

13th International Postgraduate Course on the Production and Use of Food Composition Data in Nutrition, Wageningen University, The Netherlands

Project: 500

Brigitte Buri, Wabern

The Course on the Production and Use of Food Composition Data in Nutrition, briefly “FoodComp course” took place at the University in Wageningen and lasted two weeks. The aim of the course was to demonstrate experts from all over the world how to produce, manage and use high-quality food composition data in a standardized way.

We had the opportunity to reflect our national food composition database and to compare it with the standards of EuroFIR. These basic principles are crucial in order to generate, maintain and expand high-quality nutritional data for the food composition database.

The course included lectures, practice-relevant exercises, an excursion to the laboratory, e-learning and various group works.

The sound theoretical foundations, as well as the various practical examples and exercises given in the course, allowed the participants to deepen their knowledge of each necessary single step to generate high-quality nutritional data.

We also had the opportunity to discuss with experienced experts from all over the world, gaining insights into their work as compilers. At the same time, we were able to build up a valuable international network.

The major topics of the course were:

- Requirements and use of nutrient databases at different levels
- Steps in establishing a food composition database
- Selecting and establishing priorities for including foods, nutrients and other food components in databases
- Sampling of foods
- Methods of analysis: critical evaluation and choice of methods
- Data quality (management) and evaluation
- Reviewing existing data
- Format and modes of expression
- Food nomenclature, classification and identification
- Recipe calculations
- Compilation of data
- Nutrient calculation software
- National and international activities in food composition
- Documentation and database management

These sound foundations are necessary and very valuable to me, in order to be able to carry out the daily work as the responsible person of the Swiss food composition database, since these topics were treated superficially during my studies as a dietician. I was able to deepen my scientific knowledge and acquire the necessary knowledge to maintain and expand the Swiss nutrition database.

At the moment, our priority is to improve the data quality of the Swiss nutrition database. This means that we are checking data from older sources, especially data from foreign databases, and are updating these in collaboration with various laboratories or by research.

Thanks to the sound basics of the course we were able to include the data of new food items in the Swiss food composition database.