

From fats to lipids: 80 years of shared knowledge AFECG-SFEL (1943–2023)

Received 15 May 2023 – Accepted 23 May 2023

Société Française pour l'Étude des Lipides (SFEL) celebrates its 80th anniversary this year 2023. Its current legal form dates from September 8, 2011 according to the statutes signed by Anne LE GUILLOU its then President and Alain RANCUREL its Treasurer. Its current purpose is to “bring together specialists in the production, processing and use of oils, fats and derivatives in order to promote the acquisition and extension of knowledge in these branches of industry, to establish and maintain friendly relations between the members of the association”. It also aims to award the Chevreul Medal created in 1963 in memory of the creator of fat chemistry who lived and worked for many years in this magnificent place where we are currently the Verniquet amphitheater of Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle in Paris. It was also in 2011 that SFEL joined 66 rue La Boétie in Paris in the premises of the Fédération Nationale des Industries des Corps Gras (FNCG).

From 2011 to date, the following people have been involved in the life of the association:

- As Presidents: Philippe GUESNET since 2021, Frédéric FINE (2019–2020), Michel LINDER (2017–2018), Fabrice TURON (2015–2016), Pierre VILLENEUVE (2012–2014) and Anne LE GUILLOU (2009–2012);
- As General Secretary: Claire BERTON-CARABIN currently and since 2019, Claire BOURLIEU-LACANAL (2016–2018), Elmira ARAB-TEHRANY (2017), Michel LINDER (2015–2016), Anne LEGUILLOU (2013–2014), and Jean-Claude ICART (2008–2012);
- As Treasurer: Bernadette DELPLANQUE (2019–2023) linchpin of the current Chevreul days with Philippe GUESNET (2017–2018), and Alain RANCUREL (2003–2016) true memory of our association.

All in all, a happy collaboration of researchers, academics, teachers, business executives, technical and interprofessional centers in the lipids and fats sector.

The highlight of this period 2011–2023 was undoubtedly the 2017 Congress of Nancy “Lipids & Brain, Lipids in Alzheimer disease” organized by the team of Michel LINDER of the University of Lorraine on a theme of great scientific and practical interest, with a public conference given by Stephan CUNNANE Chevreul Medalist 2017 in the sumptuous and prestigious setting of the major salons of the City Hall of Nancy overlooking Place Stanislas. Also “Lipids & Brain” 2015, 2011, 2007 in Paris organized by the respective teams with the Chevreul Medals attributed to Michael CRAWFORD (2015), Nicolas BAZAN (2011) and Stanley RAPOPORT (2007).

Before 2011 and since 1973, the name of SFEL was Association Française pour l'Étude des Corps Gras (AFECG). Its purpose was to bring together specialists in the study and manufacture of fats and derivatives, with a view to promoting knowledge of scientific or technical problems of general interest in these branches of industry, and to establish and maintain all friendly relations between members. It can therefore be seen that at the time the object was focused on the industrial sector since its origin, it was only in 2011 that the field of production was explicitly integrated into the object. The AFECG was hosted by the Fédération Nationale des Industries des Corps Gras (FNCG) at 118 avenue Achille Peretti in Neuilly. The successive Presidents of this period have been successively:

- Jacques SOULIER (1991–1992) University of Perpignan;
- François LOURY (1993–1994) Cargill Company;
- François MORDRET (1995–1997) Institut des Corps Gras ITERG;
- Georges VERMEERSCH (1997–1998) Sofiprotéol;
- Michel PARMENTIER (1999–2000) University of Lorraine;
- Jean-Luc PERRIN (2001–2002) Astra Calvé;
- André POUZET (2003–2005) CETIOM which has since become Terres Inovia;
- Alain HUERTAS (2005–2007) LESIEUR;
- Bernadette DELPLANQUE (2008–2009) University of Saclay;
- Anne LE GUILLOU (2009–2012) Danone;

In this period 1990–2011 the loyalty of the other animators is to be emphasized:

- Paule POTTIER, Astra Calvé General Secretary from 1989 to 1998;
- Jean-Claude BARRUET, General Secretary from 1999 to 2007;
- Jean-Claude ICART, OCL General Secretary from 2008 to 2012;

- Christian FOURES, Soproga-Sanofi Treasurer from 1983 to 2000, *i.e.* 17 years;
- Alain RANCUREL, Pharmascience Treasurer from 2003 to 2016, *i.e.* 13 years.

The diversity of professional origins was already at work for the greater benefit of the association.

The year 1993 marked the 50th anniversary of the AFECG celebrated at the same time for Institut des Corps Gras (ITERG) and for Institut de recherche pour les huiles et oléagineux (IRHO) both founded in the same year 1943. This anniversary was the occasion of a memorable conference by Pierre-Gilles de GENNES on surfactants. Recent Chemistry Nobel Prize in 1991 he was addressed to an informed public as evidenced by the many questions that were put to him. The Chevreul gold medal was awarded to him on this occasion. A beautiful booklet “AFECG Association Française pour l’Étude des Corps Gras 50 ans” remained the witness of this event where the history of the three organizations was presented, that of AFECG by Jean-Pierre WOLFF, that of ITERG by Jean-Paul HELME former Director General of the Institute, that of IRHO which had just joined Centre International de Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD) by Christian BRUNIN and Christian de BERCHOUX of the technical direction of CIRAD.

Before 1979, AFECG had its address at 10A rue de la Paix in Paris. It was the decentralization of ITERG laboratories in Pessac in 1979 that led the General Directorate of ITERG, its central services and the AFECG to be hosted by FNCG located at this prestigious address since the Second World War.

2 The animators of the AFECG during this period 1979–1990 were:

As Presidents:

- Alain KARLESKIND (1989–1990) Wolff Laboratories;
- Jean GRAILLE (1987–1988) CIRAD;
- François ZWOBADA (1985–1986) LESIEUR;
- André PRÉVOT (1983–1984) ITERG;
- Jean PORÉ (1981–1982) Sté Houghton;
- Maurice NAUDET (1979–1980) National Fat Laboratory of Marseille.

As General Secretary:

- Jean-Pierre LANG (1979–1988) ITERG.

As Treasurers:

- Christian FOURES (1983–2000) mentioned above;
- Louis FAUR (1979–1982).

The important event of the period was the Chevreul Congress of 1989 in Angers organized by the AFECG under the authority of Alain KARLESKIND, congress which was a great success and which had as an extension the edition of the *Manuel des corps gras* in 2 volumes at Lavoisier Editions in 1992. Jean-Pierre WOLFF ensured a colossal work as Editorial Secretary for this book, which remains a reference in our field of activity.

3 We continue to go back in time with the period 1973–1979

The AFECG took in 1973 the name of Association Française pour l’Étude des Corps Gras (AFECG), it was then hosted by ITERG at 5 boulevard de La Tour Maubourg in Paris in the beautiful mansion that you can still admire at this address. Three successive Presidents for AFECG: François POUILLAUDE (1973–1974) LESIEUR, Charles PAQUOT (1975–1976) CNRS Bellevue, Jean KLERE (1977–1978), Astra Calvé. Jean PORÉ mentioned above was the Treasurer of the association from 1973 to 1978. Marie-Thérèse JUILLET was General Secretary from 1973 to 1978, she was a great figure in our sector animating the documentation and scientific communication of ITERG before fulfilling these same functions at Astra Calvé.

4 Period 1969–1973

The name of our association was Association Française des Techniciens des Corps Gras hosted by the Société de chimie industrielle in Rueil-Malmaison. The association had two successive Presidents, two great figures of the profession, Jean-Paul HELME¹ (1969–1970) ITERG and Robert FÉRON (1970–1973) Astra Calvé, as General Secretaries René GUILLAUMIN (1967–1968 and 1970–1973) and C. DEFROMONT (1969–1970).

¹ Jean-Paul HELME was a talented painter who explained with enthusiasm and competence the role of linseed oil-based binders in Renaissance painting schools.

5 The origins of AFECG-SFEL, period 1943 to 1969

From the creation in 1943 to 1969 our association was called Groupement Technique des Corps Gras and was hosted by the Maison de la Chimie at 28 rue Saint Dominique in Paris. It had, during these 26 years, only three successive presidents, Jean RIPERT (from 1943 to 1946) the founder, we will return to him below, then at his death, Georges WOLFF (from 1947 to 1960) creator of the well-known WOLFF laboratories died around 1960, leaving the presidency to Georges TROTTMANN (from 1960 to 1968) LESIEUR Company. Three General Secretaries succeeded one another, Yves BAGOT (from 1944 to 1950), P. MÉRAT (from 1950 to 1961) ITERG and Maurice LOURY (from 1962 to 1966) ITERG. It was under the signature of Maurice LOURY (ITERG) that the historical notices appeared in the directories of AFECG members.

This period was intense in terms of exchange. From 1960, AFECG and ITERG were involved in the staff training and the extension of analytical techniques and in particular that of gas chromatography where André PRÉVOT and François ZWOBADA marked the period by their support and their competence in particular for the conversion of rapeseed into varieties without erucic acid. It is worth noting that the inventor of erucic acid-free rapeseed Keith DOWNEY², Agriculture CANADA received the Chevreul Medal in 1995 from François MORDRET then AFECG President. The diffusion of gas chromatography had multiple advantages for our sector, particularly in the quality control of oils and fats.

It was in 1963 at the initiative of Professor Emile ANDRÉ, a great admirer of the founder of the fat chemistry, that the Chevreul Medal was created by the association. It has since become a reference in our lipid and fat sector in terms of distinction with an international vocation since each year it was awarded to a French and a foreigner researcher. The list of medalists can be found on the SFEL website and below. The medal is engraved by the Monnaie de Paris based on the profile of Mr. Chevreul, then aged 37, by David d'Angers. In 1993, for the 50th anniversary of the Association, the Chevreul Medal was awarded to the 1991 Nobel Prize in Physics, Professor Pierre-Gilles de Gennes.

The videos of the lectures and articles written by the recipients are available online, on the SFEL (www.sfel.asso.fr) and the OCL websites (www.ocl-journal.org).

6 The creation of the Association on April 15, 1943

Two great figures dominated the creation of the Association: Jean RIPERT and Emile ANDRÉ.

JEAN RIPERT
(1900-1947)



² Keith DOWNEY demonstrated the genetic determinism of erucic acid synthesis in oilseed rape and proposed the conversion method, he at the same time disseminated the genetic material throughout the world including France. His name is associated to this major discovery with that of Baldur STEFANSSON, University of Manitoba who discovered the first rapeseed without erucic acid.

It was the drastic reduction in the country's supply of fats in time of World War II that inspired Jean RIPERT and Emile ANDRÉ to create the Groupement Technique des Corps Gras, whose purpose was to bring together specialists in the study and manufacture of fats and derivatives, in order to promote knowledge of scientific or technical problems of common interest in these branches of industry, to establish and maintain all friendly relations between the members of the Association, to safeguard the rights to the intellectual property of its members.

At that time Jean RIPERT was an entrepreneur deeply attached to science. In 1922, he brilliantly defended a doctoral thesis at the University of Rennes on the alkaloids of Belladonna. His career led him successively in the fields of perfume plants, insecticides with the extraction of natural pyrethrin and then in soap and toothpastes, all areas where he worked to apply the most recent knowledge and techniques. It is this spirit that pushed him to create at the Maison de la Chimie our association and then l'Institut des Corps Gras (ITERG) of which he was also the first President. He died prematurely at the age of 47.

Emile ANDRÉ (1877–1969) in 1943 was already the recognized specialist in the analysis of fatty substances. Chief pharmacist at the Salpêtrière Hospital he directed 7 doctoral thesis including that of Marie-Thérèse FRANCOIS³ in 1927 who elucidated the structure of spermaceti, ester of an aliphatic alcohol with 18 carbon atoms and a fatty acid with 22 carbon atoms, and that of Kia-Wo Hou⁴ (Chinese student) in 1933 who discovered the properties of lipoxigenase in soybean then was named lipoxidase. At the beginning of the Second World War Emile ANDRÉ was entrusted with the direction of the laboratory of metropolitan oilseeds housed initially at Institut National Agronomique and then transferred in 1948 to the CNRS laboratories in Bellevue. It is this remarkable career that earned Emile ANDRÉ to be elected Honorary President of the Association, a position he held until his death in 1969. Member of Académie d'Agriculture de France of which he was President in 1966, Emile ANDRÉ left in the reports of this company very beautiful pages including the history of the peanut⁵.

7 French and international Chevreul Medalists

Year	French Medalists	International Medalist
1963	Mr. E. André	Mr. J. Jacini (Italy) Mr. M. Loncin (Belgium)
1964	Mr. G. Champetier	Mr. T.P. Hilditch (Great Britain)
1965	Mr. M. Desnuelle	Mr. A.R. Baldwin (USA)
1966	Mr. J. Vizern	Mr. J. Martinez-Moreno (Spain)
1967	Mr. C. Paquot	Mr. H. Niewiadomski (Poland)
1968	Mrs. M.T. François	M. J. Boldingh (Netherlands)
1969	Mr. C. Trottmann	Mr. M.E. Frazer (Great Britain)
1970	Mr. R. François	Mr. W.O. Lundberg (USA)
1971	Mr. M. Naudet	Mr. H.J. Thomasson (Netherlands)
1972	Mr. J.P. Wolff	Mr. R. Marcuse (Sweden)
1973	Mr. M. Toy-Riont	Mr. J. Baltés (Germany)
1974	Mr. J. Morice	Mr. De Smet (Belgium)
1975	Mr. J.P. Helme	Mr. J.C. Cowan (USA)
1976	Mr. F. Pouillaude	Mr. U. Pallotta (Italy)
1977	Mr. E. Ucciani	Mr. Vlès (Belgium)
1978	Mr. P. Metais	Mr. A. Jakubowski (Poland)
1979	Mr. D.G. Dervichian Mr. F. Lachamp	
1980	Mr. A. Prevot	Mr. J. Pokorny (Czechoslovakia)
1981	Mr. J. Flanzly	Mr. A. Seher (Germany)
1982	Mr. M. Ollagnier	Mr. E. Fedeli (Italy)
1983	Mr. B. Entressangles	Mr. Vos (Netherlands)
1984	Mr. J. Poré	Mrs. J. Beare Rogers (Canada)
1985	Mr. A. Uzzan	Mr. T. Mounts (USA)
1986	Mr. J. Klere	Mr. J. Hollo (Hungary)
1987	Mr. F. Mendy	Mr. G. Varela (Spain)
1988	Mr. L. Faur	Mr. U. Bracco (Switzerland)
1989	Mr. J.M. Bourre	Mr. G. Robbelen (Germany) Mr. P. Capella (Italy)

³ <https://www.sudoc.fr/089179870>.

⁴ <https://www.sudoc.fr/023258721>.

⁵ L'arachide, CR Ac Ag 1932; pp. 552–561.

(Continued)

Year	French Medalists	International Medalist
1990	Mr. L. Marcou	Mr. F. Gunstone (Great Britain)
1991	Mr. A. Karleskind	Mr. M. Fondu (Belgium)
1992	Mr. R. Duterte	Mr. R. Celades (Spain)
1993	Mr. P.G. De Gennes	–
1994	Mr. A. Crastes de Paulet	Mr. W.W. Nawar (USA)
1995	Mr. A. Lesaichere	Mr. K. Downey (Canada)
1996	Mr. G. Gandemer	Mr. K. Aitzetmuller (Germany)
1997	Mr. J. Graille	Mrs. C. Dobarganes (Spain)
1998	Mr. F. Mordret	Mr. F. Luchetti (Italy)
1999	Mr. G. Pascal	Mr. O. Korver (Netherlands)
2000	M. G. Vermeersch	Mr. F. Spener (Germany)
2001	Mr. M. Renard	Mr. J. Macleod (Great Britain)
2002	Mr. G. Robin	–
2003	Mrs. N. Combe	–
2004	Mr. Z. Mouloungui	Mrs. K. Kövari (Hungary)
2005	Mr. M. Parmentier	–
2006	Mr. A. Gaset	Mrs. V. Ruyz Gutierrez (Spain)
2007	Mr. F. Carriere	Mr. S. Rapoport (USA)
2008	Mr. M. Olivon	Mr. E. Deffense (Belgium)
2009	Mr. A.J. Dijkstra (Netherlands)	Mr. C. Kapseu (Cameroon)
2010	Mr. M. Lagarde	Mrs. C. Jacobsen (Denmark)
2011	Mr. P. Guesnet	Mr. N. Bazan (USA)
2012	Mrs. F. Lacoste	Mr. Uwe T. Bornscheuer (Germany)
2013	Mr. A. Pouzet	–
2014	–	Mr. J. Harwood (Great Britain)
2015	Mrs. B. Delplanque	Mr. MA. Crawford (Great Britain)
2016	–	Mr. D. Weitz (USA)
2017	Mr. P. Legrand	Mr. S. Cunnane (Canada)
2018	Mr. Thierry Durand	–
2019	–	Mr. L. Conte (Italy)
2021	–	Mr. R. Gibson (Australie)
		Mr. Jun Ogawa (Japan)
2022	Mrs. Marie-Caroline Michalski	
2023	Mr. Michel Linder	Mr. R. Bazinet (Canada)

Emile Choné*

Academie d'Agriculture de France, 18, rue de Bellechasse, 75007 Paris, France
emilechone@gmail.com