

DATABASE COMMITTEE REPORT

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The primary activity of the Database Committee has been compilation of the Nutrient Data Bank Directory. This document was first compiled in 1980 by Donna Hay and Tony Fisher and listed 28 data bases including those from USDA. Since that time the number of systems has increased and each subsequent edition has included more citations. In 1982, the 2nd Edition included 39 systems. In the 3rd Edition in 1983, 55 systems were described and citations for the USDA data bases were not included since information about USDA data bases has been made available directly from USDA to conference attendees and other interested parties. In 1984, the 4th Edition was expanded to include more information about the data bases and a new section was added to describe the features of the software used in the systems. For various reasons, a new edition was not produced in 1985; however, a supplement to the 4th Edition was prepared to provide updated information about systems described in the previous edition and to describe 18 new systems. This year the 5th Edition includes information for 99 systems and was expanded to include 39 fields of additional data.

One of the challenges encountered in this activity is assuring that the information is both correct and up-to-date. With each new edition, data base developers have been asked to revise information about their systems and to supply new information. For the 5th Edition, 84% of the developers provided updated information. Due to the perishable nature of the information in the Directory, we are very appreciative of the cooperation of the data base developers to assure that dependable information is reported.

In addition to distribution to attendees at the National Nutrient Data Bank Conferences, the Nutrient Data Bank Directory is available for purchase by the public to help cover some of the production expenses. Due to limited sales, recent editions have been underwritten by the University of Missouri-Columbia. This year we are pleased to acknowledge partial support for the 5th Edition from the International Network of Food Data Systems (INFOODS). Now that a total revision has been accomplished, we plan to market the directory and would appreciate any suggestions relative to suitable target groups.

Developers of nutrient data base systems have been surveyed since 1984 in an effort to identify their needs for data and their opinions about standardized coding schemes. Joanne Holden has compiled the responses to the survey and a summary of that information was presented at the INFOODS conference on Users and Needs in March, 1985.

Last year at the conference in San Francisco, the Database Committee was asked to join with the Guidelines Committee to explore the desirability of considering a process for establishing guidelines. After some deliberation, most agreed that the issue was too complex to address properly at the conference.

The committee welcomes suggestions regarding new activities that should be undertaken or ways that the committee can assist users of data bases.