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Food databases in the United States. Joanne M. Holden* & David B. Haytowitz.

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As befits a large, diverse country, the United States has developed a sizeable number of databases relating to food. These databases include those developed by government agencies as well as those developed in the private sector. Some of the best known, particularly to the nutrition community, are the U.S. Department of Agriculture's food composition databases. These databases are the foundation for many other food composition databases developed elsewhere in the United States and are also recognized around the world. They are used within the Department and elsewhere to develop other databases which are used to determine nutrient intakes of food consumption and survey respondents. These databases and some of their other applications will be described. In-house food databases are developed by other government agencies, such as FDA and EPA, to meet their regulatory and other responsibilities and may or may not be released to the public. A number of food databases have been developed by food companies and trade associations to meet the requirements of the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act. Other food databases covering such areas as economic data, pesticide residues, patent information, and others will also be described. Databases are also used by research centers, both in government and at universities for applications such as clinical studies, nutrition monitoring, epidemiological studies and food technology. Issues relating to databases such as sources of data, documentation, validation, structure, and descriptions will also be addressed.

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Food Composition data in Africa. Lilian T. Marovatsanga.

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Food composition studies are essential for the quantitative study of nutrition, food science and technology and dietetics. There is a great need for more reliable, accurate and accessible food composition data. In Africa, few national Food Composition tables or databases exist, and of these, none are as comprehensive as they could be.

This article reviews the states of Food Composition programmes in Africa and the development of a regional AFROFOODS data base. The article also discusses establishment of subregional Food Composition Centres in Africa, regional data base organization, composition of steering committees and their roles. The need for data generation and problems faced in data generation are also outlined. Analysis of foods, compilation and dissemination of data and training are some of the areas identified as priority areas which require initial attention. Examples of data generated by ECSAFOODS are listed in this article. The need to link AFROFOODS with INFOODS and other established data bases is emphasized. The need for better food composition data bases in Africa is well recognized.