

25 Years of the German Oil Science Society

RECENTLY THE GERMAN Oil Science Society (D.G.F.) celebrated its 25th Anniversary. As requested by the Journal of the American Oil Chemists' Society, I am pleased to review our development during this time.



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Fats and oils are of universal importance as raw materials of agricultural production, and the foodstuffs' industries. They are also important in biology, medicine, pharmacy, and cosmetics. The D.G.F. was founded in 1936 for the purpose of bringing together chemists, engineers, farmers, biologists, doctors, pharmacists, and cosmeticians who are interested in problems of fatty substances. Due to the multiplicity of questions and problems, this Society was divisionalized as follows: Basic Research, Analysis, Oils, Biology, Edible Fats, Soap, Synthetic Detergents, Paint, Minerals and Vitamins, Wax, Apparatus, and Processing Machines. Personal attention to specific problems was achieved by means of lectures and information directed to these groups. Analytical research methods were assimilated into the D.G.F. Standard Methods. Extended courses and prizes furthered the interest of the members.

The importance of a qualified technical publication became quite apparent. The magazines "Chemische Unschau" and "Fette-Seifen-Anstrichmittel," with other small publications, were combined and distributed with the magazine "Die Ernährungsindustrie."

To honor the outstanding accomplishments of specialists in the field, the Normann Medal was donated by the Society in honor of its most famous member, Wilhelm Normann. Two American researchers, A. R. Baldwin (Hamburg, 1951) and W. O. Lundberg (Berlin, 1957) have been honored by the Society. In 1960, two Nobel Prize Winners, Dr. Dam of Copenhagen, known for his work concerning fat-free vitamins and fat transformations, and A. Butenandt of Munich, received the coveted award. Prof. Butenandt accepted his medal at the University of Hamburg during the celebration of the D.G.F.'s 25th Anniversary. At that time, he delivered his profound lecture on Poly-unsaturated Fat Alcohols and Their Biological Importance as Sex Hormones.

Membership soon exceeded 1500, reflecting the great interest in these efforts. The lecture series attracted a large audience, in Germany and from many other countries. The D.G.F. Standard Methods enjoyed wide acceptance and its publications captured world wide attention. However, many problems had to be overcome. An attempt to involve this Society politically was successfully repelled. Soon after World War II ended, the activities of all German research organizations, including the D.G.F., were halted by order of the occupying forces. With the advent of the new German Bundes Republic, and within the framework of post-war reconstruction, the D.G.F. utilized all its dormant facilities of organization, bylaws, and experience, and rapidly regained its stature.

One of the most important objectives of the D.G.F. is yet to be realized, namely, the replacement of the Reich Institute for Fat Research, founded in 1943, which became a victim of the war. It is to be hoped that the beginnings of a new institute can be realized in the year of 1962.

Shortly after its inception, the D.G.F. established contact with similar societies in other countries. It affiliated with the Commission Internationale de l'Etude des Corps Gras (I.C.), which deals with problems of analysis. After the direction of this Society was transferred to the D.G.F. during a meeting in Rome in 1938, it proposed that an international Fats and Oils Convention be held in October of 1939. The advent of World War II cancelled this meeting.

Personal contacts with other organizations were reestablished after the cessation of hostilities, and at the D.G.F. meeting in Hamburg the International Society for Fat Research (I.S.F.) was formed. The purpose of the I.S.F. was to establish a means of communication among the professional personnel in the fat and oil industry of all nations, regardless of political differences. It was the encouragement of personal contact and association, rather than an amalgamation of societies, which was sought. As elections of international boards of directors often lead to major differences of opinion, this process was eliminated. It was agreed that the leadership and organization of the Society be directed by that country in which the next general meeting was to be held.

In order to avoid difficulties of currency exchange, and to enable all interested professional personnel to be members, the requirement of yearly dues was dispensed with. The basic ideology of this new society was described in the December, 1956 edition of the Journal of the American Oil Chemists' Society. It is to be hoped that the I.S.F., which this year met in London, England from April 9 to 13, can contribute substantially to the greater understanding and cooperation between countries in these trying times of political unrest.

The D.F.G. places great value on the friendly relationship with its American colleagues and extends, by means of this editorial, a most friendly greeting.

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H. P. Kaufmann presents to Nobel prize winner A. Butenandt the Normann Medal during D.G.F.'s 25th Anniversary Meeting at the University of Hamburg, 1960.