

USDA Nutrient Composition Laboratory Update.

Gary R. Beecher, Nutrient Composition Laboratory, BHNRC, ARS, USDA,
Beltsville MD

The mission of the Nutrient Composition Laboratory is to conduct research to meet critical needs relative to the composition of foods. This mission is accomplished by conducting research in several activities including: 1) development of measurement systems, 2) development of sampling strategies for the U.S. food supply, and 3) analysis of foods. Relative to the development of analytical methodology, research continues for such nutrients and food components as carotenoids, cholesterol, dietary fiber, fatty acids, flavonoids, folate, several minerals, vitamin C, vitamin E, tocotrienols and several water soluble vitamins. Instrumentation development for mineral analysis is also an active component of the research program. Several projects are oriented toward the development of stable and applicable food reference materials which will improve the accuracy of nutrient data. Data are being evaluated from a large project on the analysis of carotenoids in tomatoes and tomato products and will be added to the carotenoid database as soon as the data are summarized and published. Collaboration continues with many commercial, state and federal laboratories and other research organizations.