Guest Editing a Special Issue for Food Policy

The editors of Food Policy welcome proposals for special issues on topics that fall within the scope of the journal ([www.elsevier.com/locate/foodpol](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/foodpol)).

Each special issue is the responsibility of guest editor(s). Those wishing to guest edit a special issue should prepare a proposal as outlined below, then send this to foodpolicy@unibo.it

The editors will seek to identify the proposals of the highest quality for publication by the following competitive process. There are two deadlines each year for submission of special issue proposals: April 15th and October 15th. As soon as possible after each of these dates, the editors of Food Policy will consider all special issue proposals that conform to the journal’s guidelines and which have been received in the previous six-month period, up to close of business on the deadline date. All potential guest editors who have submitted proposals will be informed by e-mail of the success or otherwise of their proposal.

The following notes set out:

- what the editors of Food Policy are looking for in special issues
- guidelines for the development of special issue proposals
- the process by which special issues will be developed once a proposal is accepted in principle by the editors.

Note that we use the terminology of “special issue” to include a collection of papers assembled by a guest editor(s). However, under Food Policy’s current publishing practices, many such collections are likely to be special sections at the start of a Food Policy issue.

Objectives of Special Issues

Special issues of Food Policy should offer

- *either* an authoritative review of current thinking and debates in a particular area of food policy, that at the same time takes these debates forward
- *and/or* a presentation of state-of-the-art analysis within an area of current policy and academic interest, that thus informs policy debate in this area.

They should:

- Advance understanding of policy (options, priorities, impact) in the area concerned
- Provide pointers to future trends and challenges.

Preparing a Proposal for a Special Issue

Those wishing to guest edit a special issue of Food Policy should prepare a proposal that:

- Sets out the importance of the area and policy issues that the special issue will focus on;
• Explains the anticipated contribution of the special issue in advancing understanding in this area. (This will require some reference, even if brief, to existing literature and knowledge on the subject);
• Identifies papers and authors for possible inclusion in the special issue, with a brief description of each paper. (These papers do not need to have been written at the time that the proposal is presented, although our assumption is that most will be based on work already in progress). Where a given author(s) has published extensively on a subject already, it is necessary to have some indication of the new contribution to be made by the proposed paper for the special issue;
• Indicates the time-scale in which the special issue could be produced (paper writing, reviewing, submission of final copy to Food Policy) assuming the proposal is accepted.

Our recommendation is that special issues should aim to comprise a maximum of eight high quality papers, plus the introductory or overview paper. Proposals for collections of as few as four papers will be considered. Proposals for larger collections of papers will be considered under exceptional circumstances, but guest editors will have to demonstrate that the papers are of uniformly high quality.

Proposals for special issues should include more possible papers than are likely to be included in the eventual issue. This is so that the refereeing process can select the best of these papers for final inclusion in the issue. Whilst the majority of the papers to be considered for inclusion in a special issue may be known at the time of the proposal, guest editors may also propose to issue an open call for additional papers that could be considered alongside these.

All special issues should include some form of overview paper that sets out the key policy issues in the area concerned (with appropriate reference to existing literature) and summarises the contribution of the special issue to furthering understanding of them. All papers within the special issue should address explicitly one or more of the policy issues highlighted in the overview paper. It should not just be left to the overview paper to draw out the policy implications of the assembled papers.

To assist the editors in understanding how the papers in the proposal would contribute to a coherent special issue, the proposal should include a matrix that:
• Lists the key policy issues that the special issue intends to address
• Shows which papers will contribute to our understanding of which policy issues.

This matrix can also act as a useful tool during the preparation of a special issue, by showing authors the overall context of the issue and how their paper is supposed to contribute to this.

**Editing a “Successful” Special Issue**

Once a proposal has been approved in principle by the editors of Food Policy, it is the responsibility of the Guest Editors to deliver the issue to Food Policy within the agreed time-scale. One of the editors of Food Policy will act as a contact person for each special issue. Guest Editors should keep this editor informed by e-mail of progress in preparing the special issue and
in particular alert them in advance if agreed deadlines are likely to slip. If deadlines slip by more than six months, the editors of Food Policy may decide that the special issue can no longer be published.

Guest Editors must organize a double-blind reviewing process for all papers submitted for inclusion in the special issue, so as to:

- Identify those papers to be finally included in the special issue
- Strengthen these papers, so as to ensure the highest possible standards for the issue.

Guest editors should notify the contact person within the Food Policy editorial team of reviewers whom they propose to use, so that the contact person can provide comments and/or additional suggestions where appropriate. The contact person will require to see copies of all correspondence between reviewers and Guest Editors at the time that the completed draft of the special issue is submitted to Food Policy.

Once the final selection of papers has been made, final versions of these papers should be uploaded by the authors to the Food Policy online editorial system (http://ees.elsevier.com/foodpolicy). At the same time, the Guest Editors should send copies of the correspondence with reviewers to their contact person within the Food Policy editorial team, copied to foodpolicy@unibo.it

The editors of Food Policy will then check the quality of the issue before forwarding it to Elsevier for publication. They reserve the right to request a third review of papers and, if necessary, to request modifications to an issue before approving it for publication. However, the procedures set out above are designed to minimize the need for such measures.

Revised by the editors of Food Policy 10/07/2012