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FLAIR-FLOW 4 is supported by the European Commission within the 5th Framework Programme under the Quality of Life and Management of Living Resources, Key Action 1. It comprises a network that disseminates food research results to consumer groups, health professionals and the food industry in 24 European countries.

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Database of Physical Properties of Foods

In this age of computer-aided modelling, the lack of reliable data on physical properties of foods is a limiting factor for designing new food processes. A newly developed database on physical properties of foods overcomes this problem. The database is freely available at www.nelfood.com.

The database has been developed and introduced by NELFOOD, a recently completed European project. The unique feature of this project is that it provides a central repository of information, in both bibliographic and numeric forms. These are accessible to all registered users – free of charge - to enter, edit and retrieve data. The application provides data tables with graphical output. The information has been carefully collected and reviewed over the three-year period of the project by 24 project partners from 14 European countries from the Czech Republic to Switzerland. A procedure for quality control is in place.

The database contains a wealth of physical data on most major foods. At the time of writing there are:

- 11031 bibliographic references
- 1488 evaluated datasets attached to literature references
- 260 physical properties (thermal, mechanical, mass transfer, electrical, optical including colour)
- Knowledge bases on water activity and mass diffusion

This ready-to-use database will certainly benefit most food engineers - at the time of writing there are 1971 registered users. The experts managing the database expect to generate new income for maintaining, expanding and improving the database in the future. They also intend to implement on the Internet the COSTHERM project, which focuses on the prediction of thermal properties of foods from their chemical composition, and to include further knowledge bases within the thermal, microbiological and electrical areas.

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www.nelfood.com

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This one-pager was written by Mr Finn.Holm, Food Group Denmark, in July 2002.