A comprehensive guide

Second edition

Edited by Nike Stringer and Colin Dennis

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Preface President of decident of the property of the property

During the last 40 years, consumer choice has been transformed by developments in the production, distribution and retailing of food, which with improvements in the design and equipment of the domestic kitchen have facilitated a major change in our lifestyle.

Perhaps the most striking development is the marketing of a wide and expanding range of chilled perishable foods. Convenience, easy preparation and the 'fresh' and 'healthy' image and an extensive choice of different culinary tastes are attractive features. Many products are made by industrial processes using technology which has no parallel in the domestic kitchen. Others, notably cooked ready meals of all kinds, require skills, time and patience to prepare. These developments have occurred by the application of technology to the production, packaging, distribution and retailing of food.

The integrity and safety of chilled foods is multifactorial. Care is required at every stage in the food chain, from primary production of raw materials, through manufacture, distribution, retail and consumer use.

This book provides a comprehensive guide to the many important aspects necessary to provide the consumer with safe, high quality products, and includes recent developments in legislation. Since the introduction of the first coordinated chilled distribution chain in the late 1960s, substantial developments have occurred in the refrigeration equipment available and in the temperature monitoring and control systems.

Product, process and packaging developments which have occurred over the last 20 years have resulted in chilled foods representing a larger and increasing proportion of weekly purchases for home consumption as well as in institutional and service catering. Their safety and reliability have resulted from the application of scientific principles of food technology and depend on a series of

safety factors in their preparation, processing, distribution and retail sale. The overriding requirement is for the reliable 'chill chain' to control the temperature at every stage from the final process of production to the moment of purchase and absence of abuse by the consumer. Hygienic preparation and production areas are a further essential requirement for chilled food manufacture. This has resulted from a greater understanding and awareness of hygienic design of equipment and buildings, together with appropriate cleaning and sanitation regimes. Developments in methods of detection of microorganisms have greatly assisted in improving approaches to hygiene practices and monitoring the microbiological status of raw materials and finished products.

The establishment of the shelf-life of chilled foods requires a full appreciation of the microbiological, chemical, physical and biochemical aspects which influence the sensory acceptability of products. These factors are discussed in relation to the safety and quality of products, together with methods of determining shelf life of such products. The importance of the application of HACCP as part of quality management systems in the production and distribution of chilled foods brings together the many aspects of chilled foods which are covered in this book.

Further developments in processing and packaging technology will undoubtedly contribute to the continued development and innovation in the chilled food sector. High pressure processing, electric-field sterilisation and active and intelligent packaging all offer potential in this respect.

As editors, we have between us over 35 years experience in chilled food science and technology. Our contacts with the contributing authors have been built up over these years. They all have wide research and industrial experience and are recognised experts in their fields. We consider ourselves fortunate to have secured their cooperation in providing a major and unique contribution to the scientific and technical understanding of the chilled food market.

We are grateful to all the authors for applying themselves so diligently to give the best of their knowledge and skills.

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