

Editorial

## Water – A simple substance?

Water is a substance that everybody knows, often even the chemical formula. In fact, it is one of the most important chemical compounds. Water is ubiquitous and is therefore relevant in all areas of life from geology and geography to biology, medicine and food science and also economics. The particular properties of the water molecule make it interesting for chemists, physicists and food scientists. A main issue is the correct determination of the water content of substances. This seems to be a simple task but proves to be difficult in many situations and may even cause contradictory discussions. This is due to the interaction of water with many molecules which leads to different properties and behaviour of water depending on the molecular surroundings.

Such problems have led, some years ago, to the idea to invite scientists to the “First International Workshop on Water Determination in Food – A Challenge for the Analysts”. It was held at the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission in Ispra, Italy, from 6 to 7 April 2000 with the help of Prof. Dr. Elke Anklam. Some of the contributions were published in *Food Control* Vol. 12, Number 7 (2001), a special issue dedicated to this Workshop. Many questions remained unanswered and new topics were discussed.

This encouraged us to invite to the “Second International Workshop on Water in Foods – Water Structure, Water Activity, Water Determination in Food” from 26 to 27 March 2002 at the University of Reims Cham-

pagne-Ardenne in France, organised by Prof. Dr. Mohamed Mathlouthi. The subtitle indicates that the range of topics had been broadened. Most of the contributions were published in the special issue *Food Chemistry* Vol. 82, Number 1 (2003).

The “Third International Workshop on Water in Food – Water Functionality in Food, Water and Food Structure, Water Determination in Food, Water Activity in Food” was held in Lausanne, Switzerland, from 29 to 30 March 2004, organised by Dr. Christoph Reh from the Nestlé Research Centre. This special issue of *Food Chemistry* contains some of the papers presented there. It proves again that “water in food” is a scientific domain with many facets and will remain a wide and extremely interesting area.

These International Workshops on Water in Food have now become a traditional event. The next of these Workshops is planned for 27–28 March 2006 in Brussels, Belgium, and will be organised by Dr. Alexander Bernreuther from the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission in Geel, Belgium.

Heinz-Dieter Isengard

*Head of the Department of Food Analysis*

*University of Hohenheim*

*D-70593 Stuttgart, Germany*

Tel.: +49 711 397 4670; fax: +49 711 397 4674

*E-mail address:* [isengard@uni-hohenheim.de](mailto:isengard@uni-hohenheim.de)