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1953-1960	Undergraduate and Graduate Studies in Biology at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zürich
1960-1961	Postdoctoral Fellow in Saclay, Paris
1961-1962	Postdoctoral Fellow at Amherst College, Amherst, MA
1962-1965	Postdoctoral Fellow at the McArdle Laboratory for Cancer Research, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI
1965-1972	Established Investigator at the Swiss Institute for Experimental Cancer Research in Lausanne, Switzerland Associate Professor: part-time teaching of molecular biology at the University of Lausanne
1972-1998	Professor of General Microbiology at the University of Bern, Switzerland.
1975-1979	Curriculum Organiser in Biology
1976-1982	Chairman of the Research Committee of the University
1979-1980	Sabbatical: Visiting Professor at the Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation, La Jolla, CA
1980-1998	Chairman of the Department of General Microbiology
1983-1984	Dean of the Faculty of Sciences
1984-1987	Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Faculty of Sciences
1991-present	Chairman of the "Gen Suisse" Foundation
1992-1994	President of the Swiss Microbiology Society
1995-present	Vice Chairman of the "Task Group on Public Perception" of the European Federation of Biotechnology with EU grants
1998/1999 -present	Professor Emeritus; consultant in communication in biotechnology Officer of the Federation of European Microbiological Societies

The Public's Growing Distrust of Science?

It is hard to escape the conclusion, as seen through the media, that the acceptance of science is on the wane. There have been many instances where science and technology were responsible for disasters. Key words such as DDT, *Exxon Valdez*, Bhopal, Seveso, and Chernobyl spring to mind. In Britain particularly, Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) has had a horrendous impact and no one can yet say for sure whether or not there will be a significant increase in casualties from a new variant of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, a potential time bomb. Science stories in the media deal extensively with scientific errors and warning voices, such as *Silent Spring* or *Limits to Growth*, had a huge impact in the 60s and 70s. Environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are necessary and have become powerful opinion leaders.

At the same time it must be pointed out that the parameters of human well-being show a positive development. Life expectancy has gone up, infant mortality is about 20 times lower than at the beginning of the century, and the standard of living has increased for nearly everybody in the industrialized countries. Food is in abundance and the most serious food-related health problem is overindulgence.

There is a dichotomy between the apparent distrust in science and the well-being of most people. For this contradiction, no single, simple explanation is available. One phenomenon is a lack of understanding of science by the general public and the failure of science and scientists to communicate with the general population. A further problem is that increasing knowledge requires greater responsibility, which many people are not prepared to accept. How do we get out of this bind?

To regain trust requires more social involvement of scientists in the broadest sense. There needs to be openness on the part of scientists (wherever they are employed) to talk more freely about what they are doing, about what is known, as well as what is not known. Science is an essential ingredient of our culture. The postulated dialogue by scientists requires them not only to talk, but also to listen to people's worries and anxieties. Scientists need to be more visible in the media and have more contact with policy makers. More frank criticism of colleagues would be desirable, when "junk" science is circulated or when colleagues make vast ecological extrapolations from simple controlled-laboratory experiments. We need to talk openly about the risks and benefits of any technology. When appraising genetically modified crops, they need not to be looked at in isolation, but compared with traditional farming systems. Rational decision making is required. Only solid, case by case evaluation can bring the hysteria about what has been dubbed "frankenfood" to an end.