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Influência do pH final e do tempo de estocagem sob congelamento na qualidade  
de bifes *Longissimus dorsi* de bovinos Nelore (*Bos indicus*)

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Dissertação apresentada para obtenção do título de  
Mestra em Ciências. Área de concentração: Ciência e  
Tecnologia de Alimentos

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## RESUMO

### **Influência do pH final e do tempo de estocagem sob congelamento na qualidade de bifes *Longissimus dorsi* de bovinos Nelore (*Bos indicus*)**

O objetivo deste trabalho foi avaliar a influência do pH final ( $\text{pH}_f$ ) e do tempo de estocagem sob congelamento nos parâmetros de qualidade da carne como a maciez, perdas de água, solubilidade das proteínas, oxidação de proteínas e lipídios, parâmetros instrumentais da cor ( $L^*$ ,  $a^*$ ,  $b^*$ ,  $C^*$  e  $h^*$ ), e formas químicas da mioglobina na carne de bovinos machos das raças Nelore não-castrados. No frigorífico foram abatidos 24 bovinos, selecionadas 8 músculos *Longissimus dorsi* para cada faixa de  $\text{pH}_f$  [ $\text{pH}_f$ , normal ( $\leq 5,79$ ), intermediário (5,80 a 6,19) e alto ( $\geq 6,20$ )]. As carnes foram maturadas durante 14 dias e após este período foram armazenados a -20°C durante 3, 6, 9 e 12 meses. A carne com  $\text{pH}_f$  alto apresentou menor valor da força de cisalhamento, perda de água e solubilidade proteica a partir do dia zero ( $P<0,05$ ), que as amostras com  $\text{pH}_f$  normal e intermediário. Houve maior perda de água e o valor de força de cisalhamento foi diminuindo com o aumento do período de estocagem sob congelamento para as carnes com três faixas de  $\text{pH}_f$ , enquanto a contagem microbiológica permaneceu abaixo dos limites máximos estabelecidos nos 12 meses. Os bifes congelados durante 9 e 12 meses apresentaram uma diminuição significativa nos valores de metamioglobina, deoximioglobina e luminosidade ( $L^*$ ) e um aumento nos valores de oximioglobina, índices de vermelho ( $a^*$ ), amarelo ( $b^*$ ), saturação ( $C^*$ ), ângulo de tonalidade ( $h^*$ ) e oxidação proteica e lipídica ( $P<0,05$ ), simultaneamente. A carne com  $\text{pH}_f$  normal apresentou maiores valores nos parâmetros da cor ( $L^*$ ,  $a^*$ ,  $b^*$ ,  $C^*$  e  $h^*$ ) e maior porcentual da oximioglobina ( $P<0,05$ ) em todos os períodos de estocagem, e não houve diferenças significativas na oxidação proteica nas três faixas de pH final em todos os períodos de estocagem. Estas observações sugerem que a estocagem sob congelamento por longos períodos, juntamente com um período de maduração de 14 dias antes do congelamento, podem favorecer a maciez, a formação da oximioglobina e também a intensificação da cor da carne.

**Palavras-chave:** Congelamento, Força de cisalhamento, Tempo de estocagem, pH final, Cor

## ABSTRACT

### Influence of ultimate pH and freezing storage time on the quality of *Longissimus dorsi* steaks from Nelore (*Bos indicus*) cattle

The objective of this study was to evaluate the influence of ultimate pH ( $\text{pH}_u$ ) and freezing storage time on quality parameters of meat such as tenderness, water loss, protein solubility, protein and lipid oxidation, instrumental color parameters ( $L^*$ ,  $a^*$ ,  $b^*$ ,  $C^*$  and  $h^*$ ), and myoglobin chemical forms in meat from non-castrated male Nelore cattle. In the slaughterhouse, 24 cattle were slaughtered, and eight *Longissimus dorsi* muscles were selected for each  $\text{pH}_u$  range [ $\text{pH}_u$ , normal ( $\leq 5.79$ ), intermediate (5.80 to 6.19) and high ( $\geq 6.20$ )]. The meats were matured for 14 days and after this period they were stored at -20°C for 3, 6, 9, and 12 months. The meat with high  $\text{pH}_u$  showed lower values of shear force, water loss and protein solubility from day zero on ( $P < 0.05$ ), than the samples with normal and intermediate  $\text{pH}_u$ . The meat with high  $\text{pH}_u$  showed lower shear force, water loss and protein solubility values from day zero on ( $P < 0.05$ ) than samples with normal and intermediate  $\text{pH}_u$ . There was a higher water loss and the value of shear force decreased with the increase on storage time under freezing for meat with the three  $\text{pH}_u$  ranges, while the microbiological count remained below the maximum limits established at 12 months. The steaks frozen for 9 and 12 months showed a significant decrease in the values of metmyoglobin, deoxymyoglobin, and luminosity ( $L^*$ ), and an increase in the values of oxymyoglobin, red ( $a^*$ ), yellow ( $b^*$ ), saturation ( $C^*$ ), hue angle ( $h^*$ ), and protein and lipid oxidation ( $P < 0.05$ ), simultaneously. Meat with normal  $\text{pH}_u$  showed higher values for color parameters ( $L^*$ ,  $a^*$ ,  $b^*$ ,  $C^*$ , and  $h^*$ ) and higher percentage of oxymyoglobin ( $P < 0.05$ ) in all storage times, and there were no significant differences in protein oxidation in the three ultimate pH ranges in all storage times. These observations suggest that storage under freezing for long periods, along with a 14-day ripening period before freezing, may favor tenderness, oxymyoglobin formation, and color intensity of the meat.

Keywords: Freezing, Shear force, Storage time, Ultimate pH, Color

## 1. INTRODUÇÃO

A carne é um produto bastante perecível, portanto, a implementação de estratégias para estender seu prazo de validade vem sendo desenvolvida ao longo de décadas (MUELA et al., 2015). Entre eles, o uso de tecnologias de embalagem como por exemplo embalagem a vácuo e atmosfera modificada entre outros e baixas temperaturas (resfriamento ou congelamento), isoladamente ou em combinação, vem sendo utilizado de modo mais frequente, embora a maior parte das melhorias tenha ocorrido nos últimos anos (LEYGONIE; BRITZ; HOFFMAN, 2012). Na indústria, o congelamento desempenha um papel muito importante, permitindo que os produtos sejam fornecidos e comercializados em várias regiões do mundo de uma forma mais segura (DAMEN; STEENBEKKERS, 2007).

No que se refere ao congelamento este pode causar várias mudanças físicas e físico-químicas, o que pode afetar as propriedades da carne (DA SILVA BERNARDO et al., 2020; FAROUK; WIELICZKO; MERTS, 2004; HOLMAN et al., 2017; QIAN et al., 2022), podendo afetar a qualidade microbiológica, influenciar a estabilidade oxidativa das proteínas, dos lipídios e as propriedades como alteração de cor e suculência (DAMEN & STEENBEKKERS, 2007; FAROUK et al., 2004). Outras mudanças físicas que ocorrem na carne congelada é o aumento do pH (DAVEY, 1960; FAROUK; SWAN, 1998a), bem como uma maior maciez da carne descongelada em comparação com a carne sem congelar (MUELA et al., 2015). Também foi verificado que o período de armazenamento sob congelamento causou mudanças na coloração da carne e na estabilidade da mesma (HENRIOTT et al., 2020). Por outro lado, a atividade química durante o armazenamento sob congelamento na carne bovina de acordo com Lawrie, (2006) pode aumentar devido a maiores concentrações de substâncias solúveis, tais como proteínas, carboidratos e vitaminas. O fator chave que influencia sobre essas reações é a temperatura de congelamento, pois ela regula o conteúdo de água não congelada disponível para as reações químicas (MEDIĆ et al., 2018). A temperatura ideal em que a carne congelada deve ser armazenada é -40 °C (ESTÉVEZ, 2011).

A diminuição da estabilidade da cor e o aumento da oxidação da mioglobina está freqüentemente associada à formação de cristais de gelo durante o processo de congelamento, levando à desnaturação da mioglobina e a uma redução do sistema redox da mioglobina devido aos danos mecânicos da proteína (CHOE et al.,

2011; KIM; SETYABRATA; TUELL, 2017; LEYGONIE; BRITZ; HOFFMAN, 2012; MACDOUGALL, 1982). Alguns estudos encontraram que o congelamento também afeta a estabilidade da cor na carne, diminuindo os parâmetros instrumentais da cor ( $L^*$ ,  $a^*$ ,  $b^*$ , croma  $C^*$  e ângulo de tonalidade  $h^*$ ) em períodos prolongados de armazenamento (ABDALLAH; MARCHELLO; AHMAD, 1999; FAROUK; SWAN, 1998a; VIEIRA et al., 2009). Outras dessas alterações é uma diminuição da capacidade de retenção de água (ALONSO et al., 2016). Além disso, foi relatado um aumento na oxidação de proteínas, em períodos de estocagem de três meses ou mais (ESTÉVEZ, 2011; SOYER et al., 2010), o que pode levar a maior fragmentação ou agregação de proteínas e diminuindo a solubilidade da proteína (XIONG, 2000). Além disso, foi relatado que os níveis de TBARS aumentam durante o armazenamento sob congelamento (COOMBS et al., 2017b). O tempo de estocagem é outro fator importante que também influencia sobre quantidade dos exsudatos, a cor e as substâncias solúveis da carne, como proteínas (MEDIĆ et al., 2018). No entanto, há evidências que mostraram que a carne armazenada congelada por longo período pode ter problemas de qualidade, sobre a cor, aroma e rancidez (HANSEN et al., 2004).

Por outro lado, a carne com pH final ( $pH_f$ ) alto é um grande problema que tem gerado preocupação sobre a qualidade da carne fresca em todo o mundo (CÔNSOLO et al., 2021). Estudos recentes relatam que nos principais frigoríficos brasileiros cerca de 30% de toda a carne brasileira é representada por carne com  $pH_f$  final alto ao ano, principalmente devido à grande utilização de animais machos não castrados e raças zebuínas, e a indústria da carne é afetada com graves perdas econômicas devido a isso (ROSA et al., 2017). Os diferentes  $pH_f$  da carne têm uma profunda influência nas propriedades funcionais da carne (CHAN; OMANA; BETTI, 2011). O pH final ( $pH_f$ ) no músculo post mortem têm grande influência em muitos atributos da qualidade de carne como: cor, capacidade de retenção de água, maciez, solubilidade das proteínas e taxa ou extensão do crescimento microbiano (RAMANATHAN et al., 2022). A carne com um  $pH_f$  normal (5,4 a 5,7) resulta em carne com baixa capacidade de retenção de água (CRA) e valores da força de cisalhamento alto (OWENS et al., 2000). A carne com  $pH_f$  alto (>6,2) resulta em carne com uma vida útil menor (ALLEN; RUSSELL; FLETCHER, 1997), se apresentam mais macias do que a carne com  $pH_f$  normal e intermediário (CONTRERAS-BARON et al., 2021; CONTRERAS-CASTILLO et al., 2016; LI et al.,

2014; PURCHAS; AUNGSUPAKORN, 1993). Um dos principais problemas da carne com pH<sub>f</sub> alto é sua aparência mais escura, que afeta a cor dos produtos processados e a aceitação pelo consumidor (RAMANATHAN et al., 2022).

O pH final da carne pode afetar significativamente a qualidade da carne, como por exemplo, a maciez (BIDNER et al., 2004; CONTRERAS-BARON et al., 2021; CONTRERAS-CASTILLO et al., 2016; LOMIWES et al., 2014; PURCHAS; AUNGSUPAKORN, 1993). Alguns pesquisadores descobriram que a carne bovina com pH normal e alto era mais macia do que as amostras com pH<sub>f</sub> intermediário (CONTRERAS-BARON et al., 2021; LOMIWES et al., 2013; PURCHAS; AUNGSUPAKORN, 1993), enquanto outros relataram que a maciez tinha uma relação linear com o pH<sub>f</sub> na carne bovina (SILVA; PATARATA; MARTINS, 1999). Um estudo recente relatou que a carne bovina menos macia foi produzida em amostras de pH intermediário (LOMIWES et al., 2014).

No entanto, maior informação são necessárias sobre a influência do pH final post-mortem em longos períodos de congelamento sobre os parâmetros de qualidade da carne de bovinos machos da raça Nelore (*Bos indicus*). Auxiliando, com isso, na aplicabilidade para uma melhor definição de limiares de armazenamento que garantam a qualidade da carne nas redes de distribuição e exportação, aproveitando o acesso aos mercados e melhorando o gerenciamento de produtos. Portanto, o objetivo deste estudo foi avaliar a influência do pH final e do armazenamento sob congelamento sobre os parâmetros de qualidade da carne como: a estabilidade de cor, as formas químicas da mioglobina, oxidação lipídica, oxidação proteica, maciez instrumental, perda de água e solubilidade da proteica, armazenadas sob congelamento a -20 °C em períodos de 3, 6, 9 e 12 meses.

## **2. CONCLUSÕES**

Os resultados sugerem que o pH final das carnes armazenadas sob congelamento por períodos longos influencia os parâmetros de qualidade da carne bovina, com mudanças na coloração da carne onde ocorre um aumento do índice de vermelho ( $a^*$ ), amarelo ( $b^*$ ), croma ( $C^*$ ) e o ângulo de tonalidade ( $h^*$ ). Ao mesmo tempo, resultou em efeitos para todas as formas químicas da mioglobina, com valores muito altos de oximioglobina, o que fez que a carne tenha uma cor vermelha brilhante. Os níveis de TBARS permaneceram abaixo do limite de rancidez, independentemente do período de armazenamento. A carne de  $pH_f$  normal apresentou maiores valores nos parâmetros da cor, do que a carne com  $pH_f$  intermediário e alto. A partir de estes resultados a indústria, poderia optar no congelamento da carne por até por até 12 meses. No entanto, são necessários estudos sobre a estabilidade da cor da carne durante os processos de varejo, e se as mudanças da cor instrumental têm um efeito na percepção sensorial dos consumidores.

O congelamento por períodos prolongados resultou em uma diminuição dos valores da força de cisalhamento, a carne com  $pH_f$  alto apresentou melhor maciez que as carnes com  $pH_f$  normal e intermediário. Foi observado uma redução da capacidade de retenção de água ao longo do tempo de congelamento, porque as carnes das três faixas de  $pH_f$ , apresentaram maior perda de exsudação, gotejamento e cocção e a avaliação microbiológica das bactérias aeróbias mesofílos e psicrotróficas foram muito menores do que aqueles considerados como máximos aceitáveis para deterioração pelas normativas estabelecidas.

A solubilidade da proteína foi afetada pelo congelamento, diminuindo durante períodos mais longos de congelamento, e a carne de  $pH_f$  alto tendo maior solubilidade das proteínas sarcoplasmáticas e a carne de  $pH_f$  normal tendo maior solubilidade das proteínas miofibrilares. Estes resultados podem ser benéficos para a indústria da carne ao determinar estratégias de conservação por congelamento para melhorar a qualidade da carne. Entretanto, são recomendados mais estudos sobre atributos sensoriais para validar a aceitação do consumidor.

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