Practical Ethics for Food Professionals
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Practical Ethics for Food Professionals

Ethics in Research, Education and the Workplace

Edited by

J. Peter Clark and Christopher Ritson

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Preface

This volume was inspired by a symposium, ‘Everyday ethics for the food scientist: Ethics in research, education and the workplace’, co-sponsored by the student programming and the education divisions of the Institute of Food Technologists at the 2009 Annual Meeting. Additional topics and authors with an international perspective have been introduced to produce a comprehensive treatment that, it is hoped, will serve a wide audience.

Ethical considerations are involved in every aspect of a food professional’s education and career, but the subject is rarely taught explicitly. Unfortunate examples of ethical lapses abound in news reports. Large issues of strategy have ethical components, but guiding principles are sometimes difficult to articulate.

Some business and engineering colleges have adopted an emphasis on values and ethics, but these need to be communicated to food professionals who have the opportunity to apply them in a practical sense.

The editors hope that this book will be the foundation for a seminar in colleges of agriculture, where departments of food science and technology are usually found. We think it should also be on the desk of every executive or would-be executive responsible for important decisions about marketing, resources, sustainability, the environment and people in the food industry.

There are numerous broad issues relating to food that have been discussed and debated at great length. Some of these are treated in this volume as well, but the emphasis here is on practical issues that individuals face and can affect.

The book has sections on: principles, issues, examples, and a concluding chapter.

- **Principles**
  Four chapters address principles of ethics from several points of view: the use of virtues, lessons from medical ethics, ethical principles derived from moral philosophy, and an East Asian view.

- **Issues in food industry ethics**
  Issues and applications include: ethics in publishing, humane treatment of livestock, sustainable food production and consumption, health claims, and worker exploitation.

- **Examples and case studies**
  Examples and case studies include: ethical practices in the workplace, ethical thinking and education, the fair trade movement, the Peanut Corporation of America *Salmonella* case, nanotechnology and commodity speculation.

- **Conclusion**
  Finally, a concluding chapter summarizes and synthesizes the individual chapters.
WAYS TO USE THIS BOOK

This book could serve as a primary text or supplementary resource for a one or two semester course or seminar on ethics for undergraduate students in food science or related fields. An instructor will need to generate his or her own assignments and discussion questions, but they should flow naturally from the material provided.

The editors hope as well that it will serve as an educational and inspirational resource for people at all phases of a career in the food industry. There are many other sources of information on the topics, some of which are listed as references. Students, readers and instructors must stay current in this field, as issues evolve and new challenges arise. The principles are timeless, but their application requires constant self-education and vigilance.

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