



Book review

Food Microbiology and Laboratory Practice, C. Bell, P. Neaves, A. Williams (2005). Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 336 pp., Hardback, Price £85.00, ISBN: 0632063815

Reliable results from microbiology laboratories require well-trained staff and proper facilities, methods and procedures. This book was written as an aid to instructors and those undergoing training in food microbiology laboratory practices.

The first four chapters provide an introduction to the structure and habit of microbes, factors affecting growth and survival, the microbial ecology of foods and fundamentals of food preservation. The fifth chapter gives a very useful overview of the many different applications of microbiology in the food industry, including validation of HACCP plans, hygiene testing, process monitoring, checking compliance with microbiological criteria and so on. Three further chapters cover essential aspects of good practice: laboratory design, laboratory procedures and practices and accreditation and documentation. The final section gives detailed practical guidance on basic microbiological techniques, procedures for examining samples and confirmatory tests. The last chapter gives an introduction to alternative, non-culture-based, methods used in food microbiology.

The authors have extensive first-hand experience of working in the food industry and have been actively involved over many years in training microbiologists. This has enabled them to produce, in a single volume, a comprehensive and reliable guide to achieving high working standards and quality of output in the microbiology laboratory. The detailed practical aspects are well covered but equally as important are the explanations of the underlying principles involved. The scope is wide but there are ample references to further reading, including official standards. This book will be a very useful source for all microbiologists concerned with implementing and maintaining high quality working practices in the laboratory.

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