
Book reviews

Ciba Foundation Symposium 96: Fetal Antigens and Cancer. London: Pitman 1983. VIII+263 pp., several figs. and tabs. Hard bound £ 25.00.

There are many hypotheses on the origin of tumours but their mechanisms of them are not yet well understood. Therefore, it is difficult to develop concepts against tumours. One of the earliest ideas goes back to Paul Ehrlich, who suggested a role of the immune system in response to tumours. Based on this concept, the present symposium discusses new knowledge concerning the relationship between fetal antigens and tumours. Emphasis was placed on: the embryonic character of malignant cells, the genetic basis and expression of embryonic surface antigens, the molecular nature and the correlation between tumour antigens and normal antigens and their functional significance, the characterization of pre-cancerous and cancerous human antigens by monoclonal antibodies as well as possibilities for prophylactic immunization against tumours in human beings. The symposium's aim of throwing light on the topic of fetal antigens and their possible role in the development of tumours was partially accomplished. Indeed, there are many new experimental facts and interesting ideas but very many new questions, too. The topic is analysed by researchers from a considerable number of disciplines ranging from embryology to immunology, biochemistry, genetics, cell biology, and epidemiology. Although a solution of the tumour issue cannot be expected in the near future, the conclusions of this symposium offer promises for further fruitful studies.

H. Stäber, Berlin

Mukherjee, T.K. (ed.): Animal Improvement Research. Proceedings of the Fourth International SABRAO Congress. Bangi, Malaysia: SABRAO (Dept. of Genetics, University) 1983. 181 pp., several figs. and tabs.

While only two of the papers presented are devoted to topics of scientific methodology the great majority are applied to specific problems of breeding livestock in a hot humid climate: excess heat production by better producers because of a higher metabolic rate in cattle (Franklin) and poultry (Bohren, Horst), the search for a suitable breed by which to improve native cattle by crossing (Moin and Humes, Bhat, Jalaludin, and others), reproduction performance of buffaloes (Charan Chantalakhana, Bhat, Ahmad Aman) and goats (Thangavelu, Peters). Adaptation, put in the framework of agricultural problems in developing countries, is dealt with by Bhat, who shows the urgent need for an integrated system of production improvement. A general account on breeding principles with marine animals (Baharin Ben Kassim) is followed by a short report on the impressive success in silkworm breeding (Hirobe) in Japan and hormone application in India (Bustari Bai). Sheldon provides information on conservation of poultry breeds imported to Australia before this continent was subsequently closed to importations. Papers on crop improvement research are published in another volume.

E.-Ch. Wessely, Rostock