

## The Fatty Acid Producers' Award

THE FATTY ACID PRODUCERS' AWARD was presented for the third consecutive year at the Fall Meeting of the American Oil Chemists' Society, September 30, 1957. In view of its brief history it would be premature to attempt to evaluate the extent to which the aim of the competition is being achieved. The goal may, in fact, be so altruistic that it may be impossible ever to determine the influence of the award on the fat and oil industry. However it may be appropriate at this time to review the reasons for presenting the award in order to familiarize the readers more thoroughly with this facet of the diverse activities of the Society.



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The Fatty Acid Producers' Award, which consists of a certificate and \$500, was established in 1955 under the generous sponsorship of the Fatty Acid Producers' Council, a division of the Association of American Soap and Glycerine Producers Inc. The actual mechanics of the competition are administered by the American Oil Chemists' Society under the supervision of the Fatty Acid Award Committee appointed by the president.

The award is presented for the best manuscript based on research done in any educational institution in the United States or Canada. To be eligible under the rules of the competition, an entrant must do the research upon which the manuscript is based during the time in which he is a candidate for a degree (Bachelor, Master, or Doctor) or while on the staff of an educational institution within one year after the receipt of such a degree.

The primary purpose in presenting the award is to recognize and encourage research in the general area of fatty acid chemistry. Manuscripts entered in the competition may deal with research relating to the properties or applications of pure or commercial grades of fatty acids or any of their derivatives. Although the utility of the research is evaluated in judging the manuscripts, it is not intended that the basic research be eliminated from consideration. Any research which could conceivably lead to the eventual commercial development of new or improved products or processes, or to the application of fatty acids or their derivatives into new fields of usefulness, obviously would benefit the whole fat and oil industry.

IT IS in the hope of stimulating such research that the Fatty Acid Producers' Award has been presented. It is anticipated that such recognition will encourage the younger chemists and chemical engineers to direct their enthusiastic interests to research in the fat and oil field.

Unfortunately only a very few educational institutions in the United States or Canada are currently engaged specifically in fatty acid research. Such training as is given in this area is usually incidental to some other, more generalized course of instruction. Without detracting from the need of a broad general background in chemistry or chemical engineering, a greater emphasis on graduate training in fatty acid chemistry is vital to the future expansion of the industry.

Although the Fatty Acid Producers' Award is presented to the student, it is only natural that much of the credit must go to the faculty member who shepherded the winner through the research upon which the manuscript was based. It is hoped that the honor and recognition of producing an award-winning student will encourage more professors to direct the interest of their students to research in fatty acid chemistry.

WHETHER OR NOT the presentation of the award has been achieving its purpose remains to be seen. Obviously there is really no way of measuring its influence upon the industry. The Fatty Acid Award Committee is admittedly somewhat discouraged by the limited constancy in the number of entries in the competition, the same number being received this year as in 1956. And, oddly enough, each year the entries have come from different academic institutions. It would be expected that institutions which produced a winner would be likely to submit entries the following year, but such has not occurred. At least, the committee was pleased this year to receive the first Canadian entry to be submitted since the award was established.

At any rate, the committee feels that this is such a worthwhile activity of the Society that it is to be hoped that the award will continue to be offered in the future. In the event that the award is offered again next year, the committee urges all the members of the Society to encourage their academic acquaintances to enter their students in the competition.

C. W. HOERR, chairman  
Fatty Acid Award Committee