

MEDIA REVIEW

**Baking Science & Technology, 4th edition, Volume 1:
Fundamentals and Ingredients**

E.J. Pyler and L.A. Gorton

Sosland Publishing,

Kansas City, MO

ISBN: 978-0-9820239-0-7

Paperback

USD 165

In the world of cereal science and baking there are a few books which reach iconic status; one such book was the two volume set of *Baking Science & Technology* by E.J. Pyler. First published in 1952, the third edition dates to 1988 and was revised by Pyler himself. While they have been printed for quite some time they have remained classic texts to which many of us constantly refer. Undertaking the revision of an industry classic is not a task for the faint-hearted but the results of Laurie Gorton's efforts are to be loudly applauded. Work on the first of the two volumes has been completed. The vital statistics for the book are: 735 pages, 320,000 words, 380 illustrations and 3,500 indexed terms.

Volume 1 is sub-titled 'Fundamentals & Ingredients' and in its pages covers Basic food science, Bakery Ingredients (major, minor and micro), Crops and their processing, the Quality laboratory and Sanitation and regulation. The chapter contents retain much from the earlier editions, including some of the original illustrations, with the text related to the underpinning science of baking and the wide variety of ingredients which are used in the manufacture of bakery products. There has been substantial up-dating of the material and this is reflected in the comprehensive reference lists which accompany each chapter. The end result is a pleasing blend of 'ancient and modern'. It is important that revisions do not simply regurgitate old text without some careful scrutiny of the content to make sure that the retained material remains relevant. Equally it is important that the

basic essence of the previous editions is not lost otherwise the end result tends to be disconnected from its predecessors and loses some of its value. Thankfully the new edition avoids both of these potential pitfalls.

The presentation of the contents in the 4th edition reflects modern journalistic styles with illustrations and tables intruding into the text and extending beyond to the edges of the printed page; the more traditional textbook readers may find this reduces the pleasure of the reading experience. However, the publishers are to be congratulated on their extensive use of colour illustrations; too many modern technical books still rely on black and white illustrations with a resulting loss in the quality of information associated with the subtle changes in colour and appearance which frequently characterise baked product qualities. The book is clearly aimed at the north American market, reflecting the book's origins. In places this limits the overall value of the discussions in the texts in an international context.

Despite the few misgivings expressed above the new editor and associated contributors to this 4th edition are to be congratulated as they have produced a comprehensive revision that all of us involved in cereal science and technology will want to have on our bookshelves to replace our well-thumbed earlier editions. I look forward to seeing the next volume in the series (scheduled for late 2009).

Stanley P. Cauvain

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