The Sources of Our Technical Papers

IN THE COURSE of summarizing the technical program of the 1961 Fall Meeting in Chicago, the writer was struck by the paucity of papers from industrial laboratories. It was noted that, whereas 42% of the papers reported work done at government laboratories, chiefly the regional research units of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and 31% of the papers were presented by members of academic institutions, only 27% of the papers were reports from industrial or commercial laboratories. A cursory review of some of the technical programs of previous national meetings of the Society during the last nine years confirmed the writer's recollections that papers from industrial laboratories had, in the past, outnumbered papers from other sources. The results of this brief investigation are shown graphically in the diagram below.

Admittedly, the data are not complete, for only programs immediately at hand were scanned. Further information would probably reveal additional fluctuations similar to the periodic variations evidenced in the middle of the diagram. Despite the gaps, the data indicate the development of a definite trend during the past year or two. Whereas papers from industrial laboratories had averaged about 45% of those presented at A.O.C.S. meetings prior to 1960, they comprised only about 26% of those given at the last three meetings. Offsetting this decrease, papers from government laboratories have increased from an average of about 35% of those reported in the past to about 46% in recent times. Likewise, the percentage of papers from academic institutions has risen from an average of 20% to over 27%. Thus, although industry had, in the past, been the source of almost half the papers given at our meetings, it is the government laboratories which have recently presented the preponderance of papers, and industry is now represented by barely more than one quarter of the papers.

This trend is emphasized even more clearly by consideration of the actual numbers of papers presented at our national meetings. For many years, about 50–60 papers have been presented at each spring meeting, whereas the fall meetings have averaged in the neighborhood of 70 papers. It has generally been assumed that this distribution was attributable to the fact that the Society's constitution specifically designates the spring meetings as the official annual business meetings, whereas the fall meetings have traditionally been more strictly technical affairs. However, for reasons which are not yet evident, the distribution of papers was completely reversed in 1961. The spring meeting in St. Louis, even with the customary business sessions, managed to attract 75 papers, an all-time high for any A.O.C.S. meeting since World War II, while the recent session in Chicago hit an all-time low (51 papers) for fall meetings.

In the face of recent divergences from the previous pattern, papers from academic institutions have consistently averaged 16 ± 3 per meeting during the entire period under consideration, despite the fact that they represent an increasing proportion of the total papers. At the same time, papers from government laboratories have, with one exception, averaged 25 ± 4. Prior to 1960, papers from industry had averaged 30 ± 4, but at the three most recent meetings only 17, 17, and 14, respectively, were presented from this source. In comparison, academic institutions presented 15, 19, and 16, and government laboratories reported 27, 39, and 21, respectively, at these meetings.

A random spot-check of the Journal indicates that a similar trend has developed among the published papers, thereby eliminating the possibility that certain groups might prefer to publish papers directly in the Journal without previous presentation at meetings. It is quite evident that industrial laboratories, as a group, have definitely reduced their output of technical papers submitted to the A.O.C.S. Whether they are publishing more papers elsewhere is beyond the scope of this article. In view of the relatively large number of commercial organizations which comprise the fat and oil industry, it would seem that the 14 papers presented from 12 industrial laboratories at the recent Chicago meeting represents a pitifully poor batting average.

This situation is a matter of grave concern to the Governing Board and to many of our standing committees. The process of striving to promote the professional stature and the scientific

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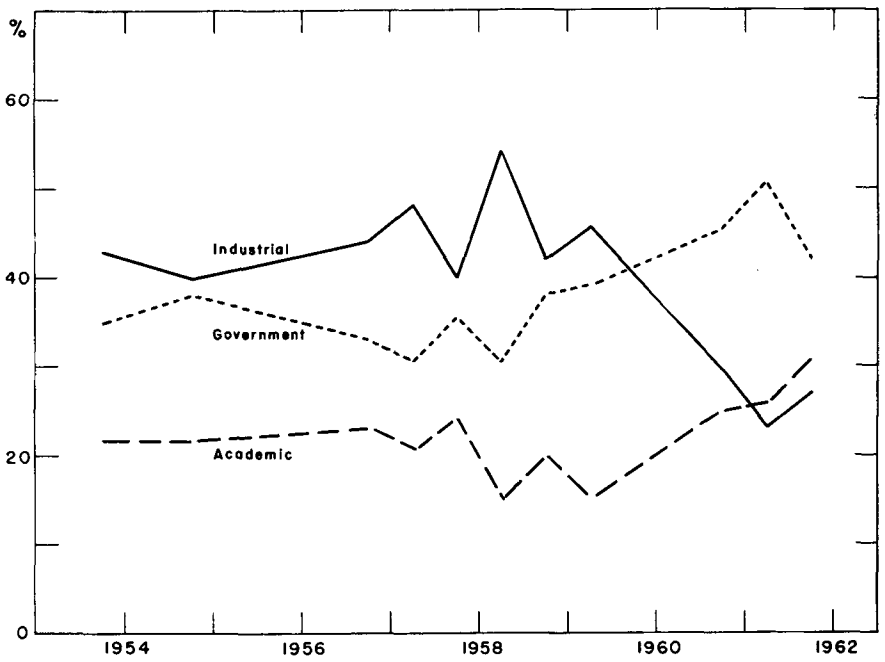

Distribution of papers from various sources in terms of percentages of total number presented at each meeting.

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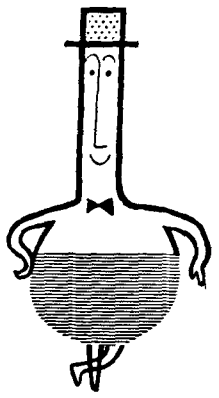
image of the Society requires the reconciliation of numerous conflicting interests between our more academically minded members engaged in research and our more practical members involved in commercial production.

The National Program and Planning Committee was reorganized to insure that all phases of the fat and oil industry are accorded equal opportunity of representation at our national meetings, yet certain groups fail to take advantage of this opportunity. The Education Committee has been actively encouraging academic institutions to direct the attention of their students to the problems of our industry, yet the Fatty Acid Award which was offered for a time in recognition of the best graduate research work in that area each year finally had to be abandoned for lack of interest. The Journal Committee, aware of the fact that the Journal has attained a world-wide reputation as the authoritative publication in the field, is continually striving to improve the scientific prominence of the Journal, whereas the Technical Safety Committee is concerned over the decrease in articles relating to plant processing procedures. The Advertising Committee has debated at great length the problem of increasing our advertising revenue, without which we would be hard-pressed to maintain the Journal. While attempting to satisfy the scientific interests of our academic members, we must, at the same time, try to overcome the arguments that the Journal does not contain sufficient material of a practical nature to be of value as an advertising medium.

It is not the purpose of this article to explore the basis of the dilemma in which we find ourselves, nor to hypothesize on the reasons for the apparent decrease in industrial publications. If industry seems to be leaning too heavily on the endeavors of others by relying on academic and government laboratories to provide the necessary background of fundamental knowledge so vitally important to continued technological progress, it must be realized that this is not a one-way street. Industry must provide some feed-back as well as more adequate support for the institutions which are the source of the basic scientific information and the technically trained workers that assure the industry as a whole of technological and financial benefit. Each member of the Society must accept a share of the responsibility.

C. W. Hoerr,
Member, Governing Board.



Meetings

A.O.C.S. National Meetings

1962—New Orleans, Roosevelt Hotel, May 7–9
Toronto, Royal York Hotel, October 2–4

1963—Atlanta, Atlanta Biltmore Hotel, April 22–24
Minneapolis, Radisson Hotel, September 30–October 2

1964—New Orleans, Roosevelt Hotel, April 27-29
Chicago, October 12–14

1965—Houston, Shamrock-Hilton Hotel, April 25–28
Cincinnati, October 11–13

1966—Los Angeles, Statler Hilton Hotel, April 24-27
Philadelphia, Bellevue-Stratford Hotel, October 4-6

1967—New Orleans
Chicago

A.O.C.S. Section Meetings

Northeast—June 5, at Whyte's Restaurant, 145 Fulton Street, New York. On April 3, 1962, Newark, N. J.

North Central—March 28, May 23, at the Builders' Club, Chicago, 6:30 p.m.

Northern California—At a selected place.

Southwest—March 8, and May 10, at Roger Young Auditorium, Los Angeles, 6:30 p.m.

A.O.C.S. Short Course, 1962

July 9–11—Developments in Fat Chemistry, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pa.

Other Organizations, 1962

March 9–10—Tenth Annual Food Technology Short Course, Columbia, Mo.

April 9–13—VI Congress of the International Society for Fat Research, London, England

May 10–12—International Symposium on Food Protection, Department of Dairy and Food Industry, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa

June 10–14—Twenty-second Annual Meeting of the Institute of Food Technologists, Fontainebleau Hotel, Eden Roc Hotel, Miami Beach, Fla.

June 18–21—The Agricultural Institute of Canada, 42nd Annual Conference, Ottawa, Canada

Sept. 8–16—Fifth International Food Congress and Exposition, New York Coliseum. For information write James Muckell, Secretary, 527 Madison Avenue, New York 22, N. Y.

Sept. 18–21—First International Congress of Food Science and Technology, Imperial College of Science and Technology, London, England. Address: Francis J. Griffith, 14 Belgrave Square, London, S.W. 1, England

Oct. 15-17—International Congress on Plastics and Problems of Choice, Amsterdam