

New Books . . .

Marketing

THE YEARBOOK OF AGRICULTURE 1954. U.S. Department of Agriculture. 506 pages. \$1.75. Reviewed by WALTER J. WILLIS, Agricultural Extension Service, State College of Washington, Pullman, Washington.

This book contains about 500 pages of information of equal use to those who work within the field of marketing and to those who want a quick look at agricultural marketing problems and possible solutions. Eighty-seven articles discuss eighteen major topics, representing 117 contributors, most of whom are in the U. S. Department of Agriculture. As would be expected with so many contributors, there are many duplications of ideas. There are about 80 charts and pictures.

Annual agricultural marketing costs are approximately 50 billion dollars, equivalent to $\frac{1}{7}$ of the gross national product. About $\frac{1}{4}$ of the firms engaged in business in the United States participate in some phase of agricultural marketing.

Marketing improvement is usually projected in two general areas, (1) improving efficiency in marketing and (2) effecting demand. The growing trend of "built-in" maid service in marketing is evident in this book. The scope of marketing requires the combined efforts of economists and scientists—engineers, chemists, pathologists, geneticists, psychologists, nutritionists, sociologists, and others in related fields.

Constant changes occur in marketing in a dynamic economy. Producers, professors, and the marketing institution must recognize these divergencies and adjust accordingly. Packaging materials that permit prepackaging and self service, precooled and vacuum cooling which reduce spoilage and quality deterioration; advanced technology in food preservation through freezing, flash pasteurization, radiation; a better understanding of nutritional requirements; developments of plant varieties and animal breeds adaptable to changing tastes and preservation methods; more effective temperature and humidity control are examples cited of contributions of physical sciences which expand markets and improve their efficiency to consumer and producer.

Areas of production, marketing channels, and marketing margins are discussed, also various functions of marketing: assembly, standardization, processing, transportation, financing, distribution, storing and risk bearing.

Interwoven throughout are expres-

sions of the need for a comprehensive system of communication, providing local and wider areas with information related to both supply and demand because of the perishability and seasonability of production, and the requirement for a more advantageous transportation modus operandi, which would benefit producer, processor, and consumer.

Various aspects of pricing are analyzed, such as futures markets, private treaty sales, auctions, and administered prices. Rigidities in the marketing system, as they affect pricing and efficient use of agricultural and marketing resources, are discussed.

This book offers an acquaintance with Fair Trade Laws, Interstate Commerce Commission regulations, the Pure Food and Drug Act, Packers and Stock Yards Act, Marketing Agreements, Price Controls, Grades (government and processor), Federal Trade Commission regulations, and other regulatory controls affecting agricultural marketing.

The section on Cooperatives, which in 1951 included 10,166 firms with 74 million members doing a 9.4 billion dollar annual business, includes discussion on problems peculiar to Coops and information on the economy of scale.

Generally, this is not a highly technical book, and for specific technical problems will not provide the answer. It does provide background material for a better appreciation of marketing problems and of work in the commodity field.

An Introduction to Industrial Mycology

GEORGE SMITH. xvi + 378 pages. St. Martin's Press Inc., New York, N.Y. 1954. \$6.00. Reviewed by WILLARD A. TABER, Institute of Microbiology, New Brunswick, N.J.

The fourth edition of this book is a more or less complete revision of the preceding one. There are two new chapters, 107 additional pages, and 18 new photographs.

The chapter on microscopy is a worthwhile addition and should prove invaluable in this day and age when training in the proper use of the microscope is often overlooked.

The chapter on nomenclature should create an understanding respect for the taxonomists' endeavors towards the standardization of the names of fungi.

The section devoted to mycological literature can be recommended for mycology students as well as for the intended readers—industrial laboratory personnel.

Since one objective of this book is to enable the reader to identify fungi com-

monly encountered, it seems regrettable that such genera as *Mortierella*, *Cunninghamella*, and *Saprolegnia* were treated so briefly whereas such genera as *Thamnidium* and *Syncephalastrum* were included in the keys. Certainly *Saprolegnia*, *Dictyuchus*, or *Leptomitus* and related genera are found in some of waste waters.

The discussion of the genus *Fusarium* should probably include the classification proposed by Snyder and Hansen. The key to the Hyphomycetales is probably as workable as a key of that type can be. It is ironic, perhaps, that one must recognize many fungi before other unfamiliar ones can be identified by the use of keys.

The author is justifiably proud of his photographs; however, labeled diagrams of some of the photographs would be most helpful in some instances.

The excellent and practical chapters discussing the yeasts, *Aspergillus spp.*, *Penicillium spp.*, laboratory techniques, maintenance of cultures, and control of mould growth need no comment. Some of the other chapter headings, however, embrace such extensive subject matter that they must necessarily be lacking in some respects. This is unfortunate for a book bearing such an all-embracing title, since many individuals of varied interests will consult it. One wonders whether it might not be better if the title were to somehow infer applicability to those concerned primarily with control laboratories.

One disadvantage inherent to any book of this sort is that in some instances it might tend to create a false sense of knowledge of the fungi, especially if the advice of the author to consult the listed texts for specific groups is not followed. There can be no doubt, however, but that anyone reading this book will profit by the information contained therein.

This reviewer's over-all impression can best be expressed by the suggestion that the appropriate industrial laboratory personnel and microbiology student alike add this book to their reading list and/or reference library.

The Big Test

The National Fertilizer Association, 616 Investment Building, Washington 5, D. C.; 15 minutes, distribution free.

Educational film on soil sampling intended for use on TV farm and garden programs. The film describes step-by-step the approved method of taking soil samples for determining plant food deficiencies in the soil.

The TV short runs 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes and is available for booking by TV stations.