



Book Reviews

International Food Regulation Handbook Policy, Science, Law. Edited by R. D. Middlekauff and P. Shubik, Marcel Dekker Inc., New York, 1989. 584 pp. ISBN 0 8247 7909 6. Price: US\$150.00.

Because food is, by definition, so important to every individual on the planet, the food industry is one of the most regulated and legislated. The aim of this regulation is to provide food which is safe to consume. The aim of this book is to provide a summary of the regulations controlling food safety in the industry.

The *International Food Regulation Handbook* is designed and written specifically for people who are directly involved with the food industry, and as such it is mostly exclusive to that type of person. This is not just the food producer, however, it is also designed for the food developer, food preserver, food distributor and the food seller.

The major aim of the book is to give a summary of the regulatory details for specific countries. It then attempts to anticipate the ways in which food regulation will change in the future. These changes generally rely on advances in the scientific field which are also covered in moderate detail. The book also tries to bring to the reader an understanding of the complex interrelationship between policy, science and law (hence the book's title).

The book has two major sections. The first deals with public policy and scientific considerations. This section covers the history of food regulation along with criteria for testing and evaluation and descriptions of test procedure.

The second section deals with statutory and regulatory requirements, and has sections dealing with the food regulations of specific areas or countries, e.g. Belgium, Australia and Thailand.

The *International Food Regulation Handbook* is well written, but it will only be of real interest to those involved in the food industry or to food scientists — to these people the book will be essential reading. The

book should also have a place in a large, general science library, for which there is enough scientific information to warrant a purchase.

David W. Taylor
John F. Kennedy

Flavours and Off-Flavours '89. Edited by G. Charalambous, Elsevier Science Publishers, Amsterdam, 1990. xxiv + 1042 pp. ISBN 0 444 88246 4. Price: US\$282.00/Dfl 550.00.

The field of flavours and off-flavours is, not surprisingly, of chief interest to those people working in food science.

Within the realms of the food industry, flavours and off-flavours are of the utmost importance in marketing. It is for this reason that the International Flavour Conferences organised by Dr Charalambous (the editor of this volume) have been such a success. This book details the proceedings of the sixth of these meetings and, whilst being concerned with flavours in general, the volume concerns itself mostly with off-flavours which arise in various foodstuffs.

An off-flavour can range from making the food mildly unpalatable to making the foodstuff virtually inedible. It can be caused by the way the food is processed, packaged, transported, stored, or it may occur naturally. Because so much food is lost in this way it is the focus of much scientific research, examples of which are found in this volume.

The food is explored in several of the papers in a hard scientific way, e.g. 'flavour analysis by gas chromatography' or 'preparation and chemical composition of commercial oak wood extracts'. There are also papers in the volume which describe the state of current knowledge in a more theoretical way, e.g. 'foreign and undesirable flavours in wine' or 'flavour characteristics of a variety of spices'.

This mix of the hard science, which describes techniques and research, along with 'softer' science, attempting to describe a flavour, makes for a good balance for a person wanting to have an overall view of the subject. However, a non-scientist would find the first set of papers too complex, and a scientist may find the second set of papers less than useful.

The book belongs in any science library which covers flavours, food chemistry, analytical chemistry or foods science, but for reasons of cost