The Role of Alternative and Innovative Food Ingredients and Products in Consumer Wellness edited by Charis Galanakis

Humans have been adding supplements to foods for a long time. When we added quinine (first extracted from cinchona bark) to our gin and tonic, it was not for its calorific value, but rather for its antimalarial properties. Similarly, today, we aim to reduce illness and better our diet through eating bioactive compounds in the variety of ways described in this book. It is described as a reference, beneficial to food scientists, technologists, nutrition researchers and food chemistry students, but I certainly believe it accessible to all who are interested in the latest food technologies available, as well as those which might be available in the future.

The book deals largely with natural (rather than synthetic) sources of bioactive ingredients and the functional foods where they may be found. Individual chapters focus on fruit, cereal, microalgae, insect, fish-based and bacterial sources of compounds. The book also describes the methods in which nutrients are commonly extracted, where they may be medically useful, and to which foods the bioactive ingredients may be added.

Of interest are comments on how the food technology industry needs legislative support in order to successfully transform food waste into useable protein/fibre/vitamins or to define more closely exactly which foods can be branded 'superfoods'. The success of microalgae and insect food industries also requires a societal shift for many, but in any event could play a larger role in global animal feed.

The world is becoming smaller with regard to exotic food information. Research into the omega-3 eating people of Greenland suggests that cardiovascular disease doesn't have to be a consequence of a high-fat diet and that historical Brazilian consumers of the açaí berry did so to improve digestion. This book, with chapter contributions from all corners of the globe, highlights the modern global search for better food ingredients.

James Lillington
(Birkbeck, University of London, UK)