

Food Hygiene and Applied Food Microbiology in an Anthropological Cross Cultural Perspective

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Foreword

In the present volume the authors have addressed the complex relationships between human beings and water and food, which are the sources of energy and healthiness and the guarantor of our survival on Earth. The challenges the authors faced were certainly arduous especially due to the vastness of the problems inherent to the water and food supplies. Such problems are extremely diverse because of the wide variety of situations of the world population, which are dependent fundamentally on climate, level of instruction, economical means, and so on. The second notable obstacle, which the authors confronted also, is the general ignorance of this topic, which is very often neglected or underestimated in school's disciplines, so it happens that who must legislate on the topic is frequently not up to the issue to be addressed. The text of the volume encloses valuable information regarding water and food elements, from the point of view of microbial ecology, physiology, and nutrition. It also includes applied microbiology as well as water and food safety, ranging throughout the period of time of human existence from prehistory to our times, naturally favoring the years closer to more current experiences. It is of utmost utility to agronomists, plant and animal scientists, as well as food scientists and food safety specialists, because they can possibly draw details in their studies and in their formulations of recipes which should be considered to satisfy the needs of any type of person, regardless of gender, age, socioeconomic status, geographical location or lifestyle, and each and every one. It is certainly useful for students of any age and also for the multitude of people who are interested in the topic, perhaps I would not say for the "insiders", a term which is now in vogue. It is also a pleasant reading for the ones, by now retired, to the study and to his evangelization, and also to revise the topics of its spent work. In summary, I welcome this

volume covering concisely and efficiently a difficult and controversial subject for which we must spur researchers to study and to further spread and develop the concepts.

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Preface

Food safety is a multidisciplinary scientific discipline that is specifically designed to prevent foodborne illness to consumers. It is generally assumed to be an axiom by both nonprofessionals and professionals alike that the most developed countries, through their intricate and complex standards, formal trainings and inspections, are always capable of providing much safer food items and beverages to consumers as opposed to the lesser developed countries and regions of the world. Clearly, the available data regarding the morbidity and the mortality in different areas of the world confirms that in developing countries, the prevalence and the incidence of presumptive foodborne illness are much greater. However, other factors need to be taken into consideration in this overall picture: First of all, one of the key issues in developing countries appears to be the availability of safe drinking water, a key element in any food safety strategy. Second, the different availability of healthcare facilities, care providers, and medicines in different parts of the world makes the consequences of foodborne illness much more important and life threatening in lesser developed countries than in most developed countries. It would be therefore ethnocentric and rather simplistic to state that the margin of improvement in food safety is only directly proportional to the level of development of the society or to the level of complexity of any given national or international standard. Besides standards and regulations, humans as a whole have evolved and adapted different strategies to provide and to insure food and water safety according to their cultural and historical backgrounds. Our goal is to discuss and to compare these strategies in a cross-cultural and technical approach, according to the realities of different socio-economic, ethnical, and social heritages.

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