

Book Reviews

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The Index of Antimicrobials. By Michael and Irene Ash, Synapse Information Resources. Gower Publishing Ltd, 1996. ISBN 0566 078163. 486 pp. Price: £95.00.

This book provides information on a broad range of antimicrobial agents having applications in the chemical, food, agriculture, pharmaceutical and water and waste treatment industries. The index is probably most useful for those looking for agents effective in a specific application and for assessing the agent's compatibility with the system, its level of toxicity in meeting environmental regulations and its safety in production and handling. A useful description of each agent is provided and includes the trade name of the chemical, the chemical description and the range of applications. The index also provides a helpful application cross-reference with information on major application areas and a manufacturers' directory with detailed contact information.

Hilary Lynch

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Flavour Science—Recent Developments. Edited by A. J. Taylor and D. S. Mottram. The Royal Society of Chemistry. Information Services, 1997. ISBN 0-85404-702-6. 472 pp. Price: £69.50.

This book contains a wealth of information about a wide range of cutting edge research in the field of flavour science. The volume records the 86 lectures, posters and workshop presentations that were made at the 8th Weurman Flavour Research Symposium, held from 23–26 July 1996 in Reading, UK. The papers have been organised into seven key areas which cover the major aspects of flavour science, i.e. Flavour of biological origin, Biotechnological production of flavour, Chirality and flavour, Thermally generated flavour, Novel methods of flavour analysis, Sensory methods in flavour, and Flavour binding and flavour release. It is no accident that these topics logically cover the sequence of flavour generation through to flavour measurement and ultimately sensory impact.

It is inevitable that in a volume such as this the quality of the individual chapters does vary. The general standard is, however, very good and the editors have done extremely well in the standardisation of presentation and style. The section on flavour binding and

flavour release is particularly interesting in its relevance to the perception of flavours in the mouth, and deals with one of the most active new areas of research in considerable detail. There is, however, something for everyone in this book, as it deals with so many issues of relevance to so many products, processes and techniques.

The book is an essential addition to the library of anyone seeking to keep abreast of the latest research in this active science and will be of value to researchers, scientists in appropriate areas of the food industry and to those involved in education.

Martin Hall

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Antimicrobial Food Additives. By Erich Lück and Martin Jager. Springer, Heidelberg. ISBN 3-540-61138-X. XXVI + 260 pp. Price: DM. 148.00.

After a general introduction of some 50 pages, the text covers all the major chemical preservatives of human food. For convenience, the sub-headings of each chapter are broadly uniform, so that each of the major compounds like sulphur dioxide or sodium chloride has sections devoted to such topics as analysis, properties, toxicity and spectrum of action. This approach does, of course, comply with the stated intention of the authors to focus the text at groups including 'the practical man in the food industry and the educated layman', for the arrangement makes the search for information extremely easy.

Unfortunately the selection of this target readership has tended to have an adverse influence on the quality and quantity of information provided, for much of the data are somewhat superficial. For example, anyone looking-up Table 7 for information on the 'mode of action of some preservatives on microorganisms' will find only a list of preservatives and an indication of target groups, i.e. 'bacteria, yeasts and molds.' Again the discussion of the Hurdle Concept highlights the fact that the 'initial microbe count should be as low as possible' and, although it may be unfair to isolate this comment, it does serve to emphasise that this book is not for the specialist. Indeed, even college students may find it less than helpful for, of over 80 references cited in one introductory section—Antimicrobial action of preservatives—only a handful are post-1990.