

I. Smith and A. Furness (editors). *Improving Traceability in Food Processing and Distribution*. Cambridge, UK: Woodhead Publishing 2006. £115.00 (hardback), pp. 256. ISBN 1 85573 959 3

This book is unlike any text on traceability I have ever read. In fact, it is more a series of loosely connected journal articles than a single text. This has the disadvantage that the text is often repetitive, sometimes contradictory and extremely confusing. The target audience for the book is also not entirely clear, although production controllers or process managers in the larger food manufacturers may find some aspects of this book helpful and useful. This book is not really a complete guide to traceability but more a text from which the committed reader will gain some rich nuggets if prepared to look hard enough. For example the Foodtrace project and the Food Print approach will interest the traceability technical expert and the interested production manager alike. Similarly, the work on DNA markers and electronic identification is at the cutting edge of this technology and will be useful for significant areas of the food-agri community.

What the book lacks, however, is focus: it appears like a group of papers that have been written with other targets in mind and have then been welded together in a far from convincing way. The book would also have benefited from

a chapter on the European legal position on traceability, with some practical examples of how companies might meet those legal obligations. The chapter on traceability of analytical measurements is interesting, but it is hard to see how it fits with the overall purpose of the text. Combining Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points principles with a technique called Failure Mode and Effect Analysis to assess what to include and, more importantly, what to exclude from a traceability system is a very useful tool for quality assurance managers.

In summary, this book is not a straightforward text on traceability that covers all aspects including legal ones. It is, however, a series of interesting essays that will reward the attentive reader with a number of useful concepts and pieces of information.

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