

Book Reviews

Toxicological Aspects of Food. Edited by Klara Miller. Elsevier Applied Science Publishers, London, 1987. 458 pp. ISBN 1-85166-080-1. Price £65.00.

At last, we have a book about food toxicology that really tackles food itself, rather than just additives and contaminants. The thirteen chapters of the book are grouped into four sections covering regulatory and practical toxicology, contaminants, cooking, preservation and storage, and the toxicology of novel foods and of some natural components. The contributors, from Europe, Japan and the USA, are all recognised experts in their field and write with clarity and authority. Each chapter is comprehensively referenced and the index is adequate.

There is very little evidence here for the concept of 'natural equals safe, and synthetic the opposite'. The litany of toxic materials of natural origin seems endless, for example, hormones, mycotoxins, methyl xanthines and amino-imidazo azarenes (from heat-processed foods), though food additives/pesticide and industrial chemical contaminants receive satisfactory coverage. Contentious issues in connection with additive regulatory toxicology, irradiation, additive intolerance, etc, are dealt with effectively, without being dwelt upon unduly. The book may be somewhat wasted on those without a basic knowledge of food chemistry and toxicology but it should find a welcome place on the shelves of anyone with a professional interest in food safety evaluation.

D. J. Snodin