Book reviews


Three times I have thrown this book in my office rubbish-bin, and three times I have retrieved it. I have retrieved it from the other rubbish there because I agreed to review it for this Journal. Why was it there? I put it there because I was alternately frustrated and infuriated as I read the contents. It may be better that a book provokes some reaction from the reader than that it has no effect at all, but there is a limit.

Throughout the book there is a fixation with recommended dietary allowances (RDA), yet the meaning and import of these seems to have been completely misunderstood by almost all of the authors. Some examples will illustrate this. We are told the significance of this: ‘thus, 75 % of the population may be subjected to Mg deficiency’. My understanding of the RDA is that 98 % of the population may consume this amount or less without their intake being insufficient to meet their needs. The whole book seems to be built on this premise. Endless studies are quotes to show that significant numbers of individuals in various group of athletes suffer from nutritional deficiencies because their estimated intake is less than the RDA. Most of these people are getting more than their requirement, even though their intake may be well below the RDA. What about the enormous error in these estimates of intake? We should be concerned about those people who do suffer from nutrient deficiencies that may be due to an inadequate intake. This misguided and misleading approach totally fails to identify those individuals.

In another chapter, we are told that: ‘this quantity will meet the RDA of most individuals’. There is no RDA for Mg. The authors might be justified in taking umbrage at a negative review based on such opinions. Here, then, are some other reasons why I would advise my students from buying this book. The above may seem unduly critical and probably reflects my personal biases. The authors and editors might be justified in taking umbrage at a negative review based on such opinions. Here, then, are some other reasons why I would actively discourage my students from buying this book. The intravascular chloride concentration is not 4 mmol/l as stated on p. 171. Students would be confused as to the average plasma Na concentration: it is 140 mmol/l (p. 120) or 154 mmol/l (p. 171)? These are simply two examples among many.

R. J. Maughan


Arguments pertaining to the reality or otherwise of an impending global food crisis have been with us for decades. Any intervention to address this issue is always welcome. The introduction of simple rural food processing technology to preserve and extend the shelf-life of food is an important part of the effort to meet the nutritional needs of our ever-expanding population. The present book is an excellent practical guide to the implementation of small-scale food processing in the developing world. The book is divided into...
two parts. The first part concentrates on the importance of food processing training, course preparation, course implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The second section covers a series of ten case studies of training in food processing from Asia, South America and Africa. The case studies provide an excellent tapestry of the various cultural and country specific needs of food processing.

The book is written in a popular style. It is accurate and detailed enough as a practical guide for anyone thinking of running a course on food processing. Most importantly the book not only addresses food technology issues, but also the marketing aspects, a topic rarely covered by books of this kind.

Each section is copiously illustrated with photographs, flow diagrams and figures making it a lively and engaging read.

This is a book well-worth reading and should be in all libraries, specifically those in the developing world. Its wide use and application has the potential to make a difference to the lives of many in the developing world.

C. J. K. Henry

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