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SYMPOSIUM ON QUALITY IMPROVEMENT OF PLANT PROTEINS

Introduction

Several years ago, the Agricultural and Food Chemistry Division of the American Chemical Society hosted one of the first symposia covering the potentials of opaque-2 and flourey-2 for the nutritional improvement of maize. Although similar work was at that time and is now being conducted with other crops, there have been no other discoveries quite so spectacular. But, encouraged by this significant contribution and the success of the Green Revolution, work toward the genetic improvement of plant proteins has continued with a significant measure of success. For the most part, those of us working in this rewarding area have spoken about our progress among ourselves, fully satisfied that our work was very important, but failing in the process to inform those who determine national and international priorities. As a result, some of those who were working in this area 5 years ago now find their work halted by lack of funds.

As with most areas of research in the biological sciences, this problem lends itself well to accelerated progress through interdisciplinary research. As one proceeds through the following papers, it will become apparent that any among us—food technologist, analytical chemist, biochemist, microbiologist, geneticist, nutritionist, physiologist, statistician—can recognize where he could make a contribution. It is my hope that this symposium will stimulate further research contributing to the feeding of hungry people.

In arranging this part of the symposium, it was my intent to tell a story and at the same time bring the audience up-to-date.

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