

The book consists of twelve chapters. Chapter 1, by C. E. Bodwell, considers how the amino acid content of a protein may be used as an estimate of protein quality; he concludes that reasonable predictions are possible. John Finley, in Chapter 2, reviews the sources of variability in the analysis of amino acids and includes explicit suggested procedures. Interactions between proteins and other constituents in cereals and oilseeds that might affect protein quality are considered by Pamela Anderson in Chapter 3. Later in the book, Chapter 8, Hurrell and Finot look at the effects of processing on amino acid availability. An important factor in protein quality is the availability of sulphur amino acids and lysine. Two chapters examine *in vitro* methods for measuring and predicting the availability of these amino acids. Chapter 4, by Samuel MacKenzie, considers the sulphur amino acids and Chapter 9, by Finot and Hurrell, considers lysine.

Three chapters (5, 6 and 7) by Chang and Pomeranz, which account for 167 pages of a 304 page book, examine comprehensively the characteristics of proteins from cereals. These chapters cover amino acid composition of cereal proteins, proteins in developing and germinating cereals and the functional and nutritional characteristics of cereal protein.

The problems of assessing the digestibility of food proteins are also considered. Bjørn Eggum (Chapter 11) discusses these problems in general terms, while, in Chapter 10, Tanksley and Knabe consider the digestibility of individual amino acids. Siamak Adibi in his chapter on the absorption of products of protein digestions, (Chapter 12) points out that dipeptides and tripeptides are probably the predominant forms in which amino acids are absorbed. Overall, it is a useful and well referenced book.

R. D. King

Food Additives—Taking the Lid off what we Really Eat. By Erik Millstone. Penguin Books, Middlesex, UK, 1986. ISBN 0-14-052369-3. Price: £2.95.

During the last 2 years the food industry in the UK has come under increasing attack in the media. The attack has concentrated on two aspects of processed foods: foods produced using 'unhealthy' natural

components and those produced using additives. This book attempts to validate the criticisms being levelled at food additives.

Evidence is presented by the author (a lecturer concerned with the social impact of science and technology) which attempts to show that the food industry, and not the consumer, benefits greatly from the use of many additives. He believes that the evaluation process is inadequate and dominated by industrial interests and that the resulting regulations controlling additives are therefore strongly biased towards the manufacturers. He concludes by presenting data which he believes show that certain additives permitted in the UK carry an excessive risk of damaging the health of the consumers.

The book is very well written, being very readable and convincing. Unfortunately it is perhaps this very fact which creates questions as to whether the position is actually as dangerous as the author obviously believes. Only by knowing intimately some of the references from which the evidence is drawn does one appreciate that this book represents a personal view. The interpretation and presentation of facts can in many cases be questioned and the evidence presented is rather slim.

Whilst I cannot recommend the book as being a satisfactory presentation of all the complexities of the topic of food additives, it does provide a guide as to the way many people in the UK are thinking. It would be very surprising if the consumer pressure generated by the current adverse criticism does not result in a number of additives, currently permitted, being withdrawn by the government. This book would not be a justification for that action but it makes it more understandable. One further comment can be made, having read the book. It is obviously essential that all those scientists concerned with matters of public interest, in this case food additives, make every effort to make their work more open and understandable. It is my view that only by making available large quantities of information and data will the public accept that the industry has nothing to hide.

David J. Jukes