

Book review

An overview on toxigenic fungi and mycotoxins in Europe. Antonio Logrieco and Angelo Visconti. 252 pp. Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, The Netherlands. ISBN 1-4020-2645-5. €95.00; US\$119.00; £66.00.

This book is a summary of the final meeting of the EU-COST-835 project 'Agriculturally important toxigenic fungi' held in Martina Franca, Italy in October 2003. The book contains contributions of experts from 18 European countries, detailing the occurrence of toxigenic fungi and mycotoxins on plants, foods and feeds. The book details each country by chapter and includes Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Rumania, Russia, Serbia-Montenegro, Spain, Turkey and the UK. The mycotoxins detailed most in the book are aflatoxins in nuts and dried fruit, ochratoxin A in cereals, coffee and wine, deoxynivalenol, zearalenone and fumonisins in cereals and cereal products and patulin in apple juices. The book has the benefit of an index divided by fungal genera, fungal species, mycotoxin and exposed plant, food or feed that allows cross-referencing across each chapter.

Several chapters detail survey-type data only for that country, showing the distribution of mycotoxins within various crops and commodities, whilst others also provide insights into related studies such as the aetiology of endemic nephropathy in Croatia and the role of agronomy on the distribution of deoxynivalenol in wheat in France.

One criticism of the book is that the toxigenic fungi and mycotoxins detailed by each country are not standardised, and as a result the chapters for

each country are focused primarily on the mycotoxins of particular interest only to that country. However, this bias in reporting merely shows which mycotoxins are a priority within a particular country and how different toxigenic fungi and mycotoxins cause particular concerns within different countries due to the combination of environmental conditions and the crops grown across the European continent. Of particular note is how the distribution of *Fusarium* pathogens of cereals varies in importance across Europe with corresponding differences in the mycotoxin profile in cereals. However, there is still evidence within this book of mis-identification of *Fusarium* species and/or the mycotoxins they produce, which indicates the need for a comprehensive study that can clarify which mycotoxins are produced by well-characterised isolates for the numerous *Fusarium* species commonly detected in crops and food-stuffs.

Overall, this is a timely overview as the European Commission will introduce legislation in 2006 setting maximum limits for *Fusarium* mycotoxins in unprocessed cereals and finished cereal products. The book successfully summarises the current status on the distribution of toxigenic fungi and mycotoxins across 18 European countries and will be a useful reference for researchers and officials with an interest and a responsibility in toxigenic fungi, mycotoxins and food safety. It will be interesting to see how the mycotoxin profile of Europe changes in the next ten years.

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