Evaluation of Processed Meats

American Meat Science Association

57th RMC

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History

1949
First Annual
Ham Show

1954
The National Ham Show
History

1966

National Ham & Bacon Show
History

1968

National Ham, Bacon & Sausage Show
History

1976

American Cured Meat Championships
American Cured Meat Championships

27 General Classes & 1 Regional class
ACMC Rule Book

Relates to product entry and general product evaluation

- Classes
- Production requirements
- Thermal processing
- Amount of product needed
- General evaluation criteria
Product Entries

- Should be in compliance with FSIS regulations
  - Appendix A (Lethality)
  - Appendix B (Stabilization)
- Remove identifying marks
  - Labels
  - Logos
  - Address
- Remove ingredient statements
Basics of Judging Processed Meats

- **External Appearance**
  - 15% of the points

- **Internal Appearance**
  - 35% of the points

- **Edibility**
  - 55% of the points
### AMERICAN CURED MEAT CHAMPIONSHIPS
Sponsored by the
American Association of Meat Processors
Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania

### SUMMER SAUSAGE - COOKED

#### 1. EXTERNAL APPEARANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uniformity of Color</td>
<td>(75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniformity of Shape</td>
<td>(75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Defects</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **EXTERNAL APPEARANCE**
   - non-uniform color
   - too pale
   - too dark
   - non-uniform diameter
   - wrinkled surface
   - streaks or water spots
   - fat, gelatin or air pockets
   - dirty smoke stick marks
   - other

#### 2. INTERNAL APPEARANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uniformity of Texture</td>
<td>(50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniformity of Color</td>
<td>(75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat to Lean Ratio</td>
<td>(50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Defects</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **INTERNAL APPEARANCE**
   - non-uniform cured color
   - pale cured color
   - particle uniformity/definition
   - fat, gelatin or air pockets
   - crumbly texture
   - case hardening
   - excess fat
   - excessive gristle/connect tissue
   - other

#### 3. EDIBILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aroma</td>
<td>(75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste</td>
<td>(300)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texture/Mouth Feel</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **AROMA/FLAVOR/EDIBILITY**
   - spice too strong
   - too salty
   - too bland
   - too greasy
   - rancid fat
   - unidentified off-flavor
   - tough or rubbery
   - poor mouth feel
   - very desirable flavor
   - desirable flavor
   - acceptable flavor
   - unacceptable flavor (not covered above)
   - other

**TOTAL** (1000)
External Appearance

• All classes should be evaluated as soon as possible

• Uncontrollable Factors
  • Light
  • Air movement
  • Room temperature
External Appearance

- **Color**
  - Should be a mahogany color
- **Defects**
  - Non-uniform color
  - Too pale
  - Too dark
External Color
External Color
External Color
External Appearance

• Workmanship / Lack of Defects
  • Defects
    • Smoke steaks or water spots
    • Dirty smoke stick marks
    • Un-cut ends on casings
    • Air pockets / fat caps
    • Scoring (Bacon)
Workmanship

- Variety of shapes and sizes available
Workmanship

- Removal of netting
External Appearance

- Uniformity of Shape
  - Defects
    - Non-uniform diameter
    - Wrinkled surface
    - Straight / Curves
    - Poor trimming (ham)
    - Shank length (ham)
Uniformity of Shape

• Wrinkled surface
Uniformity of Shape

- Curved sausage
Uniformity of Shape

- Trimming
- Shank removal
Uniformity of Shape

- Casing differences
  - Cellulose vs. Natural vs. Collagen
Internal Appearance

- All products within each class should be cut the same
  - Same person
  - Same method
  - Same location
  - Same utensil
- Evaluate product as soon as the product is cut
Internal Appearance

• Uniformity of Texture
Internal Appearance

• Particle definition
Internal Appearance

- Particle definition
  - Variation in production methods
Internal Appearance

- Uniformity of Color
  - Variation in meat component used
Internal Appearance

- Lack of Defects
  - Poor distribution of ingredients
Internal Appearance

- Lack of Defects
  - Air pockets
  - Blood splash
Internal Appearance

- Lack of Defects
  - Uncured spots
Internal Appearance

- Lack of Defects
Internal Appearance

- Lack of Defects
Edibility

- All products within each class should be evaluated the same
  - Same person doing the heating (if necessary)
  - Same method
    - Time
    - Cooking
    - Same size of piece
Edibility

- Aroma
  - Unidentifiable off-odor
  - Rancid fat
  - Over-powering smoke
Edibility

• Texture / Mouth Feel
  • Mealy
  • Tough / rubbery
  • Tough casing
  • Greasy
  • Dry
  • Too moist (Jerky, Snack Sticks, Dried Beef)
  • Too coarse
Edibility

- Taste
  - Too spicy
  - Too bland
  - Too salty
  - Unidentifiable off-flavor
  - Too smokey
  - Rancid fat
  - Unacceptable flavor
Conclusion

• How can you become a judge or a better judge
  • Practice
    • Get involved at state meat association conventions
  • Learn from your professors
    • Ask questions
  • Understand processed meat production
Conclusion

• Cured meat judging is very subjective to personal preferences

• Every judge evaluates products differently
  • No right way or wrong way, there are just better ways than others

• Processed meat products are region specific around the country
Questions