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Institute of Animal Resources

THE need for adequate standards and methods in the procurement of biological materials for research, assaying, testing, and teaching has become increasingly acute. Special problems often require special types of materials, and the purity and supply of such stocks must be assured.

Prompted by these considerations, the Chairman of the Division of Biology and Agriculture of the National Research Council, Paul Weiss, set up an organizing Committee on Animal Resources under the Chairmanship of C. C. Little, of the Jackson Memorial Laboratory, circumscribing its tasks as follows:

1) *Definition and standards*: The constitution and relevant properties of animals used for investigations and tests (their genetic constitution and purity, including degree of variability; their nutrient status; their freedom from disease; their special sensitiveness and susceptibilities, as well as other criteria of vigor) will have to be objectively defined according to accepted scientific standards. The setting of minimum standards of acceptability and maximum limits of tolerance will not only be of great practical service but should gradually lead to more universal adherence to rigorous research standards, thus creating an increasing demand for the standardization of materials.

2) *Production*: It will be necessary to insure an adequate supply of genetically defined strains for specific purposes (e.g., cancer strains; breeds with special resistance or sensitivity to particular pathogens; races with special nutrient or metabolic characteristics, etc.). This implies, besides the maintenance of existing strains of value, the continual search for new useful mutations.

3) *Certification*: Standards of identification, heredity, nutrition, health, etc., of biological materials must not only be established, but there must also be some means to determine conformance. Some surveillance of supplies and certification to the consumers is, therefore, necessary.

4) *Registry*: There will have to be a central registry which will compile and keep alive a master record of biological materials in general demand. It is to receive periodic reports on sources, availability, volume of breeding, gradual changes in strains, new breeds, anticipated production and demand, etc.

5) *Information*: Data compiled by the registry should be made available as widely as possible to potential producers and consumers. Consumers should be able to turn

to the central registry to find out when, where, and how to obtain given types of animals or animal products.

6) *Supply mechanisms*: Coordination should be attempted in all common measures to improve the mechanics of rearing, shipping, and protecting animal stocks, including adequate attention to animal welfare.

The committee, composed of representatives of academic institutions, government, industry and trade organizations, and including specialists in genetics, breeding, nutrition, parasitism, distribution and care of animals, developed a systematic and comprehensive plan. To implement this, an Institute of Animal Resources was established as a subunit within the Division, and assigned to the administrative sphere of the American Institute of Biological Sciences. O. N. Eaton, of the Bureau of Animal Industry, U. S. D. A., and himself a geneticist, has been appointed Executive Secretary.

The objectives of the Institute are:

1) To survey and put on record the existing sources of production and supply of animal material used in biological and medical research, assay, and testing.

2) To coordinate and organize this information in such a way that it can and will be available for distribution to individuals and institutions engaged in such assay, testing, and research.

3) To develop and establish reasonably scientific standards for the production, nutrition, hygiene, and shipment of such animals.

4) To take such steps as may be necessary to preserve the continuation of the various genetic strains or stocks of such material available now, or in the future.

5) To study the need for such material, both under peacetime conditions, and in the event of a possible national emergency, and to take steps to organize and have in readiness the personnel and other facilities for such extension of activity as may be necessary.

6) To explore and expedite international exchange of animal stocks of special characteristics and significance which are not available in this country.

Mainly concerned are all of those organizations and establishments engaged in biological, medical, agricultural, and public health research and testing. These include the testing laboratories of government (federal, state, municipal); of industry, and of educational institutions; foundations and agencies supporting biological, medical, and agricultural research; animal breeders; biological supply houses, and others.

SAMUEL L. MEYER

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