

Texture of Cachena meat.

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The meat quality, mainly tenderness, was affected by complex interactions of multiple antemortem and postmortem factors such as animal genetics, feeding, handling, slaughter process. Genetics determines an animal's potential for producing tender meat, and its interaction with ante- and postmortem environment and also management will determine the ultimate tenderness of the meat from each animal.

Cachena is a cattle breeds, part of the Portuguese genetic heritage, with high interest for the south Alentejo region due to the high rusticity of these animals. Animals are small and the meat is known by its excellent characteristics of texture and flavour. The determination of the factors that affect meat tenderness of Cachena is of extreme importance for the producers and for the industry. The goal of GOCACHENA project is understanding the relation among genetics, feeding, age and weight of animals, with the quality, mainly tenderness, of this exquisite meat. This research work is part of the refereed project and obtained on preliminary results useful for the persecution of the main goals.

The modalities of this trial are different due to the preparation of the meat of *Long dorsal*: sliced (aging 2, 5, 8 days) and entire pieces (aging 2, 8, 10 days). The animals were males, with slaughter weight from 165 to 225 kg, and age between 6 and 13 months. The texture was analyzed trough Texture Profile Analyze (TPA) using a Texture Analyzer TA.HD.Plus (©Stable MycroSystem). From each animal two parts of the *Long dorsal* muscles were separated and packed in bags each one with two samples and the measures were done in triplicate in each slice of each sample. The samples were prepared according to Fabre et al (2018) and Veiseth-Kent et (2018).

The results shown that there aren't significant differences for Tenderness, Springiness and Chewiness for sliced meat, however a slight decrease was noticeable. Considering the entire pieces, the only significant difference was found in the values of Springiness. The values of tenderness unexpectedly increase slightly.

The dramatic heterogeneity in the meat of animals may be caused by genetic factors. This statement confirms the necessity of deep studies like that of GOCACHENA

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