

cessing of specific fruits may not find what they are looking for.

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Biomarkers in Food Chemical Risk Assessment. Eds H. M. Crews & A. Bryan Hanley. Royal Society of Chemistry, Cambridge, UK, 1995. 138 pp.

Epidemiological and animal studies have established unequivocally that diet can influence the incidence and progress of major human diseases, such as cardiovascular disease and cancer. It is now recognised that chemicals present in the diet, being inherent to food, storage or industrial process contaminants, food additives or generated during the cooking process may play a principle role in the aetiology of these diseases or afford effective protection. The use of biomarkers to assess exposure to, and the biological effects of dietary chemicals in humans is a relatively new discipline and any new publication concerned with this subject of major current interest can only be welcome.

The book comprises 13 papers of some 10 pages each, emanating from a homonymous symposium held

at Norwich in March 1995. Some of the contributions are of review type, dealing with general concepts, whereas others describe experimental data where a particular biomarker had been evaluated e.g. the COMET assay and ethane exhalation. My only criticism, and it is a minor one, is that the order of the papers appears to be random with no attempt being made to bring together contributions dealing with similar aspects. The authors, largely UK based, are all actively engaged in this field working in research institutes or in academia. Regrettably the food industry is not represented.

In reading this book one realises that there is still a long way to go before suitable biomarkers are developed which are sufficiently sensitive to be applied to dietary chemicals whose intake is generally low. Even the term 'biomarker' appears to imply different things to different scientists. The book is up-to-date, dealing with the latest concepts in this area and as such it can be recommended not only to those researching in this field, but also to those involved in food safety. The editors are to be congratulated for getting under a single cover all the current concepts and for ensuring the publication of the book so promptly after the meeting.

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