

## Book Reviews

**Food and Nutrition Policy in Europe.** Proceedings of the Second European Conference on Food and Nutrition Policy. Edited by D. G. van der Heij, M. R. H. Löwik & Th. Ockhuizen. Pudoc Scientific Publishers, Wageningen, 1993. 249 pp. ISBN 90-220-1084-8. Price: Dfl. 150.00/US\$ 100.00.

The first European Conference on Food and Nutrition Policy, which was held in Budapest in 1990, was 'a political meeting, with official delegations by all European countries. . . . (It) was intended to adopt official recommendations, and consequently a lot of time was spent on composing an official document' [p. 247].

By contrast, the second meeting held in The Hague on 21–24 April 1992, from which this volume is derived, was 'aimed at creating an open atmosphere for exchanging ideas and for providing the participants with advice on how to implement several aspects of Food and Nutrition Policy' [p. 247]. Organised by the Dutch Ministry of Welfare, Health and Cultural Affairs, the WHO Regional Office for Europe in Copenhagen, and TNO Nutrition and Food Research of The Netherlands (a 'WHO collaborating centre for nutrition'), over 200 delegates from a variety of disciplines attended the meeting, including this reviewer as a guest of the Netherlands Heart Foundation.

The book consists of five plenary papers, thirteen papers from three parallel sessions, thirty-four pages of text summarising the work of nine workshops, and—by way of conclusion—a two page Epilogue. There is no index, and the contents page simply lists the titles of papers. The whole is attractively produced in a reasonably common format; but some of the text appears in European rather than standard English.

The book declares itself to be a *Proceedings* and thus each chapter stands alone. It is difficult to tell whether authors have revised their texts as a consequence of comments and discussion; but Philip James' opening paper on 'Challenges for applied nutrition sciences for the 1990s' does not appear to have been influenced by the workshop on 'Agricultural policy, food consumption and health' in which I participated.

The subjects covered are quite diverse. J. L. Lambert reports on a survey of French adults which explores their attitudes to alcohol consumption, for example; T. Sharp of *Marlow Foods Ltd* reports on the development of Quorn myco-protein; J. E. Blundell looks at the use of artificial sweeteners and fat substitutes; Leonore Kohlmeier, of the University of North Carolina, calls for European coordination of nutritional surveillance;

and M. Horisberger, of *Nestec Ltd*, discusses the benefits of biotechnology. Given the theme of the conference/book, Nancy Milio's paper on policy-making is a disappointment. Elisabet Helsing in one of the workshops, was one of the few people who attempted to outline the form of a food and nutrition policy; but her paper is not published in this text, and her ideas simply appear in abridged form in the workshop reports.

As a sceptical economist, what I failed to find at the conference and in this volume is a clear view of what is meant by 'Food and Nutrition Policy', why we should have one, and how such a policy might be pursued. This book is a collection of papers, some good, some indifferent, which were presented at a conference in The Hague in 1992; but they do not live up to the book's title: *Food and Nutrition Policy in Europe*.

Alan Swinbank

**Seafoods: Resources, Nutritional Composition and Preservation.** Edited by Z. E. Sikorski. CRC Press Inc., Boca Raton, Florida, USA, 1990. 248 pp. ISBN 0-8493-5985-6. Price: US\$198.00.

This book consists of 13 chapters written primarily by authors from Poland and other Eastern European countries; however, it does serve as a useful source for readers wishing to have a brief global overview of the topics discussed since in all but two or three of the chapters the English is more than adequate. The exceptions are undoubtedly the chapters concerned with salting and marinating of fish (Chapter 9) and smoking (Chapter 10) where the phraseology makes understanding difficult.

A further problem with several of the chapters are the references where many of those quoted are not readily available in the West. For example, Chapter 5 is concerned with the preparation of the catch for preservation and marketing and quotes only 3 references, two of which are in Polish and the other in the Russian language.

Though given a global perspective there is inevitably some bias in the views expressed with the great dependence on Polish and Russian literature. The coverage, though, is as would be expected from the title with chapters on resources and their availability, their nutritive composition, post harvest changes, chilling, freezing, drying, salting, marinating, smoking, canning, minced fish processing and sanitation requirements. The reviews of these topics are necessarily brief and

would only be used as a starting point for any reader wishing to research, teach or implement any of the various areas and, as indicated previously, the references to some of the chapters may not be easily accessible to many readers.

The book is well produced and possesses a very good

index to aid the reader seeking information on specific points. In spite of reservations expressed above, the book will be a valuable addition to the libraries of Institutions concerned with fish science and technology.

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