

NEW BOOKS

Antibiotics Annual 1953-1954

Edited by HENRY WELCH and FELIX MARTI-IBANEZ, viii + 632 pages. Medical Encyclopedia Inc., New York, N. Y. 1953. \$8.00. Reviewed by H. A. LECHEVALIER, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N. J.

"Antibiotics Annual 1953-1954" is a collection of more than one hundred papers which were presented at a symposium on antibiotics held in Washington in October 1953. This symposium, which we hope was the first of a series, was sponsored by the division of antibiotics of the Food and Drug Administration in collaboration with the journal, *Antibiotics & Chemotherapy*. Dr. H. Welch and Dr. F. Martí-Ibáñez should be congratulated for having successfully accomplished the always thankless job of organizing such a meeting. The "Antibiotics Annual" is a very handsome book which should satisfy everybody's criteria for definitive publication. As such it is hoped that in the future the authors will present at these symposia only original data that will not be published elsewhere. For example, apparently the same paper on the therapeutic effect of nystatin in experimental histoplasmosis which was published by Campbell, Hodges, and Hill in the "Antibiotics Annual" (p. 210) was also published in *Antibiotics & Chemotherapy* [4, 406-10 (1954)]. In order to prevent the authors from feeling that their papers, published in "Antibiotics Annual," do not have enough circulation, it is suggested that *Antibiotics & Chemotherapy* publish annually the table of contents of "Antibiotics Annual."

The symposium was an excellent outlet for a large amount of information on the new antibiotic, tetracycline. Ten papers (pp. 40-120) were presented on this subject.

Several antibiotics were announced: (1) hygromycin, a rather nontoxic antibiotic active against bacteria, mycobacteria, and certain large viruses; (2) streptogramin, an antibiotic also of rather low toxicity which is mainly active against Gram-positive bacteria; (3) ruticin and streptocardin, which are toxic substances active against Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria; (4) methymycin, an antibiotic closely related to picromycin and the proactinomycins; (5) an antiviral substance produced by a *Nocardia*.

Among the papers most likely to interest the chemist one may mention "The Preparation and Properties of Crystalline Nystatin" by Dutcher, Boyack, and Fox, and one on the chemistry of two

closely related antibiotics, thiolutin and aureothricin, by Celmer and Solomons.

A rather ingenious method for the differentiation of closely related antibiotics, based on the agar diffusion rates, was described by Fisher and Charney.

Feeding antibiotics to animals has raised the problem of how much antibiotic is present in the tissue of marketed animals and on the emergence of antibiotic resistant strains of microorganisms. These problems were discussed by various groups.

Due to their high antimicrobial properties antibiotics have tempted the food technologist as a means of diminishing spoilage of food while increasing the quality and appearance of the products. Although antibiotics are not used for this purpose as yet, studies like those of Kersey, Visor, and Wrenshall's "Residual antibiotic levels on food products during storage and processing" are furnishing the data which will eventually permit others to reach a decision on this subject.

We are looking forward to the next "Antibiotics Annual." We would like to see as a whole a smaller number of papers but more of those which are highly significant.

In order to make attendance of these symposia more pleasant, we suggest that the authors of lengthy papers be permitted to present orally a resume of the highlights of their work and that the whole paper be published in detail in the "Antibiotics Annual."

Official Publication

Association of Economic Poisons Control Officials, Inc., 202 pages. 1954. Available from A. B. Heagy, College Park, Md. \$3.00. Review by G. C. DECKER, Illinois State Natural History Survey, Urbana, Ill.

The section "Descriptions of Pesticide Chemicals," a revision of last year's "Pesticopoeia," is a most valuable if not, indeed, the only readily available handbook of basic information pertaining to pesticides. The text has been completely revised and so greatly improved that it may now be considered as an indispensable reference by all technical workers closely associated with the development, production, sale, and use of pesticides.

Some 150 pesticidal chemicals, about 50 more than last year, are fully described under such headings as common name, chemical name, empirical formula, chemical and physical properties, analytical method, toxicity, residues, and uses.

In addition to the Descriptions of

Pesticide Chemicals section, the Official Publication contains 78 pages of valuable information including: The Constitution of the AEPSCO, Uniform State Act, Uniform Custom Application Act, Regulatory Principles, Definitions of Terms, Uniform Registration Forms, Uniform Sampling Procedure, List of Control Officials, and four interesting papers—Association Review, Rodney C. Berry; Looking Forward in Pesticide Research and Control, K. Starr Chester; Perspective in Legislation and Regulations, Charles L. Smith; and The Role of National Better Business Bureau in the Advertising of Pesticides, Van Miller.

Food for People

SARAH R. RIEDMAN, 192 pages—Abelard-Schuman, Inc., Publishers, New York City. 1954. \$2.50. Reviewed by FRANCIS JOSEPH WEISS, Consultant on Food and Nutrition, Washington, D. C.

Most books on nutrition are either so scientific that they can be read only by students with a good background in chemistry and biology or so popular that they do not convey the essence of the quite substantial body of knowledge which forms the field of nutrition. The extraordinary fact about Dr. Riedman's book is that it avoids either extreme and strikes a happy medium between a too scientific and a too popular presentation. The medium is, indeed, a happy one in a very literary sense since few authors writing on nutritional subjects have such a happy sense of humor and express themselves on difficult matters in a way which even the uninitiated can understand.

And yet the book makes also pleasant reading for the scientist who will enjoy the seemingly effortless presentation of complex facts without any sacrifice of scientific rigor for the sake of popularity.

Although Dr. Riedman covers an enormous field in a small volume, the book never becomes a mere accumulation of facts and figures. Moreover, by showing what foods do to us rather than what they are she makes her presentation fascinating and interesting: How did man learn the facts of nutrition? What happens to the food in our body? What roles play proteins, vitamins, minerals in our diet?

Summarizing, it should be said that "Food for People" is a book for people, but also for scientists who after all are also people.