
Editorial

Science Marches On

THE Twenty-third Annual Meeting of the American Oil Chemists' Society has now passed into history. The country's favorite bugbear of the moment, "business conditions," decreed that the attendance at the meeting should be a little smaller than that of other recent years, but the enthusiasm of those members and guests who did attend was not dimmed by any thought that America is going to close up.

It is our belief that many business men could profit by the example of the earnest scientist, who, in times of stress, applies himself just a little more zealously to the problems of cost reduction and quality improvement in the manufacturing operations under his care. The original papers and committee reports presented at the Oil Chemists' meeting this year offered ample evidence of the substantial service being rendered the fatty oil industries by the research efforts of this group and of their associates.

Of outstanding interest were the several reports and papers dealing with the problem of determination of free fatty acids in the oil in cottonseed. Application of standardized analytical methods to the determination of the value of each parcel of seed to the oil miller will result inevitably in the production of greater profits, not only for the miller, but for the refiner, and for the careful farmer likewise.

The improvement of operating practice in cottonseed mills was also the subject of carefully prepared papers, reports, and of much discussion during the sessions of the meeting. Chemists and chemical engineers throughout the industry are undoubtedly doing their share to protect the profits of their employers during these difficult times, and even to increase them, by enabling manufacturers to offer products of

improved and standardized quality, which have the strongest possible appeal for the reluctant buyer.

Business Can Be Good

“LAST month our business was bigger than in any other month of our business history.” No, this is not a dream, but the actual statement of a manufacturing executive, made to the editor only a few days before this issue went to press. “How did they do it?” is the inevitable question rising to the lips of everyone to whom the words have been repeated.

A plant of moderate size, manufacturing commodities of highly competitive character, their marketing efforts have been confined entirely to nearby territory, where the ability to make prompt deliveries without excessive freight or haulage costs has enabled them to sell profitably at recognized market prices. Recognizing the difficulty of securing orders at this time, they have intensified their sales effort within the bounds of this nearby market territory.

The very fact of their moderate size has held their production and sales overhead costs within reasonable limits. Efficient factory operating methods have curbed current production costs (without the necessity of reducing working forces, for these were never more numerous than necessary).

Lastly, chemical control has been made even more rigid than in the past, in order that quality shall be maintained at the highest level possible and improved wherever feasible.

Such old-fashioned attention to business seems to bring a favorable result, despite the general cry that profitable business is impossible under present conditions.
