

BOOK REVIEW

THE PEST WAR. W. W. Fletcher. 1974. John Wiley & Sons, N.Y. x + 218. Professor Fletcher's book purports to cover all pests, their control, and the impact of controls on the environment and on the welfare of mankind. To what extent and for what audience? Slim coverage of a huge subject is forewarned by there being only 175 pages of text. Fletcher offers that the book should ". . . serve as a useful introductory text for elementary courses in pest control. . . ." This reviewer teaches just such courses but regretfully has not yet found a useful introductory text. Consider that this book—published in 1974—does not even contain the expression "pest management", that it never touches on the fundamental concepts of developing modern pest control systems.

Chapter 1 describes (in 21 pages) the anatomy, development, and examples of insects, weeds, and fungi. Not pathogens—just fungi. Bacteria, viruses, MLO's, and the like are ignored. Nematodes are mentioned, but only as something entomologists occasionally worry about. Now you know how he keeps within 175 pages.

The book is wildly uneven, for, on the other hand, Fletcher spends two pages describing smut control in the 1700's. He gives a long, pointless background on the discovery of the herbicidal properties of 2,4-D. And while bacteria and viruses do not rate a discussion, we are told all about the grey seal as a pest. The *grey seal*? I'll leave it to the reader to have fun with that one; it may sell a book for Fletcher if you are piqued enough to find out about it.

After a short—13 pages—chapter on "Methods of Pest Control" (mechanical, eradication, resistant varieties, etc.) Fletcher spends 5 chapters on pesticides. Then one on vertebrate pests (and the grey seal), and a 15 page chapter on biological control—which ends with a grabber on dung disposal in Australia.

Now a chapter called "Novel Methods of Control". Fletcher never defines this, but backs into an explanation in stating that ". . . the cornerstone of pest control is the use of pesticides, with some support being supplied by biological methods". Novel evidently does not mean "new" for he discusses sterility in insect control (demonstrated 20 years ago and used practically for 15), and other methods (ex.: repellents) much older than that. The dismay of this reviewer peaked here as Fletcher utterly ignores the opportunity at least to mention the pest management concept and creating integrated programs of control in which a mixture of strategies are combined to minimize the use of practices which are ecologically damaging, temporary, and expensive.

His sole nod in this direction is an outmoded version of integrated control suggesting that the *future* may lie in making use of both chemical and biological control. The future went by when you weren't looking, Professor Fletcher.

There is reasonable balance in the final chapter on pesticides in the environment. The appendixes contain brief lists of "Further Reading", pest names, and pesticide names.

The book is written in something less than the Queen's English, which one does not expect from an English professor, but it is not so bad as to be distracting. Examples of regulations and regulatory agencies are all British.

I suspect that Professor Fletcher, as many have and most of us are tempted, has converted his class lecture notes into a book along with the (admitted) help of colleagues who wrote on certain specialties. Keep trying. You may come up with a commercial success and achieve that prayed for independence from cloddish bureaucrats.

S. H. Kerr
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida