

## What Are the Pesticide Information Problems?

### A Panel Discussion\*

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On September 12, 1963, at the American Chemical Society meeting in New York four men met to evaluate a problem. Their task is given in the title of this paper. The panel consisted of four distinguished scientists: a chief chemist from the Department of Agriculture, a professor of entomology, the assistant director of research of a large chemical company, and a leading expert on chemical documentation. Their names: Dr. T. H. Harris, Professor W. M. Hoskins, Dr. D. MacDougall, and Dr. H. Skolnik. Their remarks on this occasion are elaborated in their papers which follow.

The question posed concerned the manner in which chemists in the pesticide industry keep abreast of published information. Many groups in the chemical industry have considered this question in a similar fashion. However, the pesticide industry had not addressed itself to this question in at least eight years.

The panelists were asked to describe some of the ways in which the information needed by themselves and their co-workers flowed to, through, and in some cases right by them. What about awareness and what about retrieval? What questions are asked of the literature and how efficiently and how well are they answered? In the time allotted it was agreed not to propose detailed solutions.

The objective was to single out specific problems in the hope that discussion would be stimulated among others—hopefully, those in the best position to propose solutions. Among the problems defined were:

- (a) The need for rapid and complete retrieval of pesticide information by government agencies.
- (b) The difficulty in maintaining awareness to the degree necessary for keeping the teaching of pesticides as current as possible.
- (c) The difficulty of doing pesticide-oriented literature searches on classes of compounds indexed in the conventional manner.

One panelist maintained that there were no special pesticide information problems since there is no distinct pesticide literature. Pesticide chemists use the traditional chemical and biological literature. Thus industry shares these problems is common with many others; the solution which serves all should serve pesticide chemists best.

During the discussion it was remarked that the synthetic organic pesticide industry is only about twenty years old. It behooves us to consider today's problems and ask: What problems will scientists seeking this information encounter twenty years from now and what can we do to help them? Those scientists may well be ourselves.

The moderator is of the opinion that the panelists did an admirable job and wishes to take this occasion to thank them once more for their contributions. Interest engendered by this discussion has been largely responsible for a symposium devoted to pesticide literature at a following American Chemical Society meeting.

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