

A SUMMING UP

The Fifteenth National Nutrient Databank Conference was held on June 4-6, 1990, in Blacksburg Virginia. There were twenty-five oral presentations, ten poster presentations, eight commercial booths and about one hundred and sixty attendees. As in former databank conferences, there was something for everybody from the first time user of nutrient data bases to the experienced data base user. The presentations included a valuable update of the available resources for the nutrient data bank user, a discussion of the international nature of nutrient data bases, a discussion of some aspects of the issues and controversies concerning nutrient fiber, as well as several discussions from a users viewpoint on how to use various data bases including the use of microcomputers.

Variability of food composition data, both real and apparent, was presented for a variety of food components including selenium, vitamin A, carotenoids, vitamin C, pesticides, salt and fat. The variability of food composition was also discussed from the viewpoints of the effect of processing and of recipe compositions as determined by calculation and chemical analysis.

The conference ended with a look to the future with discussions of biotechnology and designer foods. The current stage of progress of the biotechnology of plants and of animals was presented with a emphasis on how this exciting new technology might influence the composition of foods. The conference ended with presentations on two of the new designer foods Simplese® and Olestra. The introductions of biotechnology and designer foods are obviously going to have significant impacts on the composition of the foods of the future.

Kent K. Stewart
Blacksburg, Virginia