

Preface

During the past few years, there have been many requests that the monograph "Protein and Amino Acid Requirements of Mammals"* be brought up to date and expanded in scope. Moreover, fellow investigators have indicated that there is need for a collection in one volume of rather detailed presentations describing the current state of knowledge concerning this aspect of nutrition. This volume aims to fill that need.

The unprecedented research activity in this field and in related areas during the past decade has resulted in a gradually increasing limitation of space in the periodical literature which can be allotted to review, reflections, and speculations on the broad significance of experimental findings. These publication restrictions tend to retard the continuity of scientific thought and progress. One solution to the problem appears to be the use of media which can provide qualified investigators ample space and freedom to express themselves fully in the area of their major cognizance.

Although all segments of human communication are currently beset by difficulties of orderly and accurate transmission of facts, the field of nutrition falls prey to some unique hazards. The most serious of these results from the vast number of reports dealing with nutritional matters which appear almost daily in the lay literature. No one will deny the value of public education in this most vital of subjects. Competition for space and readers, however, tends to lead to the dramatization of certain scientific reports at the expense of accuracy. Although such accounts of scientific observations in the public press can be condoned somewhat by the expediency of the circumstances, the increasing appearance of these articles in the professional literature is to be deplored and constitutes a disservice to the science of nutrition, particularly when the editorial responsibility is cloaked with authoritarian anonymity.

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