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### Trends in Carbohydrate Chemistry

P.L. Soni, Vineet Kumar (Eds.); John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2000, 178 pages, £29.95, ISBN 3-527-29842-8

The book consists of selected papers delivered by distinguished scientists at the XIII Carbohydrate Conference, November 1998. The theme of the conference was 'Industrial Polysaccharides and their Applications'. The conference was jointly funded by the Association of Carbohydrate Chemists and Technologists, India (ACCTI) and The Forest Research Institute, Dehra Dun.

The topics covered within the book are varied but have a common theme, which is the utilisation of India's abundant and varied natural plant life. These are used as a sustainable resource in: the food industry, in production and quality improvement; pharmaceuticals as binding and coating agents; to modify or improve industrial processes, producing higher yields or more environmentally friendly production methods. With a view to new applications being developed for existing materials, the reaction kinetics of carbohydrates or their analysis is also discussed in several papers.

Seven of the papers discuss in detail the use of gums obtained from plant sources for a variety of purposes mostly food and pharmaceutical, but also in the oil and gas industries where tamarind seed powder is used in the drill head slurry to promote the sealing quality of mud.

The use of carbohydrate enzymes in the food in industry is covered in three papers, for example the enzymatic removal of cyanoglucosides from cassava root, which is a staple food source consumed by a large proportion of the population, some of which exhibit illness due to the cyanoglucosides.

The use of waste plant material as a resource to form new products, such as graft co-polymerisation onto starch, which was a waste product from the cotton textile industry. The grafted co-polymers have been used as an environmentally friendly and economical super absorbent.

This book is of interest to all professionals in the carbohydrates field, food industry or pharmaceuticals. It is also of economic interest with respect to biomass transformation and sustainable development.

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