BOOK REVIEW


Since 1974, when the First International Working Conference on Stored-Product Entomology was held in Savannah, these conferences, convened every four years, have become the keystone for the presentation and dissemination of research results in the protection of stored products of organic origin. Indeed, the two-volume proceedings of the Canberra conference, attended by more than 400 participants from 46 countries, contain some 250 papers, confirming the cardinal role of this periodic congregation of professionals, mainly researchers, in stored-product protection.

The papers published in the proceedings are grouped in the following sessions: Fumigation and Controlled Atmospheres, Storage Engineering, Sampling and Trapping, Insect Biology, Inert Dusts, Grain Quality, Grain Protectants, Integrated Commodity Management, Storage Fungi and Mycotoxins, Biological Control, Quarantine and Regulatory Issues, and Physical Control. These chapters are followed by workshop reports not included in the above-mentioned sessions (Appropriate Storage, Expert Systems, On-Farm and Small-Scale Storage and Extension, Standards), a list of participants, a list of trade exhibitors, and an author index.

It is hardly possible to comment here on all the respective papers included. However, if we accept the premise that the proceedings are a true and significant representation of the world’s research scene in stored-product protection, it is perhaps possible to draw some generalizations on present research trends.

The most conspicuous feature of this collection of papers is the apparent decline of interest in the control of stored-product pests by conventional insecticides. Other protectants, such as natural products of plant origin, juvenoids, chitin inhibitors, and inert dusts, remain in the focus of researchers. In fumigants, the last days of methyl bromide and the increasing acceptance of phosphine and carbon dioxide are obvious. The controlled atmosphere technologies are increasingly becoming a research-supported part of every-day practice.

The well-attended Sampling and Trapping session also documents the decrease of the general acceptance of toxicants as a universal solution of problems and the fortunate shift from pest control to pest management. The recognition that it is imperative to to know the kind and extent of an infestation precisely before practical prophylaxis or control decisions are made is quite clear.

A surprise both to the organizers and to the informed readers are the comparatively few contributed papers on pest biology. Though it became a tradition that these conferences largely devoted their available time to practice-oriented projects, the decline of interest in (or funding of) pest biology research is most unfortunate.

Naturally, the papers presented vary in their creativeness and invention. Yet these two volumes contribute a large body of laboratory and field research, original data and original ideas. Similarly as the proceedings of the previous conferences, they are indispensable for the researcher in stored-product protection. Also, I strongly recommend them as reading for those pest control operators who wish to run their business in a truly qualified way.

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