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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FISHERY CHEMISTS EXPLAIN ACTIVITIES IN WORLD NUTRITION MATTERS

Chemists in various parts of the world are driving hard to discover how to "lock in" the essential nutritives of fish and to improve quality generally, discussions at the second day's International Conference on Fish in Nutrition developed. The Conference, held in Washington, D. C., is sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organization.

The day's discussions were replete with references to amino acids, bacteria, enzymes, oxidation, antioxidants and other items coming under the scrutiny of the chemists. Laymen and scientists alike have long known that many forms of meat improve with reasonable aging but that fish are considered at their best when just caught. Fishery chemists are seeking to determine the reason for this difference.

This chemical research is expected to add materially to that which is already known relative to the extension of the quality and flavor of fish well beyond the just-caught stage. Already improved handling techniques on shipboard, better refrigeration on fishing vessels, improved processing techniques for all forms of fishery products, processing fish and fishery products under rigid Government inspection, better transportation, improved storage facilities and practices at the processing and distribution levels have all contributed to make quality fishery products available at the consumer level.

The discussions hinged upon the food components of fish--proteins, fats, minerals and vitamins, and the scientific knowledge already accumulated and the areas in which more knowledge is necessary.

Part of the discussion centered around seemingly simple terms such as "edible fish" which means one thing to peoples of one part of the world and something else to those of other parts, or "salting" which means dry salting to some and wet salting to others. It was pointed out that since this conference is vitally

concerned with world literature on the whole topic of fish in nutrition it is necessary that all terms be thoroughly understood by all those interested in the literature.

The day covered a variety of subjects pertinent to the main theme of locking in the nutritive values and improving quality.

The complicated nature of fish oils, the effect the manner of catching a fish has upon its fat structure, the value of fermentation as a food preservative and as a means of increasing nutritive content, preservation of food by nuclear radiation, by drying or freezing were discussed.

The chemical sequences in the manufacture of fish flour were touched upon, the effect of storage and the chemical changes of the lipids or fats in meals treated with antioxidants and those not treated were also explained.

Main Topic II which has dealt at length with deterioration factors will be completed at noon on the third day, Thursday, September 21. The next topic will relate to fish in the national diets.

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