

INTRODUCTION

Ladies and gentlemen. It is at once a privilege but also a heavy responsibility for what I may call our tropical team to be presenting the opening topic in such a wide ranging programme as we have in this conference.

Tropical storage science and technology operates in the many branched tributary system of a broad stream which has traditionally moved away from its source in the older, developed, industrialised parts of the world. If one can select two salient characteristics of the tropical scene which we may ask our colleagues in temperate areas to note, these are, firstly, climate. High humidity and an average temperature exceeding 25° C producing continuous and many insect generations puts heavy pressure on our insect control techniques. Secondly, the inevitably low standards of acceptance of the quality of stored produce reduces motivation towards improvement.

But today, methods and practice in tropical storage have invoked intensive local research, education and extension of training. In their presentations, our speakers will bring out the peculiar needs of the tropics for basic surveys on modern economic lines and for awakening the political and public conscience to activate the mass of well tried and proven measures whether in production, marketing, or in reducing losses in transport on route to the ultimate consumer. Other speakers will stress the means of achieving this goal.

I will only mention my own thoughts prompted by my recent visit to Eastern Africa; that we must so present our case to the political leaders, and to their governmental and industrial arms, that a properly and continuously funded effort is motivated within each national boundary. Only in such a way can we ensure the protection in storage and distribution of food which is no longer cheap anywhere. I heard only this morning on the CBS news, that concern is felt for the fate of all those petro-dollars. We, in this conference, are more concerned with what I'd like to call the nutri-dollar and the ways and means of saving it for the benefit of both producers and consumers of good clean food.

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