

Tagu, D. (ed.): **Principes des techniques de biologie moléculaire**.— INRA Editions, Paris 1999. ISBN 2-7380-0859-3. 131 pp., FF 120.00.

This nice book is introduced as a part of the series "mieux comprendre" (better understand) and it serves so excellently. To better understand the authors used simple and demonstrative pictures. These pictures are headings of the chapters where some more details concerning molecular techniques are described. Although the book describes many applied techniques, it is impossible to include all of them. These new approaches are invented practically instantaneously in many laboratories round the world. For example, some new attitudes to mark the start of transcription are missed (fiche 25). Due to the limited space in this book, an exhaustive list of all techniques for DNA labelling is not included in chapter about DNA electrophoresis (fiche 3). In the chapter Labelling of molecules (fiche 40) the phenomenon of so-called "gene tagging" is not mentioned, though it is the wide-spread technique in plant genome research. On the other hand, the authors present practically all techniques enabling to isolate and detect any gene or its product from different organisms. This complex attitude is well demonstrated in the chapter Screening of a bank (fiche 14) where many possible techniques of screening are suggested. In preceding chapters the difference in gene frequency in genomic and cDNA library is comprehensively explained.

The chapters are arranged in blocks which make the orientation in individual topics easier. The first block "Definitions" explains the basic terms of molecular biology. Next block "Vectors and cloning" describes the techniques necessary for gene isolation. Other blocks are devoted to gene detection and functional analysis of the cloned gene. The last block describes some techniques for detection of genome polymorphism. These techniques become more and more important not only in breeding but also in plant ecology. The book does not serve as a laboratory manual but helps to laymen and even to specialists to understand the principles of many tricky techniques.

It seems that there is only one drawback. The book is written in French which is not so wide-spread among biologists. But the very instructive pictures help anybody to comprehend the text which is compendious and concise.

The book is available from INRA Editions, RD (Route de St Cyr), F-78026 Versailles Cedex, France.

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