

Committee Spotlights



Technical Safety and Engineering Committee

The Technical Safety and Engineering Committee was originally formed to promote safety and engineering in the processing of vegetable oils in related industries. This involved the development of good manufacturing practices in oil mills as well as in vegetable oil refineries and led to joint cooperation with the National Fire Protection Association in the development of Booklet No. 36 regarding solvent extraction plants.

At the recent AOCS meeting in New York, a new subcommittee of our group, entitled "Energy Conservation," was developed and will be headed by Louis J. Roman, Administrative Manager, Humko Sheffield, Memphis, TN.

In the past we have dealt with subjects such as good manufacturing practices regarding the handling and use of benzoyl peroxide, input regarding metric conversion in the United States with regard to the American Oil Chemists' Society, and we are currently providing input to the ASTM subcommittee involving testing procedures for chemical retardant clothing.

Future symposia topics will deal with energy conservation in all phases of vegetable oil manufacture and refining, special construction hazards and codes present in countries outside the United States, and constant input into improved processing technology in both the oil mill area and the vegetable oil refining area.

We have in the past provided symposia covering vegetable protein products and their manufacture and utilization.

W.M. BARGER
Chairman

Uniform Methods Committee

One of the trademarks of the AOCS is the Book of Official Methods. The procedures which constitute these Official Methods are largely the result of collaboration work by the many technical committees within the Society. Over the past almost 70 years these technical committees have assembled a collection of standard methods for the analysis of fats and oils which are recognized and used throughout the world.

Often overlooked in the midst of this activity is a committee which has also been concerned with analysis from the very beginning of the Society, the Uniform Methods Committee. This committee, established in 1909, was charged with the promulgation of methods. Since that time the functions of the committee have changed little. The initial activities consisted of preparation of standard analytical methods and cooperative testing. Distribution of samples, originally a function of the Uniform Methods Committee, was transferred to the Smalley Committee in 1922. When the Society decided a few years later that it should have its own Book of Methods, a committee on Revision of Methods was appointed to review and issue additions and revisions, and a second committee prepared a loose-leaf Book of Methods. This function was subsequently assumed by the Uniform Methods Committee and now is the responsibility of the editor of the Official and Tentative Methods.

The Committee on Uniform Methods is constituted under the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws of the

American Oil Chemists' Society. Appointed by the president, it consists of a chairman and eight additional members, including the editor. The chairman also serves as an ex-officio member of the Governing Board. The committee's responsibilities are straightforward: it receives from the president or any member of the Society suggestions for the improvement of old methods or for the establishment of new methods; it suggests to other committees work which is needed to improve or confirm methods; and it refers these matters to standing committees or may request that the president appoint new committees to investigate specific projects. To facilitate these functions, committee members individually provide liaison with the many technical committees.

The process for acceptance of methods is described in AOCS M 2-65. Every method which has been developed by a technical committee subcommittee or task group must have a two-thirds affirmative vote from the recommending group before it can be presented to the Uniform Methods Committee. Within the Uniform Methods Committee itself a two-thirds affirmative vote is necessary for adoption. In both technical committee and Uniform Method Committee balloting, negative votes must be accompanied by reasons and must be resolved before final approval. All new methods must remain "tentative" for at least one year before being adopted as official. A tentative method that has not been raised to official status after four years must be removed from the book.

In practice this reviewing system has produced high quality analytical methods suitable for referee purposes. Every effort is made to keep the methods current and to introduce new methods as they become available but, at the same time, to retain those procedures which, although apparently obsolete, are still in use in many laboratories around the world.

The Uniform Methods Committee relaxed its strict policy in 1974 in regard to collaborative testing and established a protocol whereby the Society could adopt methods from other organizations. Proposals for the adoption of such methods can be made by any AOCS member. The method, together with supporting collaborative data and precision statements, will be referred to the appropriate technical committee. Inclusion of the method in the Official Methods will be authorized in accordance with M 2-65. At the same time the committee established criteria for the adoption of alternate methods. These are as follows:

1. Alternate methods may be adopted to avoid obsolescence of equipment or to stimulate research and development in specific areas.
2. Methods must be significantly different in principle, operating time, or equipment needed.
3. Methods must measure the same component or be used for the same purpose.
4. Only one method can be designated as the official or referee method. Others must retain the word "alternate."
5. Methods will be adopted after review and recommendation of the appropriate technical committee. Inclusion in AOCS methods will be authorized in accordance with M 2-65.

In the past the solicitation of methods has taken place before national meetings. Normally, the chairman of the