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APPLICATIONS; 4.12 SUMMARY; 5 Carrageenan; 5.1 INTRODUCTION; 5.2 RAW MATERIALS; 5.3 MANUFACTURING; 5.4 REGULATION; 5.5 STRUCTURE; 5.6 FUNCTIONAL PROPERTIES; 5.7 FOOD APPLICATIONS; 6 Cellulose Derivatives; 6.1 INTRODUCTION; 6.2 RAW MATERIALS AND PROCESSING; 6.3 COMPOSITION AND CHEMISTRY; 6.4 FOOD APPLICATIONS; 6.5 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS; 7 Gelatine 7.1 INTRODUCTION 7.2 MANUFACTURING PROCESS; 7.3 REGULATIONS: EUROPEAN UNION AND THE USA; 7.4 CHEMICAL STRUCTURE AND REACTIVITY; 7.5 PHYSICOCHEMICAL PROPERTIES; 7.6 FOOD APPLICATIONS; 7.7 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS; 8 Gellan Gum; 8.1 INTRODUCTION; 8.2 MANUFACTURE; 8.3 CHEMICAL COMPOSITION; 8.4 FUNCTIONAL PROPERTIES; 8.5 REGULATORY STATUS; 8.6 APPLICATIONS; 8.7 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS; 9 Gum Tragacanth and Karaya; 9.1 GUM TRAGACANTH; 9.2 GUM KARAYA; 10 Inulin; 10.1 INTRODUCTION; 10.2 RESOURCES AND RAW MATERIALS; 10.3 PRODUCTION; 10.4 CHEMICAL STRUCTURE; 10.5 PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL PROPERTIES 10.6 PRINCIPLE OF FAT REPLACEMENT 10.7 PHYSIOLOGICAL PROPERTIES; 10.8 APPLICATIONS; 11 Konjac Glucomannan; 11.1 INTRODUCTION; 11.2 RAW MATERIALS; 11.3 PROCESSING; 11.4 STRUCTURE; 11.5 FUNCTIONAL PROPERTIES; 11.6 FOOD APPLICATIONS; 11.7 NUTRITIONAL APPLICATIONS; 11.8 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS; 12 Microcrystalline Cellulose; 12.1 INTRODUCTION; 12.2 MCC PRODUCT TECHNOLOGIES; 12.3 MANUFACTURING PROCESS; 12.4 COLLOIDAL MCC PRODUCT LINE EXTENSIONS; 12.5 PHYSICAL MODIFICATION - THE ALLOYING CONCEPT; 12.6 PHYSICAL AND FUNCTIONAL PROPERTIES; 12.7 LEGISLATION AND NUTRITION; 12.8 FOOD APPLICATIONS 12.9 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS 13 Pectin; 13.1 INTRODUCTION; 13.2 RAW MATERIALS; 13.3 PROCESSING; 13.4 COMPOSITION; 13.5 CHEMICAL PROPERTIES; 13.6 APPLICATIONS; 13.7 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS; 14 Pullulan; 14.1 INTRODUCTION; 14.2 RAW MATERIALS; 14.3 PRODUCTION; 14.4 FUNCTIONAL PROPERTIES; 14.5 FOOD APPLICATIONS; 14.6 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS; 15 Seed Gums; 15.1 INTRODUCTION; 15.2 RAW MATERIALS; 15.3 PRODUCTION; 15.4 COMPOSITION; 15.5 FUNCTIONAL PROPERTIES; 15.6 FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS; 15.7 DERIVATISED SEED GUMS FOR TECHNICAL APPLICATIONS; 16 Starch; 16.1 INTRODUCTION; 16.2 RAW MATERIALS; 16.3 PROCESSING 16.4 COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE

Sommario/riassunto

Stabilisers, thickeners and gelling agents are extracted from a variety of natural raw materials and incorporated into foods to give the structure, flow, stability and eating qualities desired by consumers. These additives include traditional materials such as starch, a thickener obtained from many land plants; gelatine, an animal by-product giving characteristic melt-in-the-mouth gels; and cellulose, the most abundant structuring polymer in land plants. Seed gums and other materials derived from sea plants extend the range of polymers. Recently-approved additives include the microbial polysac