2). The correlation is particularly high between *R* and *SQ* (0.97), but lower for *R* and *RQ* (0.72). While all correlation coefficients are positive and highly statistically significant, the variation in reputation is greater than for the *QI*, with a standard deviation *s* (coefficient of variation *v*) of 1.25 (17.4%) for *R* compared to 1.05 (14.5%) for *QI.*

Further insights arise when examining differences between *R* and *QI* across quartiles of journals. In the top quartile (38 journals), the mean *QI* is 8.42, while the mean *R* is even higher with 8.63. Reputation thus tends to be rated above scientific quality at the top end. The largest differences between the mean *R* and *QI* occur for highly rated general Science journals such as *Nature Sustainability* (+1.20), *Science* (+1.04), *Nature Communications* (+0.79), and *Nature Climate Change* (+0.74). This may reflect these journals' role in communicating research across fields, where accessibility and broad readership enhance perceived reputation.

[5] Different categories as defined in Web of Science differ in size and citation frequency. For example, based on the 2024 Journal citation reports, the category Agricultural Economics and Policy includes 43 journals with 2,190 citable items and 68,878 citations, while the category Environmental Sciences includes 376 journals with 106,208 citable items and 5,163,397 citations. These differences between categories imply that the median JIF in the category Agricultural Economics and Policy is 1.5, while it is about double the size (3.1) in the category Environmental Sciences. In contrast, the JCI is category normalized, i.e. the average JCI in each category is 1.

A similar pattern appears for some of the highest-ranked agricultural economics journals: *Annual Review of Resource Economics* (+0.62), *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* (+0.48), *European Review of Agricultural Economics* (+0.43), *Food Policy* (+0.38), and *Journal of Agricultural Economics* (+0.38). Among high ranked business and economic journals, *Journal of Business Research* (+0.68), *Journal of Business Ethics* (+0.50), and *World Development* (+0.34) also show higher R than QI. Overall, mean R exceeds mean QI for 21 journals in the first quartile. The pattern is reversed for 17 journals with (QI > R) and a negative difference between R and QI. The difference is strongest for *Agriculture and Human Values* (-0.32), *Sociologia Ruralis* (-0.24), *Environmental Modelling and Software* (-0.29), and *Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics* (-0.24).

In the second, third, and fourth quartiles, mean differences between *R* and *QI* are on average negative (-0.08, -0.03, -0.22), indicating slightly higher assessments of scientific quality compared to reputation. Some agricultural and resource economics journals in the second and third quartile received clearly better assessments of *QI* compared to *R*: *Journal of Agricultural and Food Industrial Organization* (+0.56), *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics* (+0.43), and *Agribusiness* (+0.41). Conversely, *Global Food Security* (-0.94), *Ecological Indicators* (-0.67), *Energy Policy* (-0.62) and *Land Use Policy* (-0.28) display higher reputational assessments.

In the fourth quartile, this tendency is most pronounced: the mean *QI* (5.85) exceeds mean *R* (5.63) for 25 of 38 journals. The largest positive differences are found among journals published in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, such as *Landbauforschung* (+1.18), *Journal of Consumer Protection and Food Safety* (+1.11), the *German Journal of Agricultural Economics* (+0.98), the *Austrian Journal of Agricultural Economics and Rural Studies* (+0.58*)*, and *Agriculture* (+0.46*)*. Several other international agricultural and food economics journals - *Bio-based and Applied Economics* (+0.72), *EuroChoices* (+0.36), *British Food Journal* (+0.25), and *China Agricultural Economic Journal* (+0.23) – follow this pattern. Among open-access multidisciplinary journals, *Nutrients* (+1.07), *Water* (+0.84), *Forests* (+0.79), and *Sustainability* (+0.41*)* also received higher *QI* than *R*, whereas *Resources* (-0.67) and *Journal of Cleaner Production* (-0.28) were assessed lower on *QI* than on reputation.

3.5 Robustness Check: Evaluator Fixed Effects

For brevity, we present the results of a robustness check in Appendix B. We calculate mean-centered versions of *SQ* and *RQ* at the respondent level and compute an adjusted version of *QI* (*adj. QI*), which controls for evaluator-specific assessment tendencies. When comparing our ranking in Table 1 with the mean-centered version we derive a Spearman rank correlation coefficient of 0.95 and a Kendall's τ of 0.82. This indicates that the overall ordering of journals seems to be rather stable between both rankings, although significant differences exist for some journals. Furthermore, we extend the analysis by decomposing each journals' *QI* into a baseline rating and a quality bonus, allowing for a more fine-grained analysis of systematic tendencies.

4 Discussion

The objective of this contribution is to provide an updated survey-based assessment of journals in agricultural economics and related fields by researchers from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Building on the first survey by Dabbert et al. (2009) and Herrmann et al. (2011), we again measure scientific quality using a composite quality index that integrates assessments of (i) the scientific quality of published articles (*SQ*) and (ii) the quality of the review process of the journal (*RQ*). A survey-based approach offers a comprehensive perspective that extends beyond citation-based indicators. While metrics such as the Journal Impact Factor (*JIF*) and the more recent Journal Citation Indicator (*JCI*) allow for quantitative comparisons within and

across disciplines, they remain limited in capturing researchers' experience as readers, authors and reviewers. This knowledge provides essential insights, especially in agricultural economics, a field that has become increasingly multidisciplinary.

The context of the recent survey differs from the 2009 survey for three reasons. First, the journal market has grown substantially, with many more journals in most subdisciplines. Second, the research orientation of our professional associations has broadened with a trend towards sustainability issues and more interdisciplinary research. Third, journal selection is now based on observed publication and citation numbers of our research community rather than publication lists and expert opinion. Consequently, the 160 journals in our sample cover a wide range of life science-related fields, whereas the share of general economics and business journals has declined compared to 2009.

Despite the broader scope, several core journals retain their leading positions. *The American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, *European Review of Agricultural Economics*, *Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*, *Agricultural Economics*, *Journal of Agricultural Economics*, and *Food Policy* were rated in both surveys as top core journals.

As in the first survey, our results suggest that journals from different disciplines can be directly compared by researchers who are familiar with these journals, while impact factors remain field-dependent. Citation metrics are influenced by field size and its citation culture, and, thus, may not reflect perceived scientific standards. For example, the *Journal of Cleaner Production* (*JIF* = 10.0 for 2024) is rated considerably lower (*QI* = 6.38) than most core agricultural economics journals shown in Table 3. Other multidisciplinary journals - *Nutrients* (*JIF* = 5.0), *Sustainability* (*JIF* = 3.3), *Resources* (*JIF* = 3.2), and *Land* (*JIF* = 3.2) - also received below average *QI* values (all< 5.5). These findings suggest that high citation rates do not necessarily translate into perceived high scientific quality among agricultural economists.

A novel result is that average quality assessments have become clearly more positive compared to 2009. The mean *QI* increased by 1.08 points (6.15 to 7.23)*, SQ* by 1.12 (6.11 to 7.23), and *RQ* by 0.93 (6.39 to 7.32). The share of journals rated 7.0 or higher rose from 21.3% (34 of 160 journals) to 64.4% (98 of 152 journals).

Two main factors may explain this result. First, the broader journal list includes more high- and good-quality journals in research areas such as environmental and resource economics, food and consumer economics and rural development. Second, journals that appeared in both surveys also improved substantially. Among the 66 overlapping journals, the mean *QI* rose by 0.85 points (from 6.46 to 7.30). For example, *Food Policy* (7.01 → 8.25), *Journal of Agricultural Economics* (7.07 → 8.11), and *Agribusiness* (6.16 → 7.23) all experienced significant gains.

The same is true for journals in more specialized topic areas like environmental economics (*Journal of Environmental Economics and Management* from 7.41 to 8.54; *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning* from 5.81 to 8.02; *Journal of Environmental Management* from 6.09 to 7.64) or consumer economics (*Appetite* from 5.81 to 7.34; *Food Quality and Preference* from 6.08 to 7.26). In many cases higher *QI*s were accompanied by a greater number of assessments, suggesting increased relevance of these journals for the members of our associations. Table A4 in the Appendix provides a direct comparison of *QI*s and the number of assessments for all 66 journals covered by both the second and the first survey. It also provides the rank of each journal within this subsample for both rankings and the difference.

In contrast, journals with mean *QI* below 5.5 fall into two distinct groups: (i) several open-access journals published by MDPI (*Resources*, *Nutrients*, *Land*, *Agriculture,* and *Sustainability)* and (ii) German-language journals targeting at a national readership: *Landbauforschung*, *Ernährungs Umschau*, and *Berichte über Landwirtschaft*. This pattern aligns with ongoing debates about the scientific quality of some MDPI journals. Although MDPI is not classified as a predatory publisher and has numerous journals indexed in Clarivate's Journal Citation Report,

recent studies (Oviedo-García, 2021; Hanson et al., 2024) note features that distinguish them from leading journals in the respective categories, including high self-citation rates and high intra-publisher citation rates, extensive use of Special Issues, and unusually large Editorial Boards. Our results – reflected in low values for *QI, SQ* and *RQ* – seem consistent with these concerns.

Against this background and following recent debates on the structure of academic publishing, it is useful to interpret our ranking results in relation to different journal ownership structures and publishing models. The ranked journals represent a wide range of organizational forms, including commercial publisher-owned journals, society-owned and -operated journals (e.g. *German Journal of Agricultural Economics*), and society journals published in collaboration with commercial publishers (e.g. *European Review of Agricultural Economics, Journal of Agricultural Economics*). These models typically imply different roles for editors and publishers and potentially different reputational trajectories. As Hüttel and Hess (2025) argue, commercial publishers may have incentives to expand volume and exploit reputation and citation metrics for profit in increasingly oligopolistic (and oligopsonistic) markets, while scientific societies might retain greater control over editorial- and academic standards and journal scope. Such aspects should be addressed in future research to analyze in more depth how business models might interact with perceived journal quality. The responses on motivations might further help to explain publication patterns: researchers balance reputation, visibility, and timeliness when choosing outlets. For instance, *European Review of Agricultural Economics* and *Ecological Economics* – both highly ranked – also attract a substantial number of publications, consistent with the emphasis on reputation. Conversely, the most frequent publication outlets (*Sustainability* and *Berichte über Landwirtschaft*) have low mean *QI*s, suggesting that accessibility, scope, or publication speed may outweigh perceived scientific quality.

It is important to distinguish between perceived scientific quality and a journal's relevance. The first survey (Herrmann et al., 2011) also measured relevance and showed lower differentiation across rating classes for relevance than for scientific quality. In the present survey, reputation replaced relevance. Our results show that reputation and scientific quality are correlated. However, the respondents assessed the scientific quality of the journals more homogeneously than the journals' reputation: The standard deviation of *QI*, and of its components *SQ* and *RQ*, is lower than that of *R*. This may explain why some lower-reputation journals still attract considerable submissions.

Our survey-based quality indicators provide an important complement to citation-based metrics such as *JIF* or *JCI*. They provide immediate guidance for researchers, especially early-career scholars, in selecting suitable journals for publication. On an increasingly heterogeneous journal market, it will be possible to select a journal in the core area of agricultural economics or a more specialized field which is positively assessed by the peer research community. Top- or high-rated journals of our sample in the core group of agricultural economics or in a specialized field may provide preferable options for high-quality output from a research, dissertation or habilitation project.

With regard to the survey methodology, it was important to keep the questionnaire and the metrics in line with the first ranking (Dabbert et al., 2009; Herrmann et al., 2011). It allowed us to investigate changes regarding publication outlets and perceived quality changes over time. However, the tremendous increase in the number of journals and the proliferation of research in agricultural economics present new challenges for the chosen survey approach as well. The robustness check of the journal ranking in Appendix C indicates that some evaluator-specific effects do exist. These effects may be due to the fact that research in agricultural economics has become more interdisciplinary. There are new segments of researchers working in agricultural economics and new specialized journals which are evaluated for the first time by the community of agricultural economists. It may well be that the assessment of journals is affected by the researchers' subfields. There is evidence for North America that such field effects on journal rankings do exist, for example between agricultural and environmental economists

(Rigby et al., 2015). It is an important question of future research to test for such field effects in detail within causal models.

5 Conclusions

Based on an inventory list of journals in which agricultural economists from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland published most frequently and which journals are cited most often in their work, we developed and used a publication-citation index to select a list of 160 journals. The selected journals were then assessed by members of our national associations GEWISOLA, ÖGA and SGA in an online questionnaire. It was the objective to update results of the first GEWISOLA/ÖGA journal ranking in 2009. The extensive number of journals in which our community publishes (about 1,000 journals between 2015 and 2020) and the large number of new journals included in the survey illustrate the rapid developments on the market for scientific journals, i.e. the increased specialization and proliferation of research in the domain of agricultural economics. This made the selection of journals for the ranking and the continuation of the ranking a challenge. Nevertheless, the general results are directly relevant for researchers and research institutions and a complement to citation-based rankings.

The quality assessments are based on the same approach as in the previous journal ranking. Therefore, the change in perceptions of quality can be measured for those journals which entered both rankings. A major result is that a broad set of journals in agricultural economics and the neighboring disciplines are perceived as being of a high, good or solid quality and that the mean *QI* increased considerably from the first to this second ranking. These general results raise market transparency by providing new information on quality perceptions within our research community for a broad set of relevant journals. This may also lead to better guidance for researchers in their submission of journal articles.

A number of open questions remain for future research. We have not addressed the potential use of such journal rankings for faculties and research institutions in the evaluation of researchers' publication performance. It could be an interesting next step to develop a positive list of journals for the different fields of specialization in agricultural economics on the basis of the journal metrics provided and additional citation-based metrics that can be updated regularly. It should be noted that our article has left out the important debate on the reliability of different approaches to measuring journal quality. We have argued that citation-based indicators like the impact factor and survey-based approaches like ours are important complementary tools. Recent empirical work has shown that citation metrics like the impact factor are affected by strong growth of and many new entrants on the open-access journal market (Hanson et al., 2024; Oviedo-García, 2021). Predatory journals are seen as a "global threat" and not easy to identify (Grudniewicz et al., 2019). If new publishers succeed to enter the databases of established platforms like Clarivate's Journal Citation Reports, it may be financially attractive in a system with author processing charges, to increase market share by raising self-citations in a journal and across the publishers' journals and by editing more special issues with guest editors. Such strategies put a "strain on scientific publishing", as Hanson et al. (2024) put it, impact factors are manipulated upwards, and quality signals get diluted. Two conclusions can be derived: First, there is an obvious need for additional work on how these challenges can be avoided. Second, the existing challenges to the validity of citation metrics raise the importance of the survey-based approach; researchers can rely on their experience to assess review quality and scientific quality of the journals they know independent of citation metrics.

Data Availability Statement

The questionnaire, STATA code and anonymized survey data from the assessment of journals are available in the GJAE Journal Data Archive (https://doi.org/10.15456/gjae.2026065.1013382515).

Author Contributions

Conceptualization: all; Methodology: all; Validation: all; Formal Analysis: FT, RT, KS, RH, SH, JK, LG; Investigation: JPL; Data Curation: FT; Writing – Original Draft: FT, RH, JPL, KS, RT, SH, JK, LG; Writing – Review & Editing: all; Project Administration: JPL, RT, MB

Competing Interest

The authors declare no competing interests.

AI Statement

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Appendix A

Supplements to the Main Analysis

Table A1. Research institutions included in the list of publications

Institution	University	University of Applied Sciences	Research Institute
Agroscope – das Kompetenzzentrum des Bundes für die landwirtschaftliche Forschung in der Schweiz			x
Bundesanstalt für Agrarwirtschaft und Bergbauernfragen, Österreich			x
Christian-Albrechts-Universität Kiel	x		
ETH Zürich	x		
Fachhochschule Kiel		x	
Fachhochschule Südwestfalen		x	
Georg-August-Universität Göttingen	x		
Hochschule Anhalt		x	
Hochschule Bingen		x	
Hochschule Geisenheim	x		
Hochschule Neubrandenburg		x	
Hochschule Nürtingen-Geislingen		x	
Hochschule Osnabrück		x	
Hochschule Rhein-Waal			
Hochschule Weihenstephan-Triesdorf		x	
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin	x		
Institut für Weltwirtschaft, Kiel			x
Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen	x		
Leibniz Institut für Agrarentwicklung in Transformations-ökonomien (IAMO)			x
Leibniz Universität Hannover	x		
Leibniz-Zentrum für Agrarlandschaftsforschung (ZALF)			x
Martin-Luther Universität Halle	x		
Österreichisches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (WIFO)			x
Technische Universität München	x		
Thünen-Institut			x
Universität Bonn	x		
Universität für Bodenkultur Wien	x		
Universität Greifswald	x		
Universität Hohenheim	x		
Universität Kassel	x		
Universität Osnabrück	x		
Universität Rostock	x		

Source: own elaboration

Table A2. Number of articles in total and from agricultural economists in German-speaking countries with the number of references in the 21 journals of the Social Science Citation Index Expanded between 2015 and 2020

Journal	Total number of articles 2015-2020	Articles with authors from Austria/ Germany/Switzerland	Number of citations
German Journal of Agricultural Economics	153	131	6,297
British Food Journal	1,365	93	4,901
Food Policy	620	76	4,174
Journal of Agricultural Economics	275	57	2,740
European Review of Agricultural Economics	221	53	3,140
Agricultural Economics	403	49	2,534
International Food & Agribusiness Management Rev.	337	44	2,374
American Journal of Agricultural Economics	495	37	2,004
Agribusiness	266	32	1,880
China Agricultural Economic Review	258	20	943
Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy	280	18	932
Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics	245	18	806
Annual Review of Resource Economics	143	16	1,786
Journal of Wine Economics	116	12	376
Agrekon	149	11	620
Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics	171	8	481
New Medit	217	8	284
Aquaculture Economics and Management	152	7	292
Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics	188	6	330
Agricultural Economics-Zemedelska Ekonomika	333	5	149
Custos e Agronegocio Online	449	0	0

Source: own elaboration

Table A3. Selected journals (N = 154), with number of publications, citations and publication-citation index value

Journal	Publications	Citations	Index
American Journal of Agricultural Economics	9	1,251	310.52
Food Policy	39	742	217.84
Agricultural Economics	34	638	187.77
European Review of Agricultural Economics	70	471	183.52
Journal of Agricultural Economics	61	486	178.14
World Development	35	584	175.76
Sustainability	151	55	164.26
German Journal of Agricultural Economics	109	208	159.13
Ecological Economics	79	298	150.83
Berichte über Landwirtschaft	135	11	137.65
British Food Journal	45	374	135.14
Food Quality and Preference	52	304	125.27
Land Use Policy	89	130	120.33
Appetite	41	271	106.32
Agricultural Systems	55	110	81.51
Agribusiness	29	186	73.83
International Food and Agribusiness Management Review	41	119	69.68
PLoS ONE	36	120	64.92
Austrian Journal of Agricultural Economics and Rural Studies (previously "ÖGA-Jahrbuch" and "Journal of the Austrian Society of Agricultural Economics")	60	5	61.21
Journal of Cleaner Production	42	68	58.39
Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy	13	181	56.63
Journal of Consumer Protection and Food Safety	54	7	55.69
Journal of Development Studies	19	134	51.30
Food Security	32	75	50.08
Science	7	158	45.08
Journal of Rural Studies	25	76	43.32
Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America	7	146	42.19
Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics	13	115	40.72
Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics	7	136	39.78
Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization	8	127	38.61
Applied Economics	10	110	36.51
Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics	8	114	35.48
Environmental Research Letters	26	37	34.92
Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics	6	118	34.44
Energy Policy	23	46	34.09
China Economic Review	15	78	33.80
Agricultural Finance Review	20	51	32.29
Environmental and Resource Economics	5	112	31.99
Public Health Nutrition	10	90	31.69
Journal of Environmental Management	22	37	30.92
China Agricultural Economic Review	14	65	29.67
International Journal on Food System Dynamics	19	40	28.64
Land Economics	5	95	27.90
Global Environmental Change - Human and Policy Dimensions	14	57	27.74
Agriculture and Human Values	5	88	26.21
Journal of Productivity Analysis	3	96	26.14
International Journal of Consumer Studies	10	62	24.94
Annual Review of Resource Economics	8	69	24.63
Ecology and Society	18	27	24.51

Journal	Publications	Citations	Index
Ecosystem Services	20	18	24.34
Journal of Business Ethics	7	70	23.87
Climatic Change	8	65	23.67
Water	23	2	23.48
Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems	10	52	22.53
Journal of Dairy Science	8	55	21.26
Applied Economics Letters	12	35	20.44
Global Food Security	9	47	20.33
Environmental Science and Policy	15	22	20.30
Journal of Business Research	3	71	20.11
Journal of Environmental Economics and Management	3	71	20.11
Biomass and Bioenergy	11	37	19.92
Economic Modelling	13	28	19.75
Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics	3	68	19.39
Forest Policy and Economics	15	16	18.86
Journal of Economic Surveys	3	65	18.67
Energy Economics	8	42	18.12
Trends in Food Science and Technology	6	49	17.81
Nature Climate Change	8	38	17.16
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	6	46	17.09
NJAS - Wageningen Journal of Life Sciences	10	28	16.75
Livestock Science	5	46	16.09
Empirical Economics	7	37	15.92
Ernährungsumschau	14	7	15.69
Fleischwirtschaft	14	7	15.69
Land	15	1	15.24
Journal of Economic Psychology	5	42	15.12
International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability	12	12	14.89
Environmental Modelling and Software	11	16	14.86
Nature Communications	10	20	14.82
Aquaculture Economics and Management	4	44	14.61
Eurochoices	9	23	14.54
Meat Science	3	46	14.09
Landbauforschung - Journal of Sustainable Organic Agricultural Systems	13	4	13.96
Computers and Electronics in Agriculture	6	33	13.95
Journal of Environmental Planning and Management	10	16	13.86
Data in Brief	13	3	13.72
European Journal of Operational Research	3	44	13.61
Journal of Food Products Marketing	7	27	13.51
Sociologia Ruralis	6	31	13.47
World Economy	5	35	13.44
Organic Agriculture	11	10	13.41
Bio-based and Applied Economics	9	18	13.34
Poultry Science	8	22	13.30
Climate Change	13	1	13.24
Journal of Integrative Agriculture	12	4	12.96
Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews	9	16	12.86
Agriculture	12	3	12.72
European Journal of Agronomy	5	32	12.71
Journal of Risk Research	9	15	12.62
Food Control	3	39	12.40
Social Indicators Research	10	9	12.17
Forests	11	4	11.96
Renewable Energy	10	8	11.93
Energy	9	12	11.89

Journal	Publications	Citations	Index
African Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics	7	19	11.58
Animal Welfare	4	31	11.47
Journal of Agricultural and Food Industrial Organization	4	31	11.47
Studies in Agricultural Economics	10	6	11.45
Journal of International Development	5	26	11.27
Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension	11	1	11.24
Journal of Land Use Science	11	1	11.24
Regional Environmental Change	9	9	11.17
Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems	8	13	11.13
Journal of Environmental Psychology	5	25	11.03
Gaia - Ecological Perspectives for Science and Society	10	4	10.96
International Journal of the Commons	10	4	10.96
Environment, Development and Sustainability	7	16	10.86
Technological Forecasting and Social Change	6	20	10.82
Psychology and Marketing	3	32	10.71
Precision Agriculture	6	19	10.58
Social Science and Medicine	3	30	10.23
Quarterly Journal of International Agriculture	6	17	10.10
Journal of International Food and Agribusiness Marketing	5	21	10.06
Journal of Policy Modelling	5	21	10.06
Outlook on Agriculture	5	21	10.06
Earth´s Future	10	0	10.00
Nutrients	6	16	9.86
British Journal of Nutrition	5	18	9.34
Global Change Biology, Bioenergy	6	13	9.13
Agricultural Economics Review	4	21	9.06
Energy Research and Social Science	9	0	9.00
Resources	9	0	9.00
Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics	7	8	8.93
Wine Economics and Policy	7	8	8.93
Ecological Indicators	6	12	8.89
Journal of Peasant Studies	3	24	8.78
Climate Policy	8	2	8.48
Nature Sustainability	7	6	8.45
Environmental Management	6	10	8.41
Conservation Biology	4	18	8.34
Agricultural and Food Economics	6	9	8.17
Agricultural Water Management	6	9	8.17
European Journal of Development Research	5	13	8.13
Systemic Practice and Action Research	8	0	8.00
Climate Risk Management	7	4	7.96
Economic "anchor" journals			
American Economic Review	0	398	95.93
Econometrica	0	357	86.05
Journal of Development Economics	1	183	45.11
Journal of Political Economy	0	179	43.14
Journal of Econometrics	0	177	42.66
Review of Economics and Statistics	0	166	40.01
Quarterly Journal of Economics	0	151	36.39
Journal of Marketing Research	0	130	31.33
Swiss “anchor” journal			
Journal of Socio-Economics in Agriculture	3	5	4.21

Source: own calculation

Table A4. Scientific quality (QI) of 66 journals included in the second and first journal ranking

Journal	2nd ranking			1st ranking			Difference		
	QI	(n_z+m_z)	Rank	QI	(n_z+m_z)	Rank	QI	(n_z+m_z)	Rank
American Economic Review	9.65	112	1	8.95	92	1	0.70	20	0
Journal of Econometrics	9.41	48	2	8.48	31	2	0.93	17	0
Review of Economics and Statistics	9.11	48	3	8.25	34	4	0.86	14	1
American Journal of Agricultural Economics	8.81	231	4	8.29	237	3	0.52	-6	-1
Journal of Productivity Analysis	8.77	34	5	7.70	20	8	1.07	14	3
Journal of Development Economics	8.61	67	6	7.73	40	7	0.88	27	1
Journal of Environmental Economics and Management	8.54	67	7	7.41	30	10	1.13	37	3
Sociologia Ruralis	8.32	72	8	7.64	61	9	0.68	11	1
European Review of Agricultural Economics	8.31	261	9	7.79	269	6	0.52	-8	-3
Food Policy	8.25	291	10	7.01	169	18	1.24	122	8
Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization	8.24	62	11	7.82	42	5	0.42	20	-6
World Development	8.18	146	12	7.10	74	16	1.08	72	4
Journal of Agricultural Economics	8.11	235	13	7.07	197	17	1.04	38	4
Agricultural Economics	8.02	251	14	7.16	266	13	0.86	-15	-1
Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning	8.02	28	15	5.81	13	51	2.21	15	36
Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource …	7.99	151	16	7.28	95	12	0.71	56	-4
Ecology and Society	7.94	82	17	7.01	17	19	0.93	65	2
Agriculture and Human Values	7.90	110	18	6.52	25	30	1.38	85	12
Land Economics	7.88	89	19	6.90	52	21	0.98	37	2
Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy	7.74	15	20	6.30	107	37	1.44	-92	17
Journal of Rural Studies	7.73	135	21	6.98	78	20	0.75	57	-1
Livestock Science	7.73	19	22	5.83	10	50	1.90	9	28
Environmental and Resource Economics	7.72	77	23	7.12	55	14	0.60	22	-9
Ecological Economics	7.71	236	24	7.36	87	11	0.35	149	-13
Journal of Development Studies	7.67	73	25	6.61	26	28	1.06	47	3
Journal of Environmental Management	7.64	81	26	6.09	36	43	1.55	45	17
Agricultural Systems	7.61	184	27	6.80	75	24	0.81	109	-3
Empirical Economics	7.48	38	28	6.88	23	23	0.60	15	-5
Forest Policy and Economics	7.48	48	29	5.43	12	58	2.05	36	29
World Economy	7.47	28	30	7.12	30	15	0.35	-2	-15
Precision Agriculture	7.45	51	31	5.33	17	59	2.12	34	28
Journal of Environmental Planning and Management	7.44	33	32	6.25	26	40	1.19	7	8
Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics	7.36	95	33	6.61	100	29	0.75	-5	-4
Appetite	7.34	94	34	5.81	15	52	1.53	79	18
Climatic Change	7.30	59	35	6.75	20	26	0.55	39	-9
Journal of Land Use Science	7.28	31	36	6.65	11	27	0.63	20	-9
Food Quality and Preference	7.26	81	37	6.08	26	45	1.18	55	8
Agribusiness	7.23	160	38	6.16	101	41	1.07	59	3

Journal	2nd ranking			1st ranking			Difference		
	QI	(n_z+m_z)	Rank	QI	(n_z+m_z)	Rank	QI	(n_z+m_z)	Rank
International Journal of Consumer Studies	7.22	39	39	6.10	22	42	1.12	17	3
China Economic Review	7.19	31	40	5.94	10	49	1.25	21	9
Computers and Electronics in Agriculture	7.11	58	41	6.45	23	32	0.66	35	-9
Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics	7.08	130	42	6.49	98	31	0.59	32	-11
Land Use Policy	7.07	247	43	6.38	52	35	0.69	195	8
Journal of Socio-Economics in Agriculture	7.00	11	44	4.65	55	64	2.35	-44	20
Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension	6.97	22	45	5.47	10	57	1.50	12	12
Economic Modelling	6.95	47	46	6.80	29	25	0.15	18	-21
Applied Economics	6.92	109	47	6.90	73	22	0.02	36	-25
Ecological Indicators	6.86	49	48	6.30	11	38	0.56	38	-10
Agricultural Finance Review	6.84	68	49	6.41	19	33	0.43	49	-16
Applied Economics Letters	6.84	70	50	6.06	32	46	0.78	38	-4
Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems	6.83	33	51	6.09	17	44	0.74	16	-7
Journal of Agricultural and Food Industrial Organization	6.78	27	52	6.41	26	34	0.37	1	-18
British Food Journal	6.68	126	53	6.04	33	48	0.64	93	-5
Journal of Food Products Marketing	6.37	16	54	6.30	11	39	0.07	5	-15
Outlook on Agriculture	6.32	34	55	5.63	40	55	0.69	-6	0
Journal of Policy Modeling	6.22	28	57	6.33	35	36	-0.11	-7	-21
German Journal of Agricultural Economics	6.22	235	56	6.06	385	47	0.16	-150	-9
EuroChoices	6.05	116	58	4.83	134	62	1.22	-18	4
Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems	5.99	19	59	5.75	32	53	0.24	-13	-6
International Food and Agribusiness Management ...	5.89	57	60	5.66	38	54	0.23	19	-6
Journal of International Food and Agribusiness Review	5.84	17	61	5.51	26	56	0.33	-9	-5
African Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics	5.80	36	62	5.20	35	60	0.60	1	-2
Journal of Agriculture and Rural Development in...	5.74	15	63	5.00	15	61	0.74	0	2
Austrian Journal of Agricultural Economics and ...	5.52	80	64	4.77	114	63	0.75	-34	-1
Landbauforschung	4.92	24	65	4.26	119	66	0.66	-95	1
Berichte über Landwirtschaft	3.65	165	66	4.53	308	65	-0.88	-143	-1

The list includes nine journals which changed their name between the first and the second ranking: Agrawirtschaft became German Journal of Agricultural Economics; Agrarwirtschaft und Agrarsoziologie became Journal of Socio-Economics in Agriculture; European Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension became Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension; Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Gesellschaft für Agrarökonomie became Austrian Journal of Agricultural Economics and Rural Studies; Journal of Sustainable Agriculture became Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems; Landbauforschung Völkenrode became Landbauforschung - Journal of Sustainable and Organic Agriculture;Livestock Production Science became Livestock Science; Review of Agricultural Economics became Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy.

Source: own calculation

Appendix B

Robustness Check – Description and Tables

Part A: Adjusting for evaluator-specific assessment tendencies (mean-centering at the respondent level)

Respondents may differ systematically in their assessment behavior, as one reviewer pointed out: “There may be two types of evaluators: those who are more critical and those who are less critical toward journals. Consider also that they come from different communities and evaluate different journals. This could bias the results toward a higher ranking for journals from the field of the uncritical evaluator group”.

The reviewer suggested reporting mean-centered (adjusted) journal assessments to correct for such differences. We implemented this idea. The adjustment is done for each evaluator by subtracting their own mean assessment across all journals they evaluated.

Formally,

$$adj.\ \overline{SQ}_z = \frac{1}{n_z}\sum_{i=1}^{n_z}(SQ_{zi} - \overline{SQ}_i) \tag{B1}$$

and

$$adj.\ \overline{RQ}_z = \frac{1}{m_z}\sum_{i=1}^{m_z}(RQ_{zi} - \overline{RQ}_i) \tag{B2}$$

with $\overline{SQ}_i$ being respondent *i*’s mean assessment of journal scientific quality, and $\overline{RQ}_i$ being respondent *i*’s mean assessment of journal review process quality. These adjusted values reflect how much respondent *i*’s assessment deviates from her/his own mean assessment of *SQ* (*RQ*): By construction, the adjusted values are centered around zero: positive values indicate that a journal is assessed above the respondent’s average, and negative values indicate a below-average assessment. Based on these adjusted values we computed an adjusted quality index (*adj. QI*) using the same weighting scheme as for the raw data (see Section 2.4):

Table B1 compares *QI* and *adj. QI* for all 152 journals that fulfilled the inclusion criteria. To assess the sensitivity of *QI* with respect to evaluator-specific rating tendencies, we first look at changes in the ranks of individual journals. There are journals that show strong changes in rank when moving from *QI* to *adj. QI*. A qualitatively higher (numerically lower) rank was achieved by *Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics* which climbed from rank 118 to 53 (+65 ranks): Journals which fell to qualitatively lower (numerically higher) ranks are *Social Indicators Research* (rank 43 → rank 102), *Food Security* (rank 64 -> rank 103) and *Journal of Peasant Studies* (rank 40 → rank 61): Despite these extreme examples, many journals show only small changes in rank.

Table B1. Comparison of *QI* and *adj. QI* with respective journal ranks and rank changes

Journal	Number of assessments ($n_z + m_z$)	*QI*	Rank	*Adj. QI*	Adj. rank	Rank change[a)]
Journal of Political Economy	42	9.69	1	2.28	2	-1
Quarterly Journal of Economics	63	9.65	2	2.16	3	-1
American Economic Review	112	9.65	3	2.40	1	2
Econometrica	81	9.50	4	1.99	4	0
Journal of Econometrics	48	9.41	5	1.66	6	-1
Review of Economics and Statistics	48	9.11	6	1.79	5	1
American Journal of Agricultural Economics	231	8.81	7	1.50	7	0
Journal of Productivity Analysis	34	8.77	8	1.18	16	-8
Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)	86	8.67	9	1.45	8	1
Science	114	8.67	10	1.22	14	-4
Nature Climate Change	89	8.64	11	1.35	9	2
Journal of Development Economics	67	8.61	12	1.24	13	-1
Journal of Environmental Economics and Management	67	8.54	13	1.29	11	2
Journal of Business Ethics	20	8.50	14	1.34	10	4
European Journal of Operational Research	19	8.48	15	1.28	12	3
Nature Communications	122	8.33	16	0.91	21	-5
Sociologia Ruralis	72	8.32	17	0.56	31	-14
European Review of Agricultural Economics	261	8.31	18	1.02	17	1
Food Policy	291	8.25	19	0.91	20	-1
Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization	62	8.24	20	1.02	18	2
Environmental Modelling and Software	33	8.24	21	0.86	23	-2
World Development	146	8.18	22	0.59	30	-8
Journal of Agricultural Economics	235	8.11	23	0.80	25	-2
Journal of Business Research	23	8.05	24	0.72	27	-3
Agricultural Economics	251	8.02	25	0.61	29	-4
Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning	28	8.02	26	0.56	32	-6
Conservation Letters	45	8.02	27	0.86	24	3
Journal of Economic Psychology	27	8.02	28	1.22	15	13
Global Environmental Change	73	8.01	29	0.63	28	1
European Journal of Marketing	19	8.00	30	0.91	22	8
Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics	151	7.99	31	0.94	19	12
Ecology and Society	82	7.94	32	0.36	42	-10
Nature Sustainability	135	7.93	33	0.52	33	0
Agriculture and Human Values	110	7.90	34	0.45	38	-4
Journal of Marketing Research	23	7.88	35	0.77	26	9
Land Economics	89	7.88	36	0.48	37	-1
Annual Review of Resource Economics	89	7.86	37	0.50	35	2
Environmental Research Letters	57	7.85	38	0.51	34	4
Trends in Food Science and Technology	19	7.83	39	0.32	45	-6
Journal of Peasant Studies	41	7.83	40	0.08	61	-21
Environmental Management	41	7.83	41	0.09	60	-19
Conservation Biology	26	7.82	42	0.45	39	3
Social Indicators Research	14	7.81	43	-0.31	102	-59
Technological Forecasting and Social Change	35	7.81	44	0.12	54	-10
GCB Bioenergy	10	7.78	45	0.11	58	-13
Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy	135	7.74	46	0.22	48	-2
Livestock Science	19	7.73	47	0.32	44	3
Journal of Rural Studies	135	7.73	48	0.11	57	-9

Journal	Number of assessments ($n_z + m_z$)	*QI*	Rank	*Adj. QI*	Adj. rank	Rank change[a)]
Climate Risk Management	28	7.72	49	0.39	41	8
Environmental and Resource Economics	77	7.72	50	0.16	52	-2
Ecological Economics	236	7.71	51	0.22	50	1
Environmental Science and Policy	48	7.70	52	0.09	59	-7
Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews	20	7.70	54	0.33	43	11
Climate Policy	32	7.70	53	-0.02	74	-21
Journal of Development Studies	73	7.67	55	0.02	67	-12
Energy Economics	62	7.65	56	0.39	40	16
Journal of Environmental Management	81	7.64	57	0.26	46	11
Agricultural Systems	184	7.61	58	0.18	51	7
Journal of Economic Surveys	38	7.59	59	0.49	36	23
Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics	79	7.56	60	-0.03	76	-16
Forest Policy and Economics	48	7.48	61	-0.14	82	-21
Global Food Security	43	7.48	62	0.08	62	0
Empirical Economics	38	7.48	63	0.00	70	-7
Food Security	56	7.47	64	-0.31	103	-39
World Economy	28	7.47	65	-0.18	88	-23
Precision Agriculture	51	7.45	66	0.03	65	1
Journal of Environmental Planning and Management	33	7.44	67	0.05	63	4
Renewable Energy	21	7.42	68	-0.28	99	-31
Aquaculture Economics and Management	10	7.41	69	-0.30	100	-31
Remote Sensing of Environment	11	7.40	70	-0.18	87	-17
Biomass and Bioenergy	35	7.38	71	0.02	66	5
Ecosystem Services	55	7.37	72	-0.03	75	-3
Agricultural Water Management	28	7.37	73	-0.13	81	-8
Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics	95	7.36	74	-0.17	85	-11
Appetite	94	7.34	75	0.11	56	19
Energy Research and Social Science	24	7.32	76	0.00	69	7
Environment, Development and Sustainability	39	7.31	77	-0.60	116	-39
International Journal of the Commons	20	7.30	78	-0.20	92	-14
Climatic Change	59	7.30	79	0.00	73	6
Journal of Land Use Science	31	7.28	80	-0.11	80	0
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	25	7.28	81	0.11	55	26
Food Quality and Preference	81	7.26	82	0.22	49	33
Meat Science	27	7.23	83	0.01	68	15
Agribusiness	160	7.23	84	-0.18	86	-2
Waste Management	14	7.22	85	-0.40	107	-22
NJAS - Wageningen Journal of Life Sciences	50	7.22	86	-0.04	78	8
International Journal of Consumer Studies	39	7.22	87	0.00	71	16
Scientific Reports	50	7.21	88	-0.45	110	-22
China Economic Review	31	7.19	89	-0.15	84	5
Journal of Risk Research	15	7.16	90	-0.18	89	1
Applied Energy	21	7.15	91	-0.52	113	-22
Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics	21	7.15	92	0.23	47	45
Public Health Nutrition	28	7.11	93	0.00	72	21
Computers and Electronics in Agriculture	58	7.11	94	-0.19	91	3
Regional Environmental Change	44	7.09	95	-0.27	98	-3
Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics	130	7.08	96	-0.15	83	13
European Journal of Agronomy	17	7.07	97	0.03	64	33
Land Use Policy	247	7.07	98	-0.31	101	-3

Journal	Number of assessments ($n_z + m_z$)	*QI*	Rank	*Adj. QI*	Adj. rank	Rank change[a)]
Journal of Socio-Economics in Agriculture	11	7.00	99	-0.78	122	-23
Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension	22	6.97	100	-0.23	95	5
Economic Modelling	47	6.95	101	-0.21	93	8
Energy Policy	70	6.95	102	-0.23	94	8
Poultry Science	10	6.93	103	-0.18	90	13
Applied Economics	109	6.92	104	-0.43	109	-5
Agricultural and Food Economics	86	6.92	105	-0.37	106	-1
Journal of Dairy Science	47	6.91	106	-0.05	79	27
British Journal of Nutrition	10	6.90	107	-0.56	114	-7
Ecological Indicators	49	6.86	108	-0.51	112	-4
Agricultural Finance Review	68	6.84	109	-0.36	105	4
Applied Economics Letters	70	6.84	110	-0.04	77	33
Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems	33	6.83	111	-0.24	96	15
PLOS ONE	217	6.78	112	-0.36	104	8
Journal of Agricultural and Food Industrial Organization	27	6.78	113	-0.25	97	16
European Journal of Development Research	33	6.72	114	-0.48	111	3
Journal of International Development	22	6.71	115	-0.75	121	-6
British Food Journal	126	6.68	116	-0.56	115	1
China Agricultural Economic Review	47	6.67	117	-0.63	118	-1
Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics	52	6.62	118	0.14	53	65
Food Control	10	6.61	119	-0.41	108	11
Bio-based and Applied Economics	32	6.53	120	-1.02	129	-9
Journal of Integrative Agriculture	10	6.47	121	-1.15	136	-15
Energy	29	6.45	122	-0.74	120	2
Studies in Agricultural Economics	20	6.45	123	-0.94	125	-2
Water (Switzerland)	15	6.40	124	-1.20	137	-13
Journal of Cleaner Production	198	6.38	125	-0.73	119	6
Journal of Food Products Marketing	16	6.37	126	-0.62	117	9
Outlook on Agriculture	34	6.32	127	-1.03	130	-3
International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability	17	6.22	128	-1.00	128	0
German Journal of Agricultural Economics	235	6.22	129	-0.90	124	5
Journal of Policy Modeling	28	6.22	130	-0.96	127	3
EuroChoices	116	6.05	131	-1.30	139	-8
Data in Brief	53	6.03	132	-1.08	131	1
Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems	19	5.99	133	-1.08	132	1
Forests	14	5.99	134	-1.65	142	-8
GAIA	61	5.91	135	-1.13	135	0
International Food and Agribusiness Management Review	57	5.89	136	-1.27	138	-2
Journal of Environmental Psychology	29	5.86	137	-0.84	123	14
Organic Agriculture	50	5.85	138	-0.96	126	12
Journal of International Food and Agribusiness Marketing	17	5.84	139	-1.12	134	5
Journal of Consumer Protection and Food Safety	15	5.81	140	-1.36	140	0
African Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics	36	5.80	141	-1.70	144	-3
Journal of Agriculture and Rural Development in the Tropics and Subtropics	15	5.74	142	-1.12	133	9
Austrian Journal of Agricultural Economics and Rural Studies	80	5.52	143	-1.67	143	0

Journal	Number of assessments ($n_z + m_z$)	*QI*	Rank	*Adj. QI*	Adj. rank	Rank change[a)]
International Journal on Food System Dynamics	37	5.37	144	-1.60	141	3
Resources	14	5.22	145	-1.81	145	0
Nutrients	20	5.20	146	-1.99	146	0
Landbauforschung	24	4.92	147	-2.19	147	0
Land	82	4.91	148	-2.28	149	-1
Agriculture (Switzerland)	40	4.71	149	-2.33	150	-1
Ernährungs Umschau	40	4.53	150	-2.28	148	2
Sustainability	258	4.34	151	-2.83	151	0
Berichte über Landwirtschaft	165	3.65	152	-3.31	152	0

[a)] Rank change indicates the difference in rank per journal between *QI* and *adj. QI*. A positive difference indicates a qualitatively higher (numerically lower) rank in *adj. QI*, while a negative difference indicates a qualitatively lower (numerically higher) rank in *adj. QI*.
Source: own calculation based on survey data

It seems that journals at the two ends of the distribution are affected less by changes in ranks, which is explainable by the may partly mitigate prevalent evaluator-specific tendencies.

The overall ordering of journals seems to be rather stable between both rankings (Spearman rank correlation coefficient ρ = 0.9462 and Kendall's τ = 0.8221), implying only minor reshuffling of journals. This means, while evaluator-specific rating tendencies exist, their impact on our overall journal ranking remains limited. Furthermore, the results for core journals from our main analysis also hold for *adj. QI*. Table B2 shows our list of "core" agricultural economics journals, indicating both *QI* and *adj. QI* and computed changes in rank. Most of the core journals are only weakly affected by systematic assessment tendencies, with few exceptions in the mid-tier.

Table B2. Comparison of *QI* and *adj. QI* for core journals and their ranks (and rank changes) within this group of journals

Journal	*QI*	*Rank*	*Adj. QI*	*Adj. rank*	*Rank change*[a)]
American Journal of Agricultural Economics	8.81	1	1.50	1	0
European Review of Agricultural Economics	8.31	2	1.02	2	0
Food Policy	8.25	3	0.91	4	-1
Journal of Agricultural Economics	8.11	4	0.80	5	-1
Agricultural Economics	8.02	5	0.61	6	-1
Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics	7.99	6	0.94	3	3
Annual Review of Resource Economics	7.86	7	0.50	7	0
Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy	7.74	8	0.22	8	0
Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics	7.56	9	-0.03	9	0
Aquaculture Economics and Management	7.41	10	-0.30	13	-3
Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics	7.36	11	-0.17	11	0
Agribusiness	7.23	12	-0.18	12	0
Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics	7.08	13	-0.15	10	3
Journal of Socio-Economics in Agriculture	7.00	14	-0.78	18	-4
Agricultural and Food Economics	6.92	15	-0.37	15	0
Agricultural Finance Review	6.84	16	-0.36	14	2
British Food Journal	6.68	17	-0.56	16	1
China Agricultural Economic Review	6.67	18	-0.63	17	1
Studies in Agricultural Economics	6.45	19	-0.94	20	-1
German Journal of Agricultural Economics	6.22	20	-0.90	19	1
EuroChoices	6.05	21	-1.30	22	-1
International Food and Agribusiness Management Review	5.89	22	-1.27	21	1
African Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics	5.80	23	-1.7	24	-1
Austrian Journal of Agricultural Economics and Rural Studies	5.52	24	-1.67	23	1

[a)] Rank change indicates the difference in rank per journal between *QI* and *adj. QI*. A positive difference indicates a qualitatively higher (numerically lower) rank in *adj. QI*, while a negative difference indicates a qualitatively lower (numerically higher) rank in *adj. QI*.

Source: own calculation based on survey data

We draw the following conclusions:

1. *QI* seems sufficiently robust to be used as our measure of journal quality in the main text.
2. The mean-centering approach indicates that evaluator-specific assessments do exist and influence the chosen measure of journal ranking to some extent. But it is not possible to attribute differences between *QI* and *adj. QI* clearly to a specific characteristic of evaluators like being more or less critical. It is most likely that other personal characteristics of evaluators like field of research or research experience are important as well. These characteristics can also be expected to affect a journal`s performance and the personal assessment standard of the respondents who assessed it.
3. We regard it a logical step for future research to develop a multivariate causal model of journal ranking in which the different personal characteristics of evaluators are introduced as explanatory variables of *QI*s. This would allow for a ceteris-paribus analysis of the impacts of individual personal characteristics which is not possible in the descriptive statistical analysis provided here.

Part B: Decomposition of QI

Mean centering as described above can be extended to decompose the quality indicator of a journal *z* (QI_z) into two components: a baseline rating (B_z) and a quality bonus of the journal (QB_z): In the present context, QB_z is equal to the journal's adjusted quality index (QB_z = *adj.* QI_z = $QI_z - B_z$): Consequently, QI_z can be decomposed as follows:

$$QI_z = B_z + adj.\ QI_z. \tag{B3}$$

Both QI_z and *adj.* QI_z are available in Table B1 from the mean-centered approach, whereas B_z is not. B_z can be derived algebraically as

$$B_z = (1 - a_z)\frac{1}{n_z}\sum_{i=1}^{n_z}\overline{SQ}_i + a_z\frac{1}{m_z}\sum_{i=1}^{m_z}\overline{RQ}_i. \tag{B4}$$

It is basically the weighted mean of the mean evaluations of all respondents who evaluated journal *z*. Differences in the B_z of two journals point at systematic differences, either in the evaluation behavior of the set of respondents or in differences in the set of journals these respondents have evaluated. In our case, we do not compute B_z from equation (B4) but calculate it residually from equation (B3) as the difference between the original journal quality index QI_z and its mean-centered counterpart *adj.* QI_z. Accordingly, B_z can be obtained as:

$$B_z = QI_z - adj.QI_z. \tag{B5}$$

Table B3 displays all three components of equation (B3) for all 152 journals. As all values are on the Likert scale, it is straightforward to compare the magnitude of a journals' mean perceived quality (QI_z), its mean-centered counterparts (*adj.* QI_z), and the mean assessments of the journal's evaluators (B_z): Let us take the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* as an example: Its *QI* is 8.81, which is the sum of 7.31 for *B* and 1.50 for *adj. QI*. The value for *B* indicates that the evaluators of the journal have assessed their relevant journal set with a mean of 7.31 on the Likert scale. Note that this value is very close to the arithmetic mean of the *QI*s of all 152 journals (i.e. 7.23 in Table 2):

This is a pattern we can generalize from the results of Table B3. For most journals which received a large number of evaluations, the assessment standard *B* deviates by no more than 0.2 points on the Likert scale from the overall mean assessment of journal quality (7.23): Cases in point are other core journals of agricultural economics like *Food Policy* with a *B* value of 7.34, *European Review of Agricultural Economics* (7.29), *Journal of Agricultural Economics* (7.31), as well as the *German Journal of Agricultural Economics* (7.12) and the *Austrian Journal of Agricultural Economics and Rural Studies* (7.19): Leading journals in environmental economics (*Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*: 7.25) and in general economics (*American Economic Review*: 7.31) also show the same pattern. For all these journals, the assessment standards of evaluators as measured in *B* seem to be close to the arithmetic mean of *QI* across all 152 journals.

To detect evaluator-specific differences in either the evaluation behavior or the set of evaluated journals, it seems worthwhile to look at individual journals or groups of journals which deviate more strongly in terms of *B*. A case in point is *Social Indicators Research*, a journal that jumped from rank 43 to rank 102 when applying *adj. QI* rather than *QI* as quality indicator. Different explanations are possible for the fragile rank of this journal. The *B* value of 8.12 is exceptionally high and it might be interpreted as a sign for more generous evaluations among the group of evaluators. The low number of 14 assessments may also indicate a field effect: evaluators of the journal might be a rather specialized group with a set of journals that is assessed very positively within the group.

The *B* values in Table B3 suggest that more systematic differences exist which may indicate evaluator-specific effects. For example, the evaluators' baseline assessment of several other

social science journals like *Sociologia Ruralis* (*B*=7.75), *Ecology and Society* (7.59), and *Society Environment, Development and Sustainability* (7.91) is clearly higher than the average assessment of QI (7.23): The same applies to several high-quality journals, in the general Sciences (*Science*: 7.45), in general economics (*Journal of Econometrics*: 7.75), and in agricultural economics (*Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy*: 7.52): It may well be that the community of evaluators for these journals has relevant journal sets in the highest quality segment. Journals of environmental science are increasingly used by members of our associations for interdisciplinary publications, and the evaluators of some of these are also characterized by an above-average baseline assessment: *Environmental Management* (B=7.74), *Climate Policy* (7.72), *GCB Bioenergy* (7.68), *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning* (7.46), and *Environmental Science and Policy* (7.61): Another field effect seems likely.

We can summarize from the empirical results of the decomposition approach:

1. As in the mean-centering approach, the decomposition approach also shows that evaluator-specific assessments matter in the evaluation of journal quality. An important variable is B_z, the weighted mean of the mean evaluations given by all respondents who evaluated journal *z.* This variable captures evaluator-specific evaluation behavior and the specific set of journals each respondent has assessed.
2. The empirical results in Table B3 suggest that future research should pay attention to the effects of research fields on the assessment of journal quality.

Table B3. Decomposition of *QI* with *B* and *QB*

Journal	Number of assessments ($n_z + m_z$)	*QI*	*B*	*QB* (= adj. QI)
Journal of Political Economy	42	9.69	7.41	2.28
Quarterly Journal of Economics	63	9.65	7.49	2.16
American Economic Review	112	9.65	7.25	2.40
Econometrica	81	9.50	7.52	1.99
Journal of Econometrics	48	9.41	7.75	1.66
Review of Economics and Statistics	48	9.11	7.33	1.79
American Journal of Agricultural Economics	231	8.81	7.31	1.50
Journal of Productivity Analysis	34	8.77	7.59	1.18
Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)	86	8.67	7.23	1.45
Science	114	8.67	7.45	1.22
Nature Climate Change	89	8.64	7.28	1.35
Journal of Development Economics	67	8.61	7.37	1.24
Journal of Environmental Economics and Management	67	8.54	7.25	1.29
Journal of Business Ethics	20	8.50	7.16	1.34
European Journal of Operational Research	19	8.48	7.20	1.28
Nature Communications	122	8.33	7.42	0.91
Sociologia Ruralis	72	8.32	7.75	0.56
European Review of Agricultural Economics	261	8.31	7.29	1.02
Food Policy	291	8.25	7.34	0.91
Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization	62	8.24	7.22	1.02
Environmental Modelling and Software	33	8.24	7.37	0.86
World Development	146	8.18	7.59	0.59
Journal of Agricultural Economics	235	8.11	7.31	0.80
Journal of Business Research	23	8.05	7.34	0.72

Journal	Number of assessments ($n_z + m_z$)	*QI*	*B*	*QB (= adj. QI)*
Agricultural Economics	251	8.02	7.42	0.61
Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning	28	8.02	7.46	0.56
Conservation Letters	45	8.02	7.16	0.86
Journal of Economic Psychology	27	8.02	6.80	1.22
Global Environmental Change	73	8.01	7.38	0.63
European Journal of Marketing	19	8.00	7.09	0.91
Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics	151	7.99	7.04	0.94
Ecology and Society	82	7.94	7.59	0.36
Nature Sustainability	135	7.93	7.41	0.52
Agriculture and Human Values	110	7.90	7.45	0.45
Journal of Marketing Research	23	7.88	7.12	0.77
Land Economics	89	7.88	7.40	0.48
Annual Review of Resource Economics	89	7.86	7.36	0.50
Environmental Research Letters	57	7.85	7.34	0.51
Trends in Food Science and Technology	19	7.83	7.52	0.32
Journal of Peasant Studies	41	7.83	7.75	0.08
Environmental Management	41	7.83	7.74	0.09
Conservation Biology	26	7.82	7.38	0.45
Social Indicators Research	14	7.81	8.12	-0.31
Technological Forecasting and Social Change	35	7.81	7.69	0.12
GCB Bioenergy	10	7.78	7.68	0.11
Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy	135	7.74	7.52	0.22
Livestock Science	19	7.73	7.41	0.32
Journal of Rural Studies	135	7.73	7.62	0.11
Climate Risk Management	28	7.72	7.33	0.39
Environmental and Resource Economics	77	7.72	7.56	0.16
Ecological Economics	236	7.71	7.49	0.22
Environmental Science and Policy	48	7.70	7.61	0.09
Climate Policy	32	7.70	7.72	-0.02
Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews	20	7.70	7.37	0.33
Journal of Development Studies	73	7.67	7.65	0.02
Energy Economics	62	7.65	7.25	0.39
Journal of Environmental Management	81	7.64	7.37	0.26
Agricultural Systems	184	7.61	7.43	0.18
Journal of Economic Surveys	38	7.59	7.10	0.49
Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics	79	7.56	7.59	-0.03
Forest Policy and Economics	48	7.48	7.63	-0.14
Global Food Security	43	7.48	7.40	0.08
Empirical Economics	38	7.48	7.48	0.00
Food Security	56	7.47	7.78	-0.31
World Economy	28	7.47	7.65	-0.18
Precision Agriculture	51	7.45	7.42	0.03
Journal of Environmental Planning and Management	33	7.44	7.39	0.05
Renewable Energy	21	7.42	7.70	-0.28
Aquaculture Economics and Management	10	7.41	7.71	-0.30

Journal	Number of assessments ($n_z + m_z$)	*QI*	*B*	*QB* (= adj. QI)
Remote Sensing of Environment	11	7.40	7.58	-0.18
Biomass and Bioenergy	35	7.38	7.35	0.02
Ecosystem Services	55	7.37	7.41	-0.03
Agricultural Water Management	28	7.37	7.50	-0.13
Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics	95	7.36	7.54	-0.17
Appetite	94	7.34	7.23	0.11
Energy Research and Social Science	24	7.32	7.32	0.00
Environment, Development and Sustainability	39	7.31	7.91	-0.60
International Journal of the Commons	20	7.30	7.50	-0.20
Climatic Change	59	7.30	7.30	0.00
Journal of Land Use Science	31	7.28	7.39	-0.11
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	25	7.28	7.16	0.11
Food Quality and Preference	81	7.26	7.04	0.22
Meat Science	27	7.23	7.22	0.01
Agribusiness	160	7.23	7.41	-0.18
Waste Management	14	7.22	7.62	-0.40
NJAS - Wageningen Journal of Life Sciences	50	7.22	7.26	-0.04
International Journal of Consumer Studies	39	7.22	7.22	0.00
Scientific Reports	50	7.21	7.66	-0.45
China Economic Review	31	7.19	7.35	-0.15
Journal of Risk Research	15	7.16	7.34	-0.18
Applied Energy	21	7.15	7.67	-0.52
Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics	21	7.15	6.92	0.23
Public Health Nutrition	28	7.11	7.11	0.00
Computers and Electronics in Agriculture	58	7.11	7.30	-0.19
Regional Environmental Change	44	7.09	7.36	-0.27
Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics	130	7.08	7.22	-0.15
European Journal of Agronomy	17	7.07	7.04	0.03
Land Use Policy	247	7.07	7.37	-0.31
Journal of Socio-Economics in Agriculture	11	7.00	7.78	-0.78
Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension	22	6.97	7.21	-0.23
Economic Modelling	47	6.95	7.16	-0.21
Energy Policy	70	6.95	7.18	-0.23
Poultry Science	10	6.93	7.11	-0.18
Applied Economics	109	6.92	7.35	-0.43
Agricultural and Food Economics	86	6.92	7.29	-0.37
Journal of Dairy Science	47	6.91	6.96	-0.05
British Journal of Nutrition	10	6.90	7.46	-0.56
Ecological Indicators	49	6.86	7.37	-0.51
Agricultural Finance Review	68	6.84	7.20	-0.36
Applied Economics Letters	70	6.84	6.87	-0.04
Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems	33	6.83	7.07	-0.24
PLOS ONE	217	6.78	7.14	-0.36
Journal of Agricultural and Food Industrial Organization	27	6.78	7.02	-0.25
European Journal of Development Research	33	6.72	7.20	-0.48
Journal of International Development	22	6.71	7.46	-0.75

Journal	Number of assessments ($n_z + m_z$)	*QI*	*B*	*QB* (= adj. QI)
British Food Journal	126	6.68	7.24	-0.56
China Agricultural Economic Review	47	6.67	7.30	-0.63
Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics	52	6.62	6.48	0.14
Food Control	10	6.61	7.02	-0.41
Bio-based and Applied Economics	32	6.53	7.55	-1.02
Journal of Integrative Agriculture	10	6.47	7.63	-1.15
Energy	29	6.45	7.19	-0.74
Studies in Agricultural Economics	20	6.45	7.39	-0.94
Water (Switzerland)	15	6.40	7.60	-1.20
Journal of Cleaner Production	198	6.38	7.11	-0.73
Journal of Food Products Marketing	16	6.37	6.99	-0.62
Outlook on Agriculture	34	6.32	7.35	-1.03
International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability	17	6.22	7.23	-1.00
German Journal of Agricultural Economics	235	6.22	7.12	-0.90
Journal of Policy Modeling	28	6.22	7.18	-0.96
EuroChoices	116	6.05	7.35	-1.30
Data in Brief	53	6.03	7.10	-1.08
Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems	19	5.99	7.07	-1.08
Forests	14	5.99	7.64	-1.65
GAIA	61	5.91	7.04	-1.13
International Food and Agribusiness Management Review	57	5.89	7.17	-1.27
Journal of Environmental Psychology	29	5.86	6.70	-0.84
Organic Agriculture	50	5.85	6.81	-0.96
Journal of International Food and Agribusiness Marketing	17	5.84	6.96	-1.12
Journal of Consumer Protection and Food Safety	15	5.81	7.16	-1.36
African Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics	36	5.80	7.50	-1.70
Journal of Agriculture and Rural Development in the Tropics and Subtropics	15	5.74	6.85	-1.12
Austrian Journal of Agricultural Economics and Rural Studies	80	5.52	7.19	-1.67
International Journal on Food System Dynamics	37	5.37	6.97	-1.60
Resources	14	5.22	7.02	-1.81
Nutrients	20	5.20	7.19	-1.99
Landbauforschung	24	4.92	7.11	-2.19
Land	82	4.91	7.20	-2.28
Agriculture (Switzerland)	40	4.71	7.04	-2.33
Ernährungs Umschau	40	4.53	6.80	-2.28
Sustainability	258	4.34	7.17	-2.83
Berichte über Landwirtschaft	165	3.65	6.96	-3.31

Source: own calculation based on survey data