

PHYSICS

Radiocarbon in Mexico

► THE FIRST laboratory in Latin America to use radioactive carbon to determine the age of archaeological, geological and paleontological specimens is being established at the University of Mexico.

It is the direct result of a year's study by a young Mexican chemist with Dr. Willard F. Libby, professor of chemistry at the Institute for Nuclear Studies, University of Chicago, and the discoverer of radiocarbon dating.

Dr. Agosto Moreno y Moreno, who will head the new laboratory, finished his studies at the University of Chicago in May. While there, Dr. Moreno constructed an anti-coincidence circuit for use in his projected laboratory. In addition, Dr. Libby presented Dr. Moreno with a special Geiger counter he had developed for radiocarbon dating.

At present, Dr. Moreno is gathering the necessary equipment for the reduction and purification processes required in radio-

carbon dating. The laboratory is expected to be equipped for handling first specimens in two months.

Use of radioactive carbon 14 to determine ages of organic substances from archaeological and geological sites has proved to be of great help to scientists. However, there exist few radiocarbon dating laboratories in the world, and most of the Latin American specimens were being sent to the United States for age determinations.

The laboratory at the University of Mexico will now enable scientists below the Rio Grande to have their samples dated faster. It will also lift some of the overloading at the United States laboratories.

With the increasing amount of excavating and surveying being done by Mexican archaeologists, paleontologists and geologists, the new laboratory will be an important addition to Mexican science facilities.

Science News Letter, July 31, 1954

NUTRITION

Egg Buying Guide

► IF YOU are puzzled by the differences in eggs and the meanings of grade and other marks on the carton, you might look for a shield design with the letters "U. S."

This official mark appears as a gummed label that seals the carton or is printed on the carton itself. It is the sign that you are getting eggs officially graded by government standards for quality and size.

Read all the print on the shield and also on the carton to be sure you know the quality and size of the eggs you buy, the U. S. Department of Agriculture advises. The letters AA, A, B, or C tell the quality. The words "Extra Large," "Large," "Medium," or "Small" indicate size, based on minimum weight in ounces per dozen of eggs.

Finally, the date when the eggs were graded is stamped on the label. The "date" may be expressed as the day of the month, such as August 16, or 8-16, or as the number 228 meaning the 228th day of the year.

Eggs of the higher grades, AA and A, usually bring higher prices than those graded B or C. In cool weather high-quality eggs may be especially good buys because they are more abundant.

However, in summer when hot weather often causes egg quality to drop rapidly, Grades B or C may be more abundant and usually cost considerably less than the higher grades. Shoppers should know that Grade B eggs have many cooking uses and the same nutritive value as Grades AA and A.

Grade AA and A eggs have a large proportion of thick white which stands up well around a firm yolk, and they have a delicate flavor. Thus, they are appreciated for poaching, frying, and cooking in the shell.

In contrast, Grade B or C eggs have thin whites which spread out, and have rather flat yolks that may break easily. But they are suited to scrambling, baked mixtures, thickening sauces or salad dressings, or for combinations with such foods as tomatoes, cheese, onions where appearance and delicate flavors are not important.

Science News Letter, July 31, 1954

PSYCHOLOGY

Eye Witnesses Can Get Facts Twisted

► EVEN IF you are an eye witness, you can get your facts badly twisted.

This was demonstrated in an incident that took place when the mystery novelist and lawyer, Erle Stanley Gardner, was addressing a class in legal evidence at the University of California at Los Angeles.

As Mr. Gardner began his hour-long lecture, a woman burst into the room and rushed at him shouting "You got my brother hung!"

She then unsuccessfully attacked him with a pointed can opener before being escorted from the room by the class' regular instructor, Marshall W. Houts.

Mr. Houts, who planned the stunt to dramatize the great variance of eye-witness accounts to the same event, later asked the 34 students to describe in detail the woman's clothing and appearance.

Asked what the woman's complexion was like, three of the students replied dark, two ruddy, one medium, five fair, seven pale, three heavily powdered and made up, 13 said they did not know. Her actual com-

plexion was fair with freckles and no makeup.

Although the woman wore an old-fashioned, high-laced shoe with a pointed toe and high heel on her right foot and a tan shoe with a low heel on the other, which also gave her a noticeable limp, 25 of the student observers made no mention of either the different shoe styles or the limp.

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The swine industry, in recognition of a continuing problem of surplus fats and an increasing demand from shopping housewives for leaner pork, is launching a research program to develop methods for identifying superior swine breeding stock.

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