

Food Irradiation. Edited by S. Thorne. Elsevier Applied Science, London, 1992. xiii + 322 pp. ISBN 1-85166-651-6. Price: £80.00.

The book consists of eleven chapters contributed by a truly international range of authors, some of whom are very well known.

Only three chapters deal with applications of irradiation to food processing; one being a general introduction, the others being very specific works on combination of irradiation and thermal processing, and a comparison of gamma rays with electron beams for food irradiation. The main thrust of the volume concerns the current status of food irradiation, concentrating on the problems of acceptance and detection. Five chapters are devoted to questions of consumer acceptance and current status of food irradiation. As the position varies from country to country, three of these chapters are targeted at specific sectors, i.e. United States, Europe and developing countries. A further two chapters deal with methods of

detection of irradiated foods, and a final chapter considers the effects of irradiation on vitamins. Overall, the work provides a factual, well argued case in favour of the wider application of food irradiation.

A vast amount of information is presented in a clear fashion. The book is generally well written and well illustrated. It should, therefore, be recommended reading for students of food science and technology as well as scientists and industrialists with an interest in food irradiation. It should also be read by members of consumer protection groups and the media who frequently take a blinkered view of the process.

However, it should be noted that this is not a comprehensive textbook on the subject. Many aspects of processing (e.g. mode of action of ionising radiation, engineering aspects) are completely omitted. Perhaps the title is misleading in this respect. Otherwise, it is a most worthwhile book.

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