

as the possibility that crucifers may produce compounds that protect against aflatoxin-associated cancer, or that a change in diet from cereals to potatoes amongst poor people may protect them from exposure to mycotoxins. This should stimulate thought and debate about the importance of mycotoxins and it is a pity that the relatively high price may limit the range of readers.

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Pearson's Composition and Analysis of Foods 9th edn.

By R. S. Kirk and R. Sawyer. Longman, UK, 1991. x + 708 pp. ISBN 0-582-409101. Price: £49.00.

The ninth edition of this famous and unsurpassable book has been considerably enlarged from the eighth edition (591 smaller pages). The title has been appropriately changed from the original ('Pearson's Chemical Analysis of Foods') 'to Pearson's Composition and Analysis of Foods' to reflect the subtly evolving content of the book, yet its original and dependable ethos (as David Pearson always kept it) has not been lost. The authors express their intention to address a broad readership (in the preface) and this edition is certainly improved by up-dating on EC directives, Codex Alimentarius requirements and to a lesser extent by including changes in standards and methods from BSI, ISO and the Analytical Division of The Royal Society of Chemistry.

A quick peek at the (historically dependable) appendices at the back of the book reveals that most are still there but a new addition is an extensive

table of Codex Standards. Also the UK Codes of Practice are listed and the MAFF Food Surveillance Papers. The list of food additives permitted in the UK is now gone but Appendix 8 gives serial numbers of permitted food additives. All the original lists of units and factors are still there, and there is now a new Appendix 13 on Composition of Foods.

The main text of 'Pearson's Composition and Analysis of Foods' is characterised by practical details, diagrams and apparatus. The strength of this book has always been its intrinsic 'usefulness' and indeed it is the only text in existence which combines analytical methods, legislative requirements and food product quality in such a well-balanced and authoritative manner. Of course, this means that explanation is sometimes sacrificed for expediency and we are served with reference methods and worked formulas without understanding how they are derived. An example of this is the formula for calculating the percentage of a sugar mixed with sucrose using optical rotations (p. 195). This differs from the one given in the 8th edition of the book and inspection shows that the ninth edition formula is wrong. For students using these methods it is better to consolidate understanding by calculating from first principles. Generally the 9th edition of Pearson's Composition and Analysis of Foods' is well prepared and remarkably free of editorial mistakes. The authors are to be congratulated on producing this up-to-date, well sought-after and indispensable book. Its' value for money (at £49) is quite remarkable and I thoroughly recommend purchase.

Gordon Birch