
Book Review

Eggs in our life

by Peter Surai and Ray Noble

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This little book (160 pp) could well be subtitled 'Everything you ever wanted to know about eggs, but didn't know whom to ask'. The authors are well qualified to answer such questions, having spent the greatest part of their respective careers as scientists and teachers involved with eggs. For an egg aficionado like me, it makes fun reading. Throughout the book, the odd-numbered pages contain cartoons, illustrations, interesting data and general factoids concerning eggs, while continuing text chapters occupy the even-numbered pages.

In the early chapters, the authors seem at pains to avoid mention of the term 'cholesterol' even though the allusion is clear when they refer to the demise of the egg as a universally accepted component of the human diet, which it has been for centuries. The introductory chapters are followed by detailed descriptions of production systems, egg formation and structure, industry development, etc.

Then we get a very detailed description of the egg's nutrient content and discussion of the protein and lipid components. Lipids and cholesterol are dealt with in great detail and the authors continue to tread a very fine line in their attempts to avoid overt promotion. The details are beyond doubt presented fairly and reasonably. Omega fatty acid, vitamin and mineral content of eggs in relation to human nutritional needs are discussed in detail and the potential to modify these in special eggs is covered. Several interesting chapters on antioxidants, carotenoids, and methods of preserving eggs are included. Although the book has a distinct UK perspective, in truth most of the references have broad application elsewhere.

When I first read this book, I was at a loss to describe its target audience, and the authors could not help. This is still the case. It contains a wealth of useful and valuable information, but for whom? It is somewhere above the head of the average consumer. We might wish that doctors, dieticians, teachers and other pundits who influence people's decisions about food would read it, but there can be no assurance that they will. Egg farmers and others in the industry will enjoy it because they are familiar with some of the content, but will surely learn a great deal more from the authors' very wide range of information presented. It may end up as the egg industry's responsibility to get the book to those in positions of influence (the above mentioned pundits) and this would be a worthwhile effort.

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