

FOREWORD

INSECT LISTS IN THE THIRD WORLD

Few will recognize the value of the work reported herein. Insect lists are passé and even unpublishable. Supposedly it has all been done already and good taxonomists revise groups rather than construct formal lists. What's the scientific merit to that anyway?

Steven Passoa faced these sorts of criticisms over the last couple of years as he prepared the present monograph for publication, but the negative commentary, rather than reflecting on Passoa's work, indicates that the critics - who are largely well-placed professional entomologists - have little knowledge of and probably next-to-no concern for the development needs of places like Honduras and most of the rest of Central America. We need valid, carefully constructed, annotated faunal lists. These compilations serve as the basis for taxonomically accurate extension circulars, bulletins, teaching aids and (someday) textbooks. With the publication of this list and its supplements there will no longer be a need to rely on translations of decades-old U.S. textbooks like Metcalf, Flint and Metcalf (1962) which have introduced so many misconceptions into Central American entomology.

Correct identifications and systematically collected agroecological observations are the first essential building blocks for the improvement of insect pest management procedures in the region. Identifications provide the key which unlocks the world literature to the conscientious student, extensionist or researcher. They provide a concise, internationally understandable label which will permit Honduran authors to communicate with their foreign colleagues.

Passoa's list is preliminary and will benefit from equally carefully constructed supplements by future workers, but the ground work has been laid. It is hoped that the Honduran government which has inherited the collection so meticulously constructed will assure that the collection is cared for and consulted. It represents what taxonomists should but so often don't do in developing countries like Honduras.

CEIBA should also be commended for continuing its tradition of publishing "practical taxonomic" works such as Wilson Popenoe's (1:269-367, 1952 & 3:225-338, 1953) on fruits of potential impor-

tance, H. C. Finch and A. N. Finch's (17:1-188, 1971) on fungal diseases of tropical plants, and Louis O. Williams' (24:1-381, 1981) on the useful plants of Central America. These works, which break little scientific ground, are of immense value because they collate and summarize available information and put it at the disposal of regional scientists and technicians. What more appropriate role could there be for the organ of the Panamerican Agricultural School, and institution dedicated to the development and transfer of concrete, regionally appropriate, sound agricultural techniques? *Keith L. Andrews, entomologist, Escuela Agrícola Panamericana.*