Research fraud
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Published in:
Nature

DOI:
10.1038/488591b

Publication date:
2012

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Link to publication in Tilburg University Research Portal

Citation for published version (APA):
the heat produced and increased net carbon sequestration by expanded plantings. Integrating farmed forestry plantations and woody energy crops within current farming areas would increase biomass supply without disrupting water run-off or the production of food and fibre. Fewer conventional water-cooled power plants would also mean reduced consumption of potable water.

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Curb temptation to skip quality control

Daniel MacArthur cautions scientists and journal editors against jumping to “false positive” conclusions (Nature 487, 427–428; 2012). But temptations to leap over the quality-control gap are rife in scientific publishing.

Journals are proliferating, even in the top tier, so they have to compete for eye-catching papers. The quality of these publications necessarily depends on the vanishing time of a small pool of expert reviewers. Those who are competent in statistics are in particularly short supply.

Authors are driven to publish in the leading journals so that they can reap the benefits of academic respect, such as promotion and tenure. Never mind being overly conscientious in underpinning the conclusions — refuted results do not always end in retraction. And if a paper is retracted, it may not always have serious repercussions.

The upshot is that ambitious researchers want to push the limits of credibility in interpreting their results, and the same can be said of journal editors.

This publication ‘currency’ needs to be brought under tighter control to curb inflationary practices among authors and editors.

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