



## Book Review

**The Technology of Vitamins in Food.** Edited by P. B. Ottaway. Blackie A & P (an imprint of Chapman & Hall), Glasgow. 1992. ISBN 0-7514-0092-0. 270 pp. £65.00 (hardback).

Healthy eating advice and the use of nutritional labelling, coupled with the increasing attention of the media to health issues, has led to furtherance of consumer interest in all aspects of health. Indeed, over the last few years, every month has seen more evidence published on the beneficial effects of adequate vitamin intakes to reduce risk of chronic disease. Not only are the results of clinical studies beginning to exonerate the long held views of many protagonists of vitamin supplementation, but they are also recruiting supplement takers among previous antagonists.

On the back of this research, not only is vitamin supplementation booming and forecast to continue to do so, but many food companies are earnestly engaged in research projects to enhance the nutritional value of their products by vitamin fortification. Although the new era of designer foods or functional foods has not yet arrived, there is no doubt about the commercial interest in it. Despite legislative hurdles to be overcome before these foods are launched on the market, the current demand for information on vitamins by food technologists makes the publication of this book most timely.

The first few chapters deal with an overview of vitamins in human nutrition. The first chapter is by J. Marks and is on the biological functions of vitamins. Then H. Crawley continues with a chapter on the natural occurrence of vitamins in food and D. H. Shrimpton

describes the vitamin deficiency syndromes, recommended daily allowances and safety. In support of the safe track record of vitamin supplementation, Dr Shrimpton contends that many foods are naturally high in certain nutrients, and therefore a minority of the population consumes some vitamins vastly in excess of the RDA with no adverse effects. A table of the highest regular daily intakes of vitamins for which no contra-indication has been published, shows that these levels are well in excess of the RDA. However, Dr Shrimpton warns that vitamin A may be in high quantities and government advice is to avoid excess in pregnancy. To prevent vitamin A toxicity, the vitamin should be avoided in dietary supplements or in food fortification in my view, as there is no evidence of deficiency in the UK.

Of particular interest in this book are the chapters on manufacture and industrial applications of vitamins. Thus there is a chapter on industrial production of vitamins by M. J. O'Leary, another chapter on the stability of vitamins in food by P. B. Ottaway, a chapter on vitamin fortification by A. O'Brien and D. Robertson and a chapter on vitamins as food additives by J. N. Counsell. The book is completed by a comprehensive chapter of vitamin analysis by I. D. Lumley and a final chapter on aspects of food fortification legislation by D. P. Richardson.

The book is well laid out and is provided with a useful index. The subject matter is aimed at food technologists working in the food industry, to whom I would recommend it as essential reading.

**Ann F. Walker**