Congress focuses on protein use

An international congress on the nutritional, functional and economic aspects of using vegetable proteins in human foods and animal feedstuffs drew approximately 360 persons from more than four dozen nations to Singapore during the first week in October.

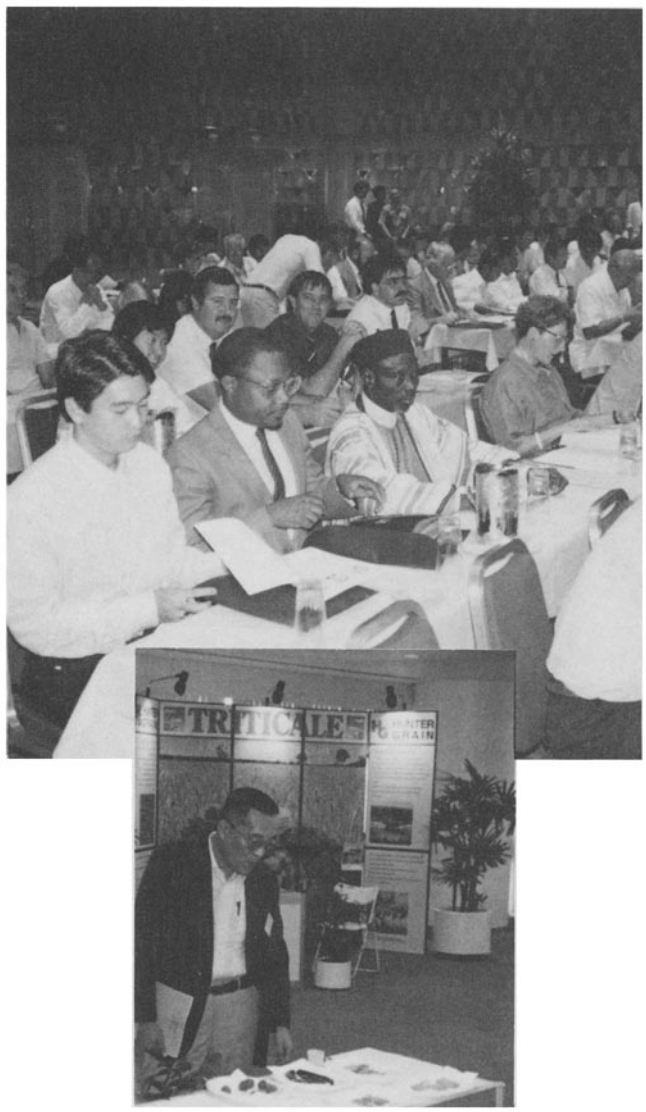
All types of potential human and animal foods, from soybeans to leaf proteins, were discussed. By design, the congress consisted primarily of review papers and thus no new major research advances were announced. But many registrants praised the overall perspective provided by a week-long congress. Audience interest appeared to be evenly split between feed and food topics. The congress format scheduled simultaneous food and feed sessions on three afternoons, with registrants able to move between the two sessions. Organizers had not expected as much movement between sessions as did occur, with the ratio of attendees reaching two-to-one, sometimes in favor of food sessions, sometimes in favor of the feed sessions.

During the opening session's keynote presentations, *Oil World's* Thomas Mielke said the drought in the U.S. during this past growing season has severely reduced world soy protein supplies and any "weather scares" in the southern hemisphere could send protein prices above the levels of June 1988.

Looking at a longer perspective, Peter Perkins of the Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics said protein trade growth during the 1990s "can, at best, be expected to match that of the 1980s" which saw reduced trade levels from the 1970s. If further trade restrictions develop during the 1990s in Europe and Japan, vegetable protein trade to developed nations could slow, he said. But increasing income and population growth in developing countries, and potential livestock feeding expansion in the Soviet Union, should provide a stimulus for growth in trade, Perkins said.

Donald E. deKieffer of the Washington, D.C., law firm of Pillsbury, Madison and Sutro noted that government-imposed restrictions may have as much effect on world trade and use of proteins as supply-demand factors. He said all major oilseed-producing regions have specific market-distorting government support programs that are designed to protect internal markets, as well as to maintain or expand foreign market shares.

Looking at protein marketing perspectives, Central Soya President David Swanson commented that "flexibility is perhaps our only defense—and offense—against unforeseen developments. The pace of change will quicken with every passing year, and victories in the marketplace will go to adaptable teams that are prepared to deal with that rapid and continuous change." Swanson said macroeconomics—changing trade policies, exchange rates, export programs and growth rates—will constantly change. Trade barriers will affect marketing opportunities, he said, suggesting that "the desire for self-sufficiency can be tempered enough to create opportunities." Aiding developing nations to grow while reducing debt will require international cooperation, but is needed, he said. Biotechnology will help meet current needs, but also "will create new ones we never envisioned," Swanson said. Environmental concerns may be met in part by new technologies from biotechnological developments. The current GATT (General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs) talks must succeed, Swanson said. "The mid-term review will be in December. Negotia-



More than 40 nations were represented as the World Congress on Vegetable Protein Utilization in Human Foods and Animal Feedstuffs opened in Singapore (top photo). An accompanying exhibit provided samples of foodstuffs (bottom photo).

tions now appear blocked, but a successful outcome is an imperative."

T. Takebe of Mitsubishi in Tokyo stressed the need for changes in world grain standards to provide incentives for growers to produce more economically valuable proteins, for new rapid instrumental analytical techniques and for reducing agrochemical residues in all crops. Takebe suggested bonuses for superior protein content or penalties for low protein content, or both.

During the following plenary sessions, speakers from 20 nations discussed the processing of oilseeds and nonoilseed protein to produce food and feed, nutritional considerations, and specific food and feed uses. In addition, a special session was held from 7 to 9 p.m. the second day of the congress to accommodate volunteer lecture and poster presentations. More than 80 persons attended the volunteer presentations.

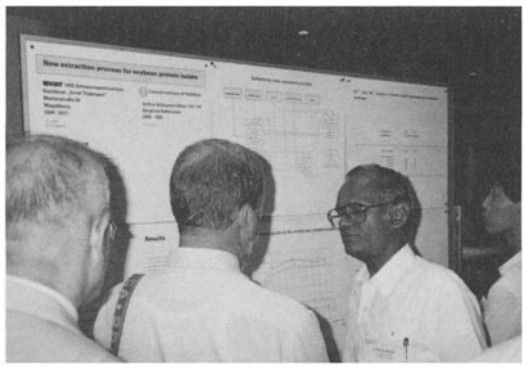
Initial evaluations of the sessions by attendees showed a wide range of value. Ratings for the opening day's keynote presentations ranged from excellent to fair. Ratings for subsequent presentations included some excellent ratings and some fair. A number of registrants expected more original research and fewer review papers; others felt some presentations were marred by poor slides. As is true at most meetings, registrants gave high ratings for the opportunity to meet and talk with specialists from around the world.

General chairpersons were Lars H. Wiedermann of the American Soybean Association office in Tokyo, Japan, and Kenneth E. Beery of Central Soya Co. Inc. in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Aiding them in program development were E.W. Lusas of Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, and Bryce Bell of the Australian Oilseed Crushers Association. The meeting was sponsored by the American Oil Chemists' Society, with the aid of two dozen participating organizations (see the September 1988 issue of *JAOCS*, page 1389).

Social events included an opening mixer, a cultural evening with Thai, Chinese, Japanese and Malaysian dancers, a cocktail reception hosted by the American Soybean Association, a gala Chinese banquet including excerpts from Chinese opera, and a western-style closing luncheon.

Eleven firms participated in the accompanying exposition. Equipment firms represented included Amandus Kahl Nachf., Krupp Maschinentechnik GmbH and SKET Import-Export. Tintometer GmbH displayed analytical instrumentation. The firms showing vegetable protein products and technology were Archer Daniels Midland Co., Alfa-Laval Food Engineering AB, Central Soya Co. Inc., Habib Arkady Ltd. and Yeo Hiap Seng Ltd. Hunter Grain featured triticale at its exhibit. Hewin International emphasized market studies available from that firm.

A proceedings of the congress will be published next year by the American Oil Chemists' Society. All paid technical registrants at the congress will receive a copy by surface mail. Additional copies will be available for purchase through AOCS, PO Box 3489, Champaign, IL 61821-0489, USA. The price for the proceedings will be set next year after production costs are known.



Registrants visit the poster session held Tuesday evening during the world congress on vegetable protein.