

CO1970RESEA16

C O N F E R E N C E S T A T E M E N T S

on

R A P E S E E D O I L

CHAIRMAN: Dr. B.B. Migicovsky,
 Canada Department of Agriculture,
 Ottawa, Ontario.

CO-CHAIRMAN: Mr. A.M. Runciman,
 Rapeseed Association of Canada,
 Winnipeg, Manitoba.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

DR. B.B. MIGICOVSKY

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you very much for this opportunity to take a part in your proceedings. It is indeed gratifying to have so many scientists from so many parts of the world come together to discuss this very important subject of common interest.

We are all aware today that science and our methodology have become in the last few years extremely more sophisticated. Our methods of measurement have become much more refined. As a result of these techniques, we are uncovering facts which were undreamed of before. There arises as a result of this a great many difficulties with respect to the interpretation of facts. We now recognize as scientists that it is not enough for us to do just the research work and publish the results in scientific journals and then stay at our bench and not be at all concerned as to what happens to this knowledge that is brought about. We realize, that we must be concerned about the use of that knowledge, the interpretation of the facts we bring about by the public and the press and the media. And not only that, if there is a misinterpretation, we must share the blame, and therefore, we must take great care to prevent a misinterpretation, and if one does occur it is our bound duty to correct it. As a result, as we are all aware, and let us not fool around, since we are dealing with some very important matters at this meeting, because the whole rapeseed industry is under the hammer, if you will.

On the other hand, I am prepared to say that if the facts are of such a nature, that we have to ruin the rapeseed industry in order to prevent hazards to the human population, so be it. But, let us not ruin a rapeseed industry, because of a paucity of facts or a misinterpretation of those facts. Therefore, the statement that we are going to make as a result of this Conference, should be of such a nature that we take into consideration all of the facts and see that the public is informed as to our interpretation of them. When I say all of the facts, as scientists you are all aware, that a negative result is every bit as important as a positive result.

I am going to mention two fables, if I may. Please, bear with me. Do you remember the story of the blind men and the elephant? One of the blind men who had the trunk of the elephant in his hands, arrived at a fact and, of course, an interpretation of the fact. It was only one of the facts. He had the trunk in his hands that he interpreted the fact that he had a snake. Obviously, a perfectly good interpretation of the facts that he had at hand, but a very erroneous one.

Now there is another story, I want to tell you. That is of a hunter who managed a very, very, very clever dog, a hunting dog. When he went hunting with his dog, he found that when he shot the duck, the duck fell into the lake and the dog went after this duck. Instead of swimming, this dog had the remarkable properties of being able to run over the water. He ran over the water, picked up the duck and brought it back, running over the water. Well, this hunter was very proud of this dog and he couldn't wait until he took his friend out. They went out the following morning, they went out to the lake, went hunting and shot the duck, and the dog went after the duck running across the water and running back. And he said, to his friend: "what do you think of my dog", very proudly. His friend said, you know I don't like to criticize the dog to his master, but I don't think your dog can swim. So the facts were the same in both cases, Ladies and Gentlemen, but one often allows an emotional bias to enter into the interpretation.

Now, let us get back to rapeseed oil. A number of facts about rapeseed oil have been uncovered with respect to the erucic acid content of this oil. A number of observations have been made. I understand that the intent of this statement is to indicate that the currently used rapeseed oil consumed over a relatively short period of time, over two, three or even four years, shows no evidence that it would be a hazard to humans consuming it, i.e., in the quantities that it is used. Knowing that we have a variety, that will be very low or even free of erucic acid within the next few years, it is our intent not to excite the public and ruin an industry, because we will gain nothing by it. Our intent is to point out to the public, that we have a product that is safe to consume, although there are possibilities that if consumed in large quantities over the period of a lifetime it could be harmful. We are, therefore, going to bring out a product in which these undesirable characteristics have been eliminated. This is the intent of this statement.

This statement is open for discussion, and hopefully there will be an agreement, so that we can take care of any misinterpretation by the public and the press of what was said here. It is high time that as scientists we take our proper role with respect to our relations to the public we serve.

STATEMENT OF JAPANESE DELEGATION

On behalf of Japan's visitors to this Conference, I would like to thank the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce and the Rapeseed Association of Canada for a very worthwhile and successful Conference.

This meeting furthers the excellent trade relations between Canada and Japan.

As Canada's number one customer, Japan expresses its wish for continued prosperity for Canada, for in this way Japan can also prosper.

And speaking of my own country, all of us from Japan look forward to continued expansion of your rapeseed acreage and to further improvement of rapeseed varieties and quality. Both Canada and Japan — not only are good friends — but they have common benefits to be gained from furthering the excellent trade relations that I am sure have been stimulated by this Conference.

Mr. Chairman, and indeed I think I can speak not only for Japan but for all the countries assembled at this first International Rapeseed Conference — My personal thanks for a full-scale, well organized, informative, and hospitable Conference. I can only hope that next year's conference will be as productive.

Thank you.

NOTE: The first and second drafts of the official Conference Statement were returned to the drafting committee consisting of representatives from Sweden, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Poland and Canada. After considerable discussion from the floor, Dr. Migicovsky presented the statement for approval by all Conference participants:

DR. B.B. MIGICOVSKY

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are returning to consider this statement of interpretation of the research results, that have been presented to this Conference.

I think that you are to be commended very highly. In fact, for the first time, in brief, there are very few occasions

DR. B.B. MIGICOVSKY (Cont'd.)

where scientists have taken upon themselves their rightful duty of interpreting their own results for the people who read them. The Committee has unanimously agreed on the kind of revision you want. Some of them are minor, but nevertheless important.

I want to repeat again, how gratifying it is to have so many people, scientists from so many countries who can come and speak freely of their research and arrive at a common interpretation of these research results.

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OFFICIAL CONFERENCE STATEMENT

Rapeseed has long been a major source of edible oil, and accounts for about 8% of the world's total vegetable oil supplies. This important oilseed and its end products of oil and meal have been the focal point of discussions by scientists, traders and processors from 20 countries gathered in Canada at Ste. Adèle, Quebec, for the International Conference on the Science, Technology and Marketing of Rapeseed and Rapeseed Products, September 20-23, 1970.

One of the Sessions drawing considerable attention concerned results of nutritional research on experimental animals fed large quantities of rapeseed oil containing high levels of erucic acid. It was found that such high erucic acid oils cause changes in heart tissue of some of these animals. The levels of rapeseed oil fed to these experimental animals were, however, substantially higher than those attained in the human diet. No hazard to human health has been attributed to rapeseed oil now or throughout its long history as a staple component of the human diet.

Plant breeders reported that new rapeseed varieties low in erucic acid and higher in linoleic acid, have been developed in several countries. Seed stocks of such varieties have been increased. A gradual change-over to these new varieties will be possible in many rapeseed-growing countries during the next few years. During this transition period the regular rapeseed oil now available will continue to be used. The physical and nutritional properties of oil from these new low erucic acid varieties were reported to be desirable.

The anticipated change-over to low erucic acid rapeseed oil is consistent with the preliminary scientific results presented at the Conference. It is in accord with the August 12th statement of Canada's Minister of National Health and Welfare who stated that Canada considered it prudent to recommend a phasing in of the new low erucic acid rapeseed varieties.
