New Books

L.A. Witting, Book Review Editor

Advances in Lipid Research, Vol. 16, Edited by R. Paoletti and D. Kritchevsky, (Academic Press, 111 Fifth Ave., New York, 1978, 410 p., $34)

This is the latest volume of a well established review series published since 1963. The seven chapters include "Metabolism of Molecular Species of Diacylglycerophospholipids" by Holub and Kuksis; "Fatty Acids and Immunity" by Meade and Merrin; "Marginal Vitamin C-Deficiency, Lipid Metabolism and Atherogenesis" by Ginter; "Arterial Enzymes of Cholesteryl Ester Metabolism" by Kritchevsky and Kothari, "Phospholipase D" by Heller, "Screening for Inhibitors of Prostaglandin and Thromboxane Biosynthesis" by Gryglewski, and "Atherosclerosis, Hypothyroidism and Thyroid Hormone Therapy" by Starr. On balance, recent volumes in this series, except Vol. 15, seem to lack the diversity of topics which characterized the early years of publication. Volume 15, in addition to chapters on long range order in biomembranes, pharmacodynamics and toxicology of steroids and related compounds, also contained reviews on fungal lipids and the biochemistry of plant sterols. While always strongly biochemically oriented, there has been a difinite shift toward emphasis of biomedical topics. This volume maintains the high standards previously set by this fine series and can be strongly recommended for personal acquisition to all subscribers to Journal of Lipid Research and other biomedically oriented lipid biochemists.

LLOYD A. WITTING, Ph.D.
Supelco Inc.
Bellefonte, PA 16823

The Book of Miso, William Shurtleff and Akiko Aoyagi, Illustrated by Akiko Aoyagi, (Autumn Press, Inc., Kanagawa-Ken, Japan 240-01, 1976, 254 p. $6.95).

Miso, a fermented soybean product, is one of East Asia's traditional foods. In the Japanese diet it serves not only as a highly flavored seasoning but also as a protein-rich staple. Different kinds of miso contain from 5 to 13 percent sodium chloride and 11 to 20 percent protein and provide a variety of flavors and a range of textures. This book contains comprehensive information about the many types of miso, and detailed instructions for making them in homes and communities. Developments in the production of miso since World War II and the effects of new ingredients and temperature-controlled fermentation are described. The authors believe, however, that "the best miso is that prepared by the natural fermentation method and sold without additives or preservatives."

Over four hundred recipes, the majority of them representing vegetarian cookery, are included. The recipes demonstrate the many ways miso can be used in soups, stews, casseroles, salads, sauces and toppings; with grains, beans and tofu; sautéed and simmered with vegetables; and even in desserts. Preference for certain recipes is indicated and the use of "natural" foods (e.g., honey, whole wheat flour, brown rice and cold-pressed vegetable oils) in their preparation is emphasized.

The claim for miso as an all-purpose seasoning is well documented. However, since most of the recipes provide one tablespoon or less per serving, the value of miso as a protein source depends on the frequency with which it is included in the daily diet. Other soybean products that require less time and skill for traditional preparation or less expensive equipment for manufacture may be better sources of additional protein.

Anecdotal support of miso consumption as an important factor in promoting health and longevity is given. Some of the specific claims reported for using miso and/or consuming a vegetarian diet are at least open to question.

"The Book of Miso" is recommended to persons who want to learn about the preparation, composition, and uses of miso and to those interested in trying recipes representative of the Japanese cuisine. The book is attractively illustrated with line drawings and typographical errors are at a minimum. In the copy sent to this reviewer, fifteen pages of the text were missing so other copies should be checked.

FRANCES O. VAN DUYNE
Department of Foods and Nutrition
University of Illinois
Urbana, IL 61801

Soy Protein and Human Nutrition, Edited by H.L. Wilcke, D.T. Hopkins and D.H. Waggle (Academic Press, New York, 1979, xiii + 406 p., $25.)

This publication is the collected lectures presented at the Keystone Conference on Soy Protein and Human Nutrition held in Keystone, Colorado, May 22-25, 1978. The 23 papers are presented by representatives of universities, government institutions, and industries in the U.S.A. and Canada, and the Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama, Guatemala.

The major objectives of the Conference were: 1) to present the most up-to-date information on the role that soy protein, and other plant proteins, should fulfill in the human diet; 2) to stimulate interest among both the public and private sectors in pursuing research on the determination of the proper place of plant proteins in the human diet; 3) to stimulate interest in better methods of evaluating the quality of plant proteins. The first half of the volume deals with the first two objectives. Papers are presented on the impact of plant proteins in worldwide food systems, types of soy protein products, soy protein isolates in the feeding of infants and preschool children, and soy protein in adult human nutrition. The next few articles are concerned with the limiting amino acids of soy products, the effect of soy protein on trace mineral availability, and biologically active substances in soy products. Some of the articles are overviews of present knowledge, but most offer some new data.

The second half of the book is devoted to the question of protein quality and how it should be determined. The first paper, a critique of methods for evaluation of protein quality, is followed by consideration of the question by a panel. Six papers are presented on the subject, which is introduced and summarized by the chairman, D.T. Hopkins. The question and answer sessions following these papers contain some particularly penetrating comments, and while there are no clear-cut answers, there is a lot of thought-provoking material. The Conference ends with a paper on worldwide regulatory perspective of plant proteins in foods, and the Aaron Altschul's summing up of what we need to know about plant proteins.

The speakers are all eminent in their respective fields, and the quality of presentation is high.

PATRICIA V. JOHNSTON
University of Illinois
Urbana, IL 61801