Choices Style Guidelines

General Information

The purpose of *Choices* is to:

> *Broadly communicate the results of quality economic analysis applied to issues and challenges faced by public and private sector decision makers in ways that enhance public understanding of and appreciation for the work of agricultural economists.*

To this end, and balancing other experiences with purely academic writing, authors should strive to write in a way that is inclusive for the general public who do not necessarily understand highly technical information or economic jargon unless you lead them to it through very simplified yet detailed explanations. Remember, the average American reads at an 8th to 9th grade level. While not all readers of your article will be average, you should develop a paper free of technical terms, language, or concepts that may not be readily understood. The goal is to extend readership and knowledge of important information.

Title Page

Final papers should include a title page containing:

- Title of the article

- Author(s)' names: for two authors, separate their names with the word "and"; for more than two authors, separate each name with a comma, and include "and" between the last two names.
  > *Example: Ralph B. Waterson and John R. Craven*
  > *Example: Ralph B. Waterson, Joel Smith, and John R. Craven*

- An abstract of <u>no more than 50 words</u>

- JEL Classification Code(s): You can find these codes at http://www.aeaweb.org/journal/jel_class_system.html. Usually 1 to 5 codes are selected. Please list these codes using the following format: JEL Classification (or Classifications) followed by a colon and the number of the codes
  > *Example: JEL Classifications: Q11, Q13*

- Add keywords following the JEL classifications. Usually 3 to 5 keywords are selected.They must be in alphabetical order and upper case first initial of each word.
  > *Example: Keywords: Agricultural Exports, Immigration, International Trade, Meat Consumption*

- Provide a Tweet using no more than 140 characters, spaces, and punctuation. Tweets should communicate an active theme or conclusion of your article.

Example (which contains 90 characters, spaces, punctuation): Effective risk management strategies are vital for farmers marketing in local food systems.

- List information about each author, including email address, at the bottom of the Title Page. Author information, along with any acknowledgements or disclaimers, will be included at the end of your article, once posted, online. Please list the authors in the order they appear in the article, and include the information about each author in a new sentence. Please indicate the corresponding author.
  Example:
  Ralph B. Waterson (ralph@waterson.com), is Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.

  John R. Craven (john@craven.com) is Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla.

- Acknowledgements and Disclaimers should follow the author information as a new paragraph.
  Example: This study was funded in part by the U.S. Department of Agriculture under Grant No. 92-EPMP-1-0027.

Article Document

The text of the manuscript must be submitted double spaced and in Times New Roman, 12 point font. As a general guideline, the author(s) should develop an article with approximately 3,500 words or 10-12 double-spaced pages.

Writing Style

- Use a journalistic style. Use active rather than passive voice.
  Examples:
  Active: Researchers earlier showed that high stress can cause heart attacks.
  Passive: It was earlier demonstrated that heart attacks can be caused by high stress.

- In the introduction, it is very important to connect your article to a policy issue of the day. This provides the motivation for the rest of your paper and draws in the reader.

- Avoid telling the reader what you are going to communicate under each of your headings or continually making statements like "in this paper." Instead, simply develop the points in each section which support your conclusion.

- Avoid headings like "introduction," "conclusion," "summary," or any other devices reminiscent of scientific journal writing. Think about headlines you see in newspapers or magazines such as *Time* magazines read by the general public.

- There are different approaches to avoiding the use of technical terms and economic jargon, depending on the topic. Two approaches to consider are through the use of a "box" or Appendix. A box contains important information set aside within an article, through shading or outlines, which is referenced in the text, for the interested reader. Although not commonly done in a *Choices* article, another option is to include a technical appendix at the end of your article.

- Do not use scholarly abbreviations or expressions (such as *e.g.*, *i.e.*, or *ceteris paribus*).

- Spell out the first use of abbreviations or acronyms (with the acronym following in parentheses).
  Example: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is over 100 years old. The USDA provides a multitude of services.

- Do not use and/or. Make a choice or rewrite the sentence.

- For percentages, use numerals and the % sign (e.g. 25%), as opposed to the word percent with the number in word form.

- Geographical terms and abbreviations :
  o Follow *AP Style* (e.g. TX should be Texas, DC should be D.C., and KY should be Kentucky.)
  o U.S. is to be used for adjective forms (e.g. U.S. food systems) and United States is to be used for the noun form (e.g. It is the oldest agricultural land-grant university in the United States.)
  o EU requires no periods and authors are encouraged to spell out European Union (EU) in first use as this web magazine is intended for a broad audience of readers and this simplifies material for the reader.

Punctuation

- There is only one space after a period at the end of one sentence and the start of the next sentence. Also use only one space after a colon.

- Avoid using parentheses in the text except in a text citation or as required in the For More Information list. Instead, use the em dash as described below.
  o To insert the em dash in Word, type Ctrl + Alt + - (the hyphen key on the number keypad). There should be no space before or after the dash.

- Please use the final comma in a series of three or more elements. This rule applies to the text of the article as well as the listing of the author information in the For More Information section.
  Example: James Jones, Marcus Smith, and Robert Adams

Title/Headings

- Article titles should be short, attention grabbing rather than usual journal style. Think newspapers or news magazines. Capitalize all words in headings and subheadings except prepositions, articles, conjunctions, and the "to" of infinitives.

- The headline and the headings within the article should all be flush left.

- None of the paragraphs after a headline or heading are indented. Everything is flush left and ragged right.

Footnotes

Footnotes are not allowed in this publication. Please integrate the material into your text or create a text citation and list the work cited in the For More Information section at the end. See rules on text citation and list of work cited.

In-text Website Citations

If absolutely necessary—for example, when writing about specific information from food bloggers—website addresses can be cited within the text of your article since *Choices* is an online publication. The address must immediately follow the site name. When the article is put online for Choices, it will be linked and no address will appear. However, the website must also be included in the For More Information section so that people printing a hard-copy of the article can also reference the site.

> *Example: Saveur (http://www.saveur.com/article/blog/2013-Best-Food-Blog-Awards-Winners) published its list of 2013 award winners.*
>
> *Example:*
> *For More Information:*
> *Saveur. (2014). 2013 Best Food Blog Award Winners. Available online: http://www.saveur.com/article/blog/2013-Best-Food-Blog-Awards-Winners.*

Citations/For More Information

- When citing an article in the text, use author (or authors) last names and year in parentheses. **Use *et al.* only for four or more authors**.
  > *Examples:*
  > *(Warren, 2006)*
  > *(Warren, Olson, and Smith, 2004)*
  > *(Warren et al., 2009)*

- List all cited articles under the heading "For More Information:" at the end of the article. You may also list any works you did not cite specifically that might provide more information for an interested reader. For more information on how to list these references, please consult the *Choices* Reference Guidelines document.

- List any Websites you cited within the article.

- When listing more than one work by the same author or authors, in the For More Information section, please list each entry completely. Do not use the convention of a line or series of dashes to replace the author's or authors' names.

Tables and Figures

- Limit the number of tables, charts, and figures. Select these carefully, but one or a few help make the article more appealing.

- Submit all Tables and Figures only in the formats stated in the Figures and Tables Guidelines document.

- Submit each of your tables and figures in individual files and do not include them in the text document, as described in the guidelines. In the text of the article, please indicate where you want these items to be placed by including [Place Figure 1 here], for example.

Boxes

Sometimes information is best conveyed in a box that will appear where you indicate it should be placed. A glossary, for example, could be in a box. Additionally, a box can be used to describe technical information, without the use of economic jargon, when it is important for a reader to understand the underlying concept to appreciate the author's point. For an example of how a box was used in a *Choices* article to communicate the concept of returns to scale and how it was used to compare the efficiency of different nutrition education programs, see http://www.choicesmagazine.org/choices-magazine/submitted-articles/what-have-we-learned-about-the-cost-and-effectiveness-of-the-expanded-food-and-nutrition-education-program.

Please send boxes as individual Word files clearly labeled.

Appendices

If using an Appendix, please indicate clearly where you want it placed. The default is to treat the Appendix like an image file and include it at the end of the published article.

Style Guides Used by *Choices* Editors

- Webster's 11th for spellings.
- Associated Press Stylebook.
- This style sheet with specific decisions for *Choices* overrides the Associated Press Stylebook. This style sheet is updated as needed.