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# Editorials

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The loss of a country's leading poultry entrepreneur and President of its WPSA Branch is a very unhappy occurrence. Thus we share with the members of the India Branch a great sadness following the sudden death of Dr B. V. Rao on 26 January 1996 (see obituary on page 109). For this tragedy to occur less than nine months before India is due to host the XXth World Poultry Congress is an added misfortune. However, it is clear that the Congress Organizing Committee and the Branch have surmounted the ensuing problems and that the course is now set for an impressive and memorable congress in September (see Branch News (page 106) for details of India's new Branch President, Mrs Anuradha J. Desai, to whom we wish a highly successful and rewarding term of office).

It is appropriate to draw attention to the change of venue for the Congress. Due to the failure to complete construction work on the prestigious India Habitat Centre, the organizers have had to move the event to the originally chosen location – the Taj Palace Convention Centre. While some sessions will be held in the adjacent Maurya Sheraton Hotel, most of the technical and social programme will take place in the large and undoubtedly impressive Taj Palace, located 14 km from Delhi International Airport and 10 km from the city centre.

This issue of the journal breaks new ground by introducing a Guest Editorial. Arising from Dr Rosen's paper (page 53), in which he argues in favour of a more logical and coherent nomenclature for the micro-ingredients included in animal feedstuffs, the opportunity has been given to Dr Derek Shrimpton, who has a long involvement with both the animal and human food industry, to add his comments and to suggest how the subject could become the focus of constructive debate.

In continuing efforts to increase the efficiency with which the *World's Poultry Science Journal* is produced, there have been some further recent changes in production arrangements. While retaining the advantages of continuing association with the Watt Publishing Group, the processes of printing and distribution have returned to Europe and are now being undertaken by Ponsen and Looijen, Wageningen, The Netherlands. Both Peter Lewis – new Assistant Editor – and I are confident that the production schedule will quickly regain normality. Please note that members will also be receiving copies of the Membership Directory, due to be published at about the time that this issue of the journal reaches you.

Chris Hann

## Feed additive nomenclature

In this issue (page 53) Dr Gordon Rosen has developed his thoughts on a more rational terminology to describe the functions of the many micro-ingredients available to the feed compounder. Few will disagree with his view that there is currently vagueness and confusion, with diverse meanings, connotations and interpretations widely evident in scientific, consumer and regulatory publications and debates. While within the feed industry there is no confusion, the point is well taken that specialist interest groups, which are becoming ever increasingly strident, may not always be aware of the evolution of a terminology and may consequently inadvertently misuse it.

Within the UK the use of micro-ingredients in feeds has been discussed in many different contexts since 1945, including animal welfare (Brambell, 1965), animal health (Swann, 1969) and human health (Richmond, 1990). Amongst these the report of the Swann Committee relates to the issue raised by Dr Rosen because it recommended, for the first time in official circles, that antibiotics should be separated into two classes – those used for growth promotion and those used clinically.

Although antibiotics are only one of a number of micro-ingredients considered by Dr Rosen, they are especially difficult to categorize because of their multiple applications and because of the long period over which the term has been in use. First use was attributed by Flemming (1957) to Vuillemin in 1889. In this possibly original usage, the concept was one of 'antibiosis' and hence it embodies an aspect of growth promotion through the suppression of antinutritional bacteria, as well as prophylaxis and therapy. Nevertheless, Dr Rosen's recommendation to classify antibiotics with the currently defined growth promoters under 'pronutrients' has a great deal of merit. While differentiation would be assisted by reference to species and dosage, the allocation of some products to more than one category may present a difficulty. Thus, he recommends that anticoccidials should appear in both the 'pronutrient' category and a new one he calls 'prophylactics'. It is true that many of the compounds currently approved as anticoccidials probably have a pronutrient effect in their own right, but it is also true that prophylaxis is another emotive word in many countries, especially in the minds of regulators. For some, it is synonymous with the indiscriminate use of low level antibiotics that may result in the more rapid development of resistance. Hence, there may be a case for an alternative term that avoids this association.

Overall, by introducing two components 'nature' and 'effect' into the system, Dr Rosen's proposals have the major objective of reducing misunderstanding and opposition by consumers. It will be a test of the system if these objectives are seen to be realizable, with consumers able to feel that there is a gain in clarity, and that current obscurities are not being substituted by others.

The category 'conditioner' may also be worth further thought. Within the feed milling industry the term more usually applies to a manufacturing process, whilst some of the EU groups would, under EU food legislation, be categorized as manufacturing aids. While at present the term 'pronutrient' does not feature in EU food legislation, there could be an advantage in using a common Feed-Food classification. Should this be followed, then antioxidants, appetizers, colourings, preservatives, acidity regulators and enzymes would appear only in the 'pronutrient' category and some simplification could be achieved by avoiding double listing. To some extent these are comments of detail. The thrust of Dr Rosen's paper is to highlight the need for a revision of the classification of the 14 regulatory groups of the EU which, if the case is accepted, raises the issue of implementation.

A suggestion has already been made at the 10th European Symposium on Poultry Nutrition in Antalya that the WPSA might be an appropriate body to initiate discussion. This idea can be endorsed on the grounds that the Association is organized on a world rather than a national basis and it has, as a major objective, the furtherance of understanding and co-operation between research workers and the industry. Moreover, in most countries there is a membership of government officials at the national branch level.

As guest contributor I invite the Council of the UK branch, other national branches of the WPSA and, because of its wide relevance, other appropriate bodies including the British and European Societies of Animal Science, to give serious consideration to the categorization of micro-ingredients in feeds raised by Dr Rosen and to the method of translating it into meaningful practice nationally and internationally.

Derek H. Shrimpton

## References

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