

The Salt Counter. By M. Wright. Pan Books (softback), 1984. 89 pp. Price: £1.00.

Recently, dietary guidelines for healthy eating have been published which suggest, among other things, a reduction in the amount of salt in the British diet. The main reason for this is the association between high salt intake and the development of high blood pressure with age in a high proportion of the UK population. High blood pressure has been shown in epidemiological studies to be one of the major risk factors involved in the development of coronary heart disease and strokes.

Of course, we have a physiological need for sodium to ensure the proper functioning of the body, but on average the daily intake is about twenty times this level. About two-thirds of the sodium content of the British diet comes from food and drink and about one-third from 'discretionary' salt, i.e. salt which is added to food at the table from a salt cellar. Use of salt in this way may be regarded as no more than a social ritual before eating for many people, who do not taste their food before shaking salt onto it. Limiting the use of 'discretionary' salt would be a simple way of reducing the sodium content of the diet. However, sodium from foods, particularly manufactured foods, can be very high. Salt is added in food manufacture not only as a preservative, but as a flavour enhancer and so may be high in soups, for example. Bread, which provides a large part of most people's diet, is high in sodium, because of the sodium bicarbonate in the baking powder used as a raising agent.

For those on a low-sodium diet, or who wish to cut down their sodium intake, this book provides a quick and easy checklist of the salt content of a wide range of foods, alcoholic and soft drinks, and water. It can be used, for example, to identify foods which could be cut down or out of the diet and those which might be substituted. Thus, frozen or fresh vegetables are much lower in sodium than canned equivalents. Most values for unbranded foods are taken from the 1978 version of McCance and Widdowson's *The Composition of Foods*, and values for many branded products are given which are not readily available elsewhere—even from labels on food products.

Although written for the lay-person, the book will also be useful to food scientists and nutritionists as a reference text. Although the book largely comprises well-laid out data tables, it also includes a useful introduction and a small section on how to make low-sodium cooking palatable. I was particularly interested to see a recipe given for a baking powder based on

potassium bicarbonate which could be used as a substitute for conventional baking powder.

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Computer-Aided Techniques in Food Technology. Edited by Israel Saguy. Marcel Dekker, New York and Basle, 1983. 512 pp. Price: Swiss Fr 187.

This is Volume 8 in the series of monographs in Food Science and contains a series of chapters written by specialist authors covering mathematical and numerical methods and the application of computer methods to food technology. This is potentially an extensive field and is supported with over 500 pages of closely typed print and a wealth of information that would make this into a useful reference book.

The book consists of 15 chapters, titled respectively: (1) Introduction to Computers and Programming (I. Saguy); (2) Numerical Techniques (R. P. Singh); (3) Development and Analysis of Empirical Mathematical Kinetic Models Pertinent to Food Processing and Storage (W. M. Rand); (4) Reaction Kinetics and Accelerated Tests Simulation as a Function of Temperature (T. P. Labuza and J. F. Kamman); (5) Quantitative Analysis and Simulation of Food Quality Losses During Processing and Storage (M. Kavel); (6) Heat Transfer and Related Topics (D. B. Lund and J. P. Norback); (7) Linear Programming and its Implementation (F. E. Bender and A. Kramer); (8) Production Control, PERT and Transportation Problems (F. E. Bender and A. Kramer); (9) Application of Computers in Food Rheology Studies (M. Peleg); (10) Optimisation Methods and Applications (I. Saguy); (11) Optimisation of Dynamic Systems Utilising the Maximum Principle (I. Saguy); (12) Process Control (M. C. Beaverstock); (13) Computer Analysis of Food Chromatographic and Electrophoretic Data of Protein (N. C. Catsimpoolas); (14) Computer System Development: A New Approach (E. W. Burnside and S. C. Nicholson); (15) The Changing Interface to Computation, Super-Routines and Professional Responsibility (R. I. Frank).

From the titles above it can be seen that the text attempts to cover both the principles and the applications of mathematical methods and computers. As each chapter is self-contained with its own references there inevitably follows a certain amount of repetition. Thus the three chapters covering kinetic phenomena might have been more suited for single