

**The functions and effectiveness of the New Zealand Therapeutic database.** Lyn Gillanders\* & Alannah Steeper.

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**Aim and Methods:** The New Zealand Therapeutic Database (NZTD) is a central resource of ingredient listings of over 3000 New Zealand foods and has the capability of providing information on 8 clinically significant food components (soya, wheat, egg, milk, lactose, peanut, legume and gluten). The database also contains self-reported data on macronutrients.

This is a fully integrated project of the New Zealand Public Health Commission whose role is to purchase and co-ordinate public health services. The service specifications are the basis for evaluating service providers and include annual statements of quality measures and contract monitoring. Two national surveys in 1994 and 1995 were carried out to evaluate effectiveness.

**Results and Conclusions**

- \* Publications are produced annually based on the above exclusions. 1108 publications were produced in 1994.
- \* Similar databases exist in Australia, United Kingdom and the Netherlands. The European Food Intolerance Databank Project has just been established and will similarly maintain and update data on European manufactured foods.
- \* The NZTD has data collection, processing, production of exclusion booklets and resource centre co-ordinated by one office. Two recent national surveys have shown a high degree of satisfaction with the service. The project is in line with international trends in this type of data collection and should prove to be of major benefit for New Zealanders.

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**Knowledge of African foods: a network of laboratories and a data bank.** J.-C. Favier,<sup>a\*</sup> & J. Ireland-Ripert.<sup>b</sup>

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Food composition tables for Africa are often incomplete and obsolete. However, a good knowledge of local foods is among factors which, in Africa, will lead to food security and development of a food industry. Therefore, some laboratories from French-speaking Africa have decided to join with CIQUAL in order to better know food composition and traditional food technologies in their area.

The objectives are the following:

- inventory African foods (current foods, new foods, wild foods);

- determine nutrient content before and after transformation;
- create a data bank from this information;
- select the most interesting foods and technologies from the nutritional point of view, in order to valorize them.

Existing information in literature and in laboratories needs to be completed by new field-surveys and reliable analyses. The creation of a data bank of African foods has been undertaken using a model of the data bank by CIQUAL. Initialized and coordinated by ORSTOM and CIQUAL, the network is open to other members.

This project should result in:

- printed and computerized food composition tables; a composition table of tropical fruits has been published in 1993;
- descriptive books about African foods;
- diffusion of the data bank by means of magnetic tapes, disks, and on-line;
- valorization of wild foods and traditional foods when able to improve the nutritional status and to generate economic activities;
- improving methods and reliability of the members of the network; developing their ability to ensure quality control in food industry.

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**The establishment of a national food data base in South Africa.** M. Kruger, M. L. Langenhoven & P. Wolmarans.

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As there was an urgent need for data on the nutrient composition of South African foods for nutritional research, the Medical Research Council produced the first printed food composition tables (FCT) in South Africa in 1981. It was updated in 1986 and 1991. The sources of information were literature and laboratory reports. In the 1991 edition the proximate composition of only 18% of the food items is of South African origin. The USA Handbook No. 8 was the major source of information (36%). The 1991 edition contains data on proximates, vitamins, minerals, amino acids and fatty acids of 1370 food items, mostly in the form they are eaten. The FCT is also available in electronic form. A large user community developed because these FCT have become the standard reference in tertiary training institutions. South Africa became part of AFRO-FOODS in 1994. It became clear that to contribute at subregional level, a national food data base needed to be established. A symposium for this purpose is being planned for September 1995. The symposium is supported by the local food industry and major food analytical laboratories. Issues such as user needs, data quality and a national advisory committee will be addressed.