Handbook of Organic Food Processing and Production

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Preface

The increasing interest in organic foods has created a need for this book, the first practical manual to cover the processing of organic food and drink. The book shows how a company can process organic foods, emphasising economic and legal considerations. The authors have been selected for their extensive 'hands-on' experience of organic food processing. By demystifying the processing of organic foods this book will encourage those from outside the current organic food industry to become involved.

An initial introduction to organic food is followed by a review of organic legislation (chapter 2) and the organic certification process (chapter 3). The following six chapters cover the major organic commodity groups: Fruit and Vegetables, Cereal Products, Meat and Meat Products, Dairy Products, Other Processed Foods and Alcoholic Drinks. Chapter 10 is devoted to developments in the USA. Finally there is an extensive directory, giving details of the major players and organic organisations throughout the world.

The book will appeal to technical and marketing personnel in organic food and drink processing companies, as well as their counterparts in companies who want to become involved. Other people who will find this book of interest include retailers who sell organic foods; farmers who grow organic crops; lecturers and students of Food Science and Food Technology; lecturers and students of Agriculture; and anyone who wants an introduction to this rapidly developing sector of the food industry.

Simon Wright

Foreword

For several years now, I have had much contact with organic food producers and processors. In 1981 Safeway pioneered the introduction of organic vegetables in supermarkets and four years later we achieved nationwide availability throughout our stores network.

Since their introduction in the early 1980s, organically grown foods have seen a mixed response from the consumer. In the past few years, some of my colleagues in other retailers have decided to discontinue organic product lines, based upon the experience of the past ten years or so.

At Safeway, we remain committed to offering our customers the choice of a range of organic products. As well as the traditional fresh fruit and vegetables, Safeway offers organic wine, bread, meat and dairy products, even fromage frais.

Much of the early failure of organic produce can be traced to the uncoordinated, unstructured approach to the market, which characterised the pioneers of organics. All parts of the food supply chain must take some responsibility for this problem. Organic products must be correctly marketed so that they meet the needs of the pertinent sector of consumers. This is an important point; in the eyes of the mainstream consumer, organic products are not virtuous in their own right, so simply trying to sell them alongside traditional alternatives is not enough.

This book is important because, when one considers that a holistic approach to a process is an integral part of the organic philosophy, there has been little published which offers the coverage of this work, in an integrated fashion.

I hope that this text is useful in helping existing processors and producers in developing their organic businesses and I also hope that it may ease the passage to market for some new businesses to join the sector. An increasing number and depth of organic producers and processors is the real key to advancing the sector, because the one real limitation to potential organic customers is price, which can only be tackled by larger volumes of supply.

I am certain that Safeway will remain committed to meeting the demand of customers by offering the option of organic products for the foreseeable future.

Sir Alistair Grant

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