



Restructuring for Excellence: A New Era for the Pakistan Journal of Food Sciences

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Food security, climate-induced agricultural disruptions, and a rising triple burden of malnutrition present critical challenges to Pakistan. Addressing these crises requires robust, evidence-based scientific solutions. As the premier national platform for food science literature, the Pakistan Journal of Food Sciences (PJFS) must evolve to meet these contemporary demands. This editorial marks the official relaunch of PJFS, introducing a modernized editorial framework, a reconstituted board of experts, and a strategic roadmap designed to elevate Pakistani food and nutrition research to global prominence.

Pervasive Challenges in Pakistani Food Research

To effectively uplift the national landscape, food research in Pakistan must directly confront several structural and systemic bottlenecks. A primary challenge is the critical disconnect between academic research and industrial application, which frequently leaves valuable laboratory findings trapped in uncommercialized theses. Furthermore, the localized food sector suffers from a severe deficit in validated baseline data regarding chemical residues, microplastic contamination, and heavy metal bioaccumulation across the food supply chain. This lack of data is worsened by limited access to high-end analytical equipment, such as LC-MS/MS and NMR spectroscopy, which restricts researchers to basic proximate analyses rather than deep molecular or mechanistic investigations. Finally, the absence of standardized, uniform protocol replication across different provincial laboratories undermines data reproducibility, making it difficult for Pakistani food research to meet the stringent validation standards required by top-tier international journals.

Strengthening Editorial Governance

A rigorous peer-review mechanism is the foundation of scientific integrity. To accelerate processing times without compromising quality, PJFS has transitioned to a fully digital, double-blind peer-review workflow. The journal has reconstituted its Editorial Board to balance deep national expertise with international perspectives. The new board comprises leading scientists



specializing in post-harvest technology, food safety microbiology, functional foods, and public health nutrition. These experts are tasked with enforcing strict methodological compliance, ensuring data reproducibility, and eliminating predatory publishing practices. Furthermore, PJFS is implementing a strict ethical policy aligned with the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) guidelines. Every submission will undergo rigorous plagiarism screening and mandatory disclosure of conflicts of interest to safeguard the credibility of our published science.

Strategic Priorities for Research Upliftment

To enhance the global impact and citation footprint of Pakistani research, PJFS will prioritize high-utility, cross-disciplinary studies. Our editorial strategy focuses on four critical pillars: climate-resilient post-harvest systems, nutritional biomarkers and biofortification, indigenous food value-added processing, and food safety regimes. We will heavily emphasize innovations that minimize post-harvest losses in Pakistan's specific supply chains and champion agronomic and genetic solutions addressing local micronutrient deficiencies such as stunting, wasting, and anemia. Additionally, the journal will focus on modernizing traditional Pakistani foods through value-addition and functional property validation, while supporting local regulatory authorities in mitigating chemical and microbial contaminants. The journal will also actively solicit review articles that synthesize regional data, offering clear policy insights for government and industrial stakeholders.

The Stewardship of PSFST and Global Alignment

The revitalization of PJFS is intimately tied to its parent organization, the Pakistan Society of Food Scientists and Technologists (PSFST), which serves as the foundational bedrock for national advocacy, professional networking, and capacity building. PSFST bridges the gap between academia, regulatory bodies, and corporate food entities, providing the essential industry-wide momentum needed to sustain this journal relaunch. Moving forward, a core strategic objective of PSFST and PJFS is to forge structured alignments and formal partnerships with premier international bodies, including the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) in the USA, the International Union of Food Science and Technology (IUFoST), and the European Federation of Food Science and Technology (EFFoST). Through joint international symposia, cross-border research exchanges, and shared technical committees, these global alliances will expose Pakistani researchers to cutting-edge international standards, co-authored global grants, and globally synchronized food safety protocols.

Introducing the New Editorial Leadership Team

The strategic relaunch and structural overhaul of the journal are driven by a reconstituted team of distinguished visionaries and academics who bring profound expertise from Pakistan's leading food and nutritional science institutions. Serving as Patron-in-Chief is Prof. Dr. Faqir Muhammad



Anjum (SI, FPAS), the former Vice Chancellor of the University of The Gambia. Dr. Anjum provides overarching institutional stewardship, utilizing his decorated background in academic governance to ensure that the journal adheres closely to national scientific mandates while pushing for global research boundaries. His pioneering research focuses on advanced grain science, cereal technology, and national nutritional policy, with a specific emphasis on optimizing the milling and baking quality of indigenous wheat varieties to combat regional micronutrient deficiencies.

Leading the intellectual direction of the journal is Editor-in-Chief Prof. Dr. Tahir Zahoor, from the Faculty of Applied Sciences at NUR International University, Lahore. As the primary academic authority, Dr. Zahoor's vision centers on enforcing publication ethics, elevating research standards, and aligning submissions with contemporary challenges in national food security. His specialized research focus covers food microbiology, dairy technology, and functional food development, with significant impact achieved through isolating indigenous probiotic strains for therapeutic foods and establishing strict microbial safety barriers in local dairy supply chains.

Directing day-to-day operations is Managing Editor Prof. Dr. Nauman Khalid, from the School of Food and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Management and Technology, Lahore. Dr. Khalid oversees the transition into a fully digital, double-blind peer-review ecosystem, ensuring high efficiency in technical workflows, production cycles, and author communications. His advanced research targets the nano-encapsulation of bioactive compounds, food safety, and novel extraction techniques, specializing in developing lipid-based delivery systems to fortify everyday foods with unstable essential vitamins and antioxidants.

Supporting the technical evaluation is a panel of distinguished Associate Editors who manage specific domain-level tracks, drive the intellectual evaluation of assigned manuscripts, and facilitate strict quality controls for breakthrough work in food science applications. Among them is Associate Editor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Issa Khan, representing the National Institute of Food Science and Technology at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad. Dr. Khan's research focuses on meat science, antioxidant active packaging, and functional product formulation, aiming to extend the shelf-life of perishable proteins using natural plant extracts to directly reduce post-harvest supply chain losses. Working alongside him to manage specific domain tracks is Associate Editor Prof. Prof. Dr. Amna Sehar from the Department of Food Engineering, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad. Her work focuses on advanced food preservation, nutrient fortification, and spectroscopic techniques for food safety. The Associate Editor, Prof. Dr. Mian Kamran Sharif, research focus on fortification of foods, especially wheat, rice, processed foods, composite flour technology, and food allergens. The other prominent Associate Editors include: Dr. Muhammad Jahangir, Dr. Hafiz Ubaid-ur-Rahman, and Dr. Ahmed Mujtaba.



Visibility and Global Integration

The ultimate benchmark of PJFS's success will be its integration into top-tier global indexing databases. Our immediate three-year roadmap focuses on securing indexing in Scopus and Web of Science (Science Citation Index Expanded). To achieve this, the journal is moving to a continuous publication model, ensuring that accepted papers are immediately discoverable online. We are launching an Open Access framework to remove paywalls, making Pakistani research highly accessible to international scholars, policymakers, and industry leaders. By upgrading our technical infrastructure, enforcing world-class editorial standards, and focusing on high-impact local solutions, PJFS will serve as the definitive catalyst for advancing food and nutrition science in Pakistan and beyond.

Official Call for Papers

In alignment with our structural reorganization, the PJFS officially invites researchers, academicians, and food industry professionals to submit their original research articles, short communications, and comprehensive review papers for our upcoming relaunch volume. We welcome high-impact submissions addressing urgent national and global concerns, particularly in climate-smart agriculture value chains, public health nutrition, novel food processing, and regulatory food safety frameworks. All submissions must represent original work that has not been published or considered elsewhere, and they must comply strictly with the updated PJFS structural formatting guidelines. Authors can benefit from a streamlined digital submission portal, transparent double-blind peer review, and accelerated post-acceptance online publication under our new continuous publication model. Complete submission guidelines, ethical policy compliance checklists, and access to the online editorial management portal are available through the official PJFS journal website.

To sustain our newly adopted Open Access framework and eliminate systemic barriers to global knowledge exchange, PJFS has instituted a sustainable yet equitable financial architecture. Operating as a non-profit academic vehicle under the aegis of PSFST, the journal levies a subsidized Article Processing Charge (APC) of PKR 25,000 for local domestic institutional submissions, and USD 150 for regular international submissions, which directly covers technical typesetting, digital object identifier (DOI) registration, and persistent server hosting fees. However, recognizing financial constraints faced by resource-strained researchers, the journal enforces a strict, transparent waiver matrix aligned with global scientific equity standards. Submissions from primary corresponding authors based in low-income economies, as classified by the United Nations and World Bank economic definitions, will automatically receive a full 100% publication fee waiver. Furthermore, to incentivize high-quality local science, full or partial waivers will be granted dynamically to postgraduate students, independent researchers without institutional grant funding, or for meritorious manuscripts selected directly by the Editor-in-Chief based on extraordinary research impact.