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1 1330, " 120,
2 1407, " 53,
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Evaluation and determination of selenium deficiency in the food chain of sheep and cow reared in the endemic mountain regions of Middle Rhodope

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SUMMARY

Selenium deficiency of soils and natural pasture vegetation, as well as an irregular supply of trace-levels of selenium to ruminants due to the seasonal dynamics during the pasture period, a low bio-accumulation rates of selenium in feedstuffs have been established.

The present study for selenium concentrations in the food chain is reviewed in details and the transfer from soil to foodstuffs of selenium are reported.

The investigation had been focused on the insufficient selenium supply and related consequences on the Se-content in raw milk and white brine cheese of sheep and cow spread in the endemic areas. The low selenium concentrations in the plant species during the lactation

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Se-
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(-),
Se-

(April-June) reflected negatively on the Se-concentration in the ewe's and cow's milk. Recommendations for selenium supplementations are proposed.

Key words: selenium, deficiency, food chain, ewe's milk, Middle Rhodope Mountain

INTRODUCTION

From the nutrition point of view the selenium availability in foodstuffs remains of great concern because a lot of factors affect its transfer along of the ecological chain. Selenium deficiency affects the expression and function of selenoproteins and has been involved in the degeneration of organs and tissues, leading to the manifestation of Keshan and Kashin-Beck diseases.

The selenium content of grains and vegetables generally depends on the selenium content of the soil, as well as on its geochemical characteristics (Johnson et al., 2010; Mehdi et al., 2013). The potential supply of selenium in soil can be influenced by factors which influence selenium speciation and solubility of selenium compounds (Kabata-Pendias and Pendias 1992).

In general in acid, clay soils and soils with high organic matter the Se-content dominate in form of selenides and selenium sulfides which are slightly mobile and therefore hardly available to plants.

(Johnson et al., 2010; Mehdi et al., 2013).

(Kabata-Pendias and Pendias, 1992).

- In alkaline soils selenates are present. They are easily soluble and highly mobile, respectively available to plants.

- The solubility of selenium in most soils is rather low, therefore many agricultural areas produce forage with low selenium content.

The uptake of selenium by plants depends at first on soil pH, redox potential and water content.

Plants may be classified as selenium accumulators or non-accumulators, depending on their ability to assimilate and accumulate selenium (Terry et al., 2000; Broadley et al., 2006).

(Terry et al., 2000; Broadley et al., 2006).

- During the grazing period ruminants are subjected to variations in the selenium supply through meadow vegetation.

Thus any disturbances may occur leading to impaired animal health and production traits – low milk production, insufficient content of selenium in milk and dairy products (Angelow et al., 2004; Makaveeva et al., 2004).

(Angelow et al., 2004; Makaveeva et al., 2004).

- Data on the forms of selenium in animal foods are limited, and the selenium content of foods from animal sources varies according to the diet of the animals (Mehdi et al., 2013). When inorganic selenium is given to animals, selenocysteine is the

(Mehdi et al., 2013).

(Rayman et al., 2008).
 (WHO, 2011).
 (Regulation (EC) 1925/2006)
 2002/46/EC).
 (Commission Directive
 2006/141/EC).
 (Johnsson 1992;
 Zablocky 1990; Thornton et al.
 1985).

main seleno-compound formed.
 - When animals consume selenium-
 containing foods of plant origin,
 protein-containing selenomethionine
 will also be formed from the
 - incorporation of plant-derived
 selenomethionine in place of
 methionine (Rayman et al., 2008).
 Although water may contain
 selenium, predominantly as
 selenate, its content is typically low
 and does not significantly
 contribute to selenium intake
 (WHO, 2011).
 - Currently, sodium selenate,
 sodium hydrogen selenite, sodium
 selenite, L-selenomethionine and
 L- selenium-enriched yeast may be
 added to food (Regulation (EC)
 1925/2006) and food
 supplements (Directive
 2002/46/EC). The selenium
 content of infant and follow-on
 formulae is regulated (Commission
 Directive 2006/141/EC).
 - In fact the bioaccumulation of
 - selenium along the food chain is
 - influenced of interrelated action of
 - such factors as geological
 - formations, soil acidity, soil organic
 - matter content, vegetation stage of
 - plants and species-specific uptake
 - (Johnsson 1992; Zablocky 1990;
 - Thornton et al. 1985).
 In view of mentioned
 considerations data on each
 - particular agriculture area is
 - needed to modify the selenium

- supply for animal and human nutrition.

- The aim of present study was to compare the selenium offer of pastures situated at different altitudes in some mountainous regions in South Bulgaria and to give the estimation on the selenium offer of sheep, raised in the investigated endemic areas.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The subject of investigation was a region near Smilyan village in the Middle Rhodope Mountain.

- Average samples of pasture grass from 10 (5 + 5) standard plots (2x2 m) situated at two levels of altitude were collected in 2 replications (Fig. 1). For assessment the effect of vegetation stage this procedure was performed once monthly during the grazing period (from May to July). In the experiment research on the dynamics of selenium in the raw milk and cheese was involved the most popular breeds in the investigated area – Karakachan sheep, Rhodope Zygay and Aborigen (Middle Rhodope breed).

- Data was compared with the typical Se-content in cow's milk received in the area. Studied are derived from white brine cheese and yellow cheese produced in the region with a homemade recipe.

10 (5 + 5)
(2x2 m),

2

1).

(

).

Se

HG

AGILENT ICP-MS.

±

Varian AAS-

The selenium content was determined using Varian AAS-HG and AGILENT ICP-MS analysis.

All results were expressed as mean ± standard deviation and compared through standard t-test procedure.



. 1.

Fig. 1. Method of standard sampling plots

(4,27± 0,25),

(P)

(K)

(N),

(= NO₃-N + NH₄-N)
< 25 mg/kg.

pH 4,0-4,5

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The soil samples from standard plots showed very low acidity – (4,27±0,25), which adversely affect the biological assimilation of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) in the food chain "soil-plant system". All pastures were extremely poor in nitrogen. The amount of absorbable forms of nitrogen – ammoniacal and nitrate (= NO₃-N + NH₄-N) in the soil was < 25 mg/kg. Considering that with levels of pH 4,0-4,5

development of nitrogen-fixing bacteria is greatly reduced, it was expected that in the acidic soil nitrogen content is substantially below the required good soil that the availability. Typical of the region botanical species and lack of basic and secondary macro and micro nutrients determined botanical diversity.

1.

Table 1. Botanical composition of the pastures in the investigated region

	Botanical composition	% content %
1	<i>Trifolium incarnatum</i> /	30,21%
2	<i>Lolium perenne</i> L./	5,45%
3	<i>Bromus mollis</i> L./	5,55%
4	<i>Festuca fallax</i> Thuil. /	0,60%
5	<i>Trifolium repens</i> L. /	3,26%
6	<i>Poa pratensis</i> L. /	9,73%
7	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> /	1,68%
8	<i>Vicia villosa</i> Roth /	2,28%
9	<i>Nardus stricta</i> /	13,18%
10	Other plant species /	28,05%
	total / o	100%

800 1100 m
2
(1).
- 75%,
- 8%
17%,
Nardus stricta L. 13%,
/1,4%/.

Average samples of pasture grass were collected at two levels of altitude (800 and 1100m) in 2 replications (Table 1). The natural composition in this area consists mainly of cereals – 75%; legumes – 8% and different grass species 17% from witch *Nardus stricta* L. reaches 13%, while in the cultivated pastures it's content is minimal /1.4%/.

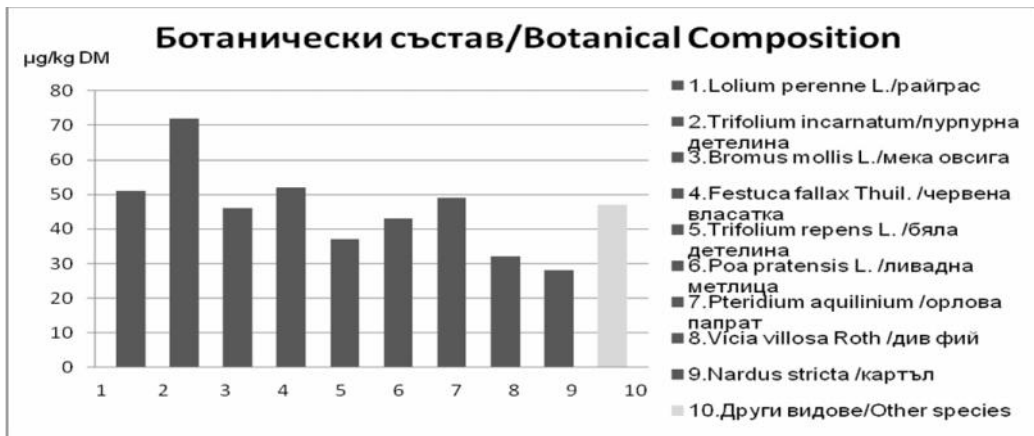
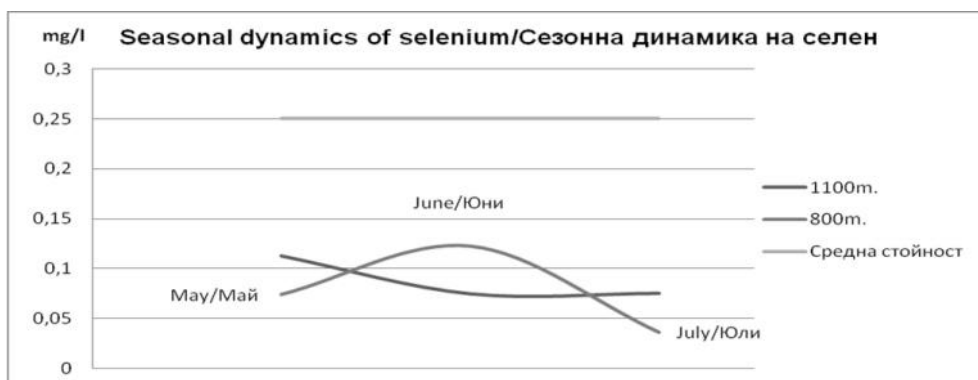


Fig. 2. Selenium content in different plant species

There is a pronounced deficit in all species close and below the critical 30 µg/kg DM.

The study of meadow grass containing all typical of the region indicator plants shows that there is no species which can compensate the low supply of selenium, so that the average level of the element is about 10-15% of the necessary needs of the animal organism (Fig. 2).

Selenium transfer during whole period is stable and depends mainly by geochemical characteristics of soil (Table 2). There are no bioaccumulation species among botanical species in the area that would have affected selenium concentrations in the food chain "soil-plant".



3.

Fig. 3. Seasonal dynamics of selenium in meadow grass depending on the levels of altitude

(2).

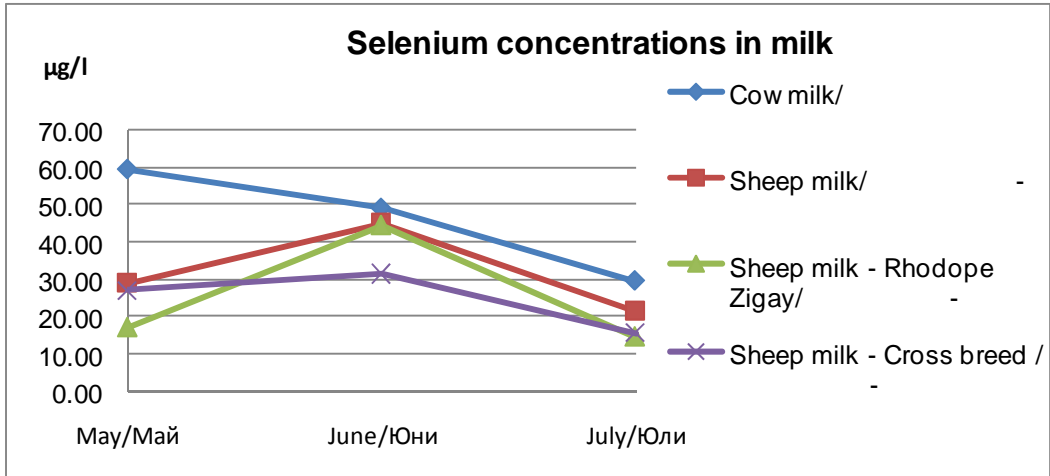
At both levels of altitude (800 and 1100m) selenium concentrations were far below normal average concentrations (0.25mg/kg), and seasonal dynamics depends mainly from geological and climatic conditions during the investigated period (Fig. 3).

2.

(2013/2014)

Table 2. Transfer factors for selenium for different altitude from two consecutive years (2013/2014)

Area/Sample/Year/Altitude	Selenium, $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$
Smylian/soils/2013 (n=3) 1100m	200±25
Smylian/plants/2013 (n=3) 1100m	30.3±6.7
Transfer factor /	0.15
Smylian/soil/2013 (n=3) 800m	207±25
Smylian/plants/2013 (n=3) 800m	29.7±23.2
Transfer factor /	0.15
Smylian/soil/2014 (n=5) 800-1100m	140.48±70.18
Smylian/plants/2014 (n=5) 800-1100m	28.25±0.54
Transfer factor/	0.20



. 4.

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Fig. 4. Selenium concentrations in raw milk from different sheep breeds during the investigated period (May-June)

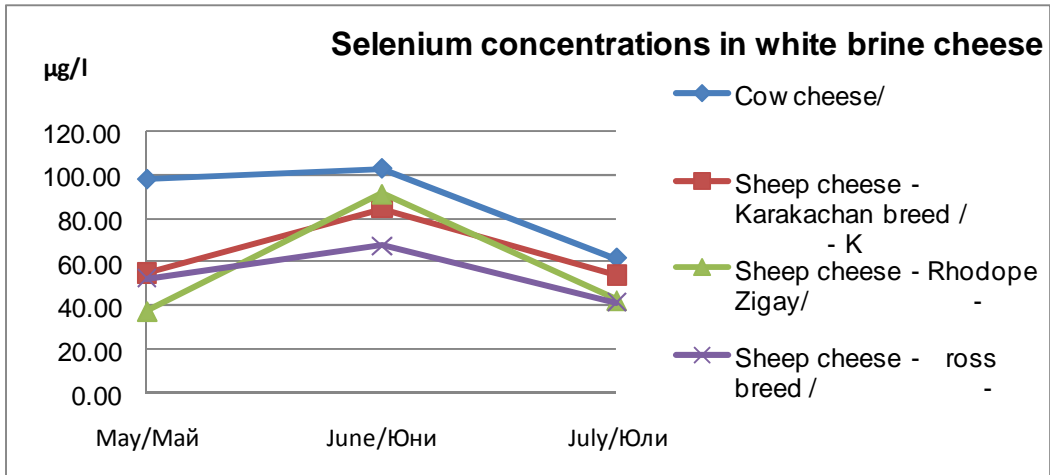
20-30 µg/l

(. 4).

Critical deficit levels around 20-30 µg/l were observed in all milk samples. With the progress of lactation concentrations continue to decrease.

The lack of enough selenium in all studied breeds and trends are identical or similar to those in cow's milk (Fig. 4). Significant deficiency of selenium in grass composition and their mutual synergistic relationships with iodine have a significant impact on the readings of selenium in sheep milk.

Better provision in cow's milk is due to additional supplementation with concentrated feed contained balanced levels of selenium, to maintain a high milk yield.



. 5.

Fig. 5. Selenium concentrations variation in white brine cheese from different sheep breed's milk and cow's milk during the investigated period (May-June)

40-100µg/kg.

(. 5).

„ - ”
1-2
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- A concentration of selenium in cow and sheep products ranges from 40-100µg/kg. Concentrations of selenium are stable and consistent in all products of the different breeds (Fig. 5).

- Deficit caused by the lack of selenium in the milk are retained in the products obtained during the entire investigated pasture period. Transfer factors in the food chain “plant-milk” and “milk-milk products” are in the range 1-2 and remain constant during investigated periods and conditions.

CONCLUSIONS

- The study on the selenium supply through pasture vegetation to ewes reared in the Middle Rhodope area revealed its irregular pattern.

Se

1100 m

800

(

Se

15 20%

-

- It was established by seasonal variations in the Se content of meadow vegetation in the range of low selenium transfer from soil to pastures at 800 and 1100 m of altitude.

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- This effect was primary determined from the spread geological structures (gneiss, syenite) and low pH of soils. The insufficient selenium availability becoming more pronounced with the advance of vegetation amounted by the end of grazing period only from 15 to 20 % of minimal nutritional needs of sheep. It was the main reason for sheep and lamb reared in the region to develop a chronic selenium deficiency.

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Possibilities to increase reproductive performance in sheep of Thracian merino breed by applying various hormonal methods

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Sincro-part
PMSG 500 UI,
271 ,

90
Melovine,
277

:

0,16% -

10,21% 10,48%.

SUMMARY

The aim of the present study is to investigate possibilities for increasing the number of the lambs born by ewes from the Thracian Merino breed by applying various methods of hormonal stimulation.

The first experiment was carried out with 271 ewes treated with intravaginal sponges Sincro-part and injection of 500 UI PMSG, and 370 untreated ewes.

In the second experiment, the first group of 90 ewes were placed implants Melovine, a second group of untreated animals were 277 animals.

The following parameters were monitored: number of artificially inseminated animals, number of ewes that gave birth to lambs, number of abortions, number of lambs born, fertility and prolificacy.

Fertility of treated with sponges ewes is slightly higher than that of the untreated with 0,16% the first year and lower the second and third year, respectively 10,21% and 10,48%.

Progesterone sponges increase

13,37%. 18,14%, 36,16% -
 - 49,81%
 33,43% -
 . -
 17,18% 4,52%.
 7,36 %
 12,18 %
 . -
 34,19% -
 , 12,31 % -
 . -
 : -
 , -
 , -
 , -
 , -

prolificacy with respectively 18,14%, 36,16% and 13,37% respectively. Fertility of the ewes treated with implants is lower by 49,81% the first year and by 33,43% in the second year. Implants increase prolificacy by 17,18% and 4,52%.

Prolificacy is increased by an average of 7,36% using the intravaginal sponges and to 12.18% when using implants compared with untreated animals.

Treated with intravaginal sponges sheep are 34,19% higher prolificacy, but with 12,31% lower fertility compared to treatment with melatonin implants.

Key words: ewes, fertility, prolificacy, melatonin, intravaginal sponges

INTRODUCTION

The main factor affecting the economic effectiveness in sheep breeding, regardless of the production aspect, is reproduction performance. In order to achieve satisfactory financial results, effective reproductive management is needed. A major element of reproductive management in sheep breeding is estrus synchronization.

In sheep breeding, two methods are used for estrous synchronization for timed artificial insemination and fertility boosting: natural (non-hormonal) and hormonal.

Hormonal treatment allows planning the lambing time considering the possibilities for profitable realization of the lambs

used for meat and breeding.

There are known three types of hormonal methods for estrus synchronization, by methods based on the action of progesterone or its synthetic analogues, such as progestogens; by regression of the corpus luteum with prostaglandin F2 or its synthetic analogues; by use of melatonin for induction of oestrus in sheep (Metodiev et al., 2010).

The use of intravaginal sponges and melatonin implants is widespread practice in different breeds of sheep (Caja et al. (2008) in Manchega and Lacaune, Lopez and Inskeep (1991) in Churra and Talavera, Padeanu et al. (2012) in Tzigai sheep).

In our country in recent years Raltchev et al. (2011), Metodiev and Raicheva (2011), Slavova et al. (2012) and Slavova et al. (2013) investigated the effect of intravaginal sponges in Ile de France and Thracian Merino breeds and Bonev (2012) tested implants "Melovine" in Ile de France and various dairy ewes crosses.

The aim of the present study is to investigate possibilities for increasing the number of the lambs born by mother ewes from the Thracian Merino breed by applying various methods of hormonal

- used for meat and breeding.
- There are known three types of hormonal methods for estrus synchronization, by methods based on the action of progesterone or its synthetic analogues, such as progestogens;
- by regression of the corpus luteum with prostaglandin F2 or its synthetic analogues; by use of melatonin for induction of oestrus in sheep (Metodiev et al., 2010).
- The use of intravaginal sponges and melatonin implants is widespread practice in different breeds of sheep (Caja et al. (2008) in Manchega and Lacaune, Lopez and Inskeep (1991) in Churra and Talavera, Padeanu et al. (2012) in Tzigai sheep).
- In our country in recent years Raltchev et al. (2011), Metodiev and Raicheva (2011), Slavova et al. (2012) and Slavova et al. (2013) investigated the effect of intravaginal sponges in Ile de France and Thracian Merino breeds and Bonev (2012) tested implants "Melovine" in Ile de France and various dairy ewes crosses.
- The aim of the present study is to investigate possibilities for increasing the number of the lambs born by mother ewes from the Thracian Merino breed by applying various methods of hormonal

stimulation.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

1. Studying the effect from the combined applications of SYNCRO-PART sponges and SYNCRO-PART PMSG.

The first experiment was carried out in the sheep farm at the Agricultural Institute of Stara Zagora with ewes from the Thracian Merino breed for a period of 3 farming years – 2009, 2010 2012. The animals were assigned into two groups. The first group of animals was treated with hormonal preparations during April and May. The following hormonal treatment scheme was used: inserting intravaginal sponges Sincro-part (30mg flurogestone acetate-FGA) into the ewes, taking the sponges out after 12 days and administering PMSG injection in a dose of 500UI, artificial insemination on the 50th-55th hour.

The second group of animals was artificially inseminated during the months of July and August without the use of any hormonal preparations.

The groups were set up in accordance with the time interval between the previous lambing and weaning of the lambs. This means that the ewes from the first group gave birth in November and December, and those from the second group-in January and February. Treated with intravaginal sponges were 271 ewes and the

1.
SYNCRO-PART
SYNCRO-PART PMSG.
3
– 2009, 2010 2012 .
Sincro-part (30mg
) ,
12
(PMSG) 500 UI, Sincro-part
50-55- .
- ,
271 . ,

370

2. Melovine (CEVA ANIM. HEALTH).

2
- 2011 2013 .

(-) - 90 .
(-) - 277

: , , () .

PMSG
1.

63,00%,
- 77,08%,

untreated animals included in the trial were 370.

2. Studying the effect from the application of melatonin implants Melovine (CEVA ANIM. HEALTH).

The second experiment was carried out in the sheep farm at the Agricultural Institute of Stara Zagora with ewes from the Thracian Merino breed for a period of 2 farming years – 2011 and 2013.

In February there were placed implants ewes and rams into and through March-April animals were artificially inseminated (Group I) – 90. In May they were inseminated untreated animals (Group II) – 277.

Both fertility and prolificacy were observed over the reported farming years. The following parameters were monitored: number of artificially inseminated animals, number of ewes that gave birth to lambs, number of abortions, number of lambs born (live born, stillborn) and fertility and prolificacy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fertility in the breed Thracian Merino after administration of hormonal stimulation pads and PMSG is presented in Table 1.

The concepted ewes from the trial group represent 63,00% during the first year, 77,08% during the second year, and a lower

- 69,33%.

62,84%, 87,29%

79,81 %.

(2013)

- 72,92%

83,58%

.

-

0,16%

,

10,21% 10,48%.

63,00%

60,13%

,

76,04%, 84,75%.

69,33%

, 79,81%

.

percentage, i.e. 69,33% during the third year. In the ewes from the control group, fertility is 62,84% during the first year, and 87,29% and 79,81% during the following years. The obtained results are similar in ewes from the same breed quoted by Slavova et al. 2013, i.e. 72,92% in the animals treated and 83,58% in the animals untreated. During the first year, fertility in the animals from the trial group for which tampons were used, is insignificantly higher than that of the control group with 0,16%, and during the second and the third year, it decreases by 10,21% and respectively 10,48% in the animals treated.

During the first year, 63,00% of the trial animals and 60,13% of the control animals gave birth to lambs. During the second year this rate is respectively 76,04% and 84,75%. During the third year, 69,33% of the animals from the first group and 79,81% of the animals from the second group gave birth to lambs.

1.

Table 1. Fertility of Thracian Merino – hormonal stimulation with intravaginal sponges

Traits	I / I year				II / II year				III / III year			
	Experimental		Control		Experimental		Control		Experimental		Control	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Inseminated	100	100	148	100	96	100	118	100	75	100	104	100
Mated	63	63,00	93	62,84	74	77,08	103	87,29	52	69,33	84	80,77
Lambded ewes	63	63,00	89	60,13	73	76,04	100	84,75	52	69,33	83	79,81
Aborted	0	0	4	2,71	1	1,04	3	2,54	0	0	1	0,96

2.
142,86%, 156,16%
151,92%
,
124,72%, 120,00%, 138,55%.
-
-
18,14%, 36,16% 13,37%,
.
et al. (2013) (2012) Slavova
37,26% 42,97%.

The reproduction performance is presented in Table 2. Prolificacy of experimental group is 142,86; 156,16 and 151,92% for the three years studied. In the control group, productivity is significantly lower, i.e. 124,72%, 120,00% and 138,55%.

The applied hormonal stimulation on the basis of progesterone sponges results in increased prolificacy in ewes from the Thracian Merino breed during all three studied years (increase by 18,14%; 36,16% and 13,37% respectively). Prolificacy is higher after hormone stimulation of animals from the same breed also according to the studies of Slavova et al. (2012) (increase by 37,26%) and Slavova et al. (2013) (increase by 42,97%)

2.

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Table 2. Reproductive performance of Thracian Merino – hormonal stimulation with intravaginal sponges

Traits	I / I year				II / II year				III / III year			
	Experimental		Control		Experimental		Control		Experimental		Control	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Born lambs	90	100	111	100	114	100	120	100	79	100	115	100
Live borns	86	95,55	96	86,49	108	94,74	114	95,00	76	96,20	104	90,43
Still borns	4	4,44	15	131,51	6	5,26	6	5,00	3	3,8	11	9,57
Prolificacy	-	142,86	-	124,72	-	156,16	-	120,00	-	151,92	-	138,55

3.

-
- Table 3 shows the results after applying hormonal stimulation with melatonin implants in animals from the Thracian Merino breed.

31,67%
43,33%
81,48% 76,76%.
49,81%, - 33,43%.

Fertility in the trial group is 31,67% during the the first year and 43,33% during the second year. In the control group, the percent of concepted ewes is significantly higher, i.e. representing 81,48% and 76,76%.

The animals into which implants were inserted, show significantly lower fertility than that of the control animals. During the first year the difference is 49,81% and during the second year - 33,43%.

3.

Table 3. Fertility of Thracian Merino-hormonal stimulation with implants

Traits	I / I year				II / II year			
	Experimental		Control		Experimental		Control	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Inseminated	60	100	135	100	30	100	142	100
Mated	19	31,67	110	81,48	13	43,33	109	76,76
Lambd ewes	19	31,67	110	81,48	13	43,33	109	76,76
Aborted	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

152,63% 138,46%,
133,94% - 135,45%

4. Effect of implants on reproduction performance is shown on Table 4. Prolificacy of the animals from the experimental group during the first and the second year is respectively 152,63% and 138,46%, and 135,45% and 133,94% in the animals from the control group.

Hormonal stimulation with melatonin implants results in increased prolificacy by 17,18%

17,18%
4,52%

-
al. (2011),

Palacin et
,
-
10,0%

during the first year and 4,52% during the second year.

Similar are the results from the meta-analyses carried out by Palacin et al. (2011), stating that the melatonin implants increase prolificacy by 10,0% in the Merino sheep breed.

4.

Table 4. Reproductive performance of Thracian Merino-hormonal stimulation with implants

Traits	I		/ I year		II		/ II year	
	Experimental		Control		Experimental		Control	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Born lambs	29	100	149	100	18	100	146	100
Live borns	29	100	146	97,99	17	94,44	145	99,32
Still borns	0	0	3	2,01	1	5,56	1	0,68
Prolificacy	-	152,63	-	135,45	-	138,46	-	133,94

1

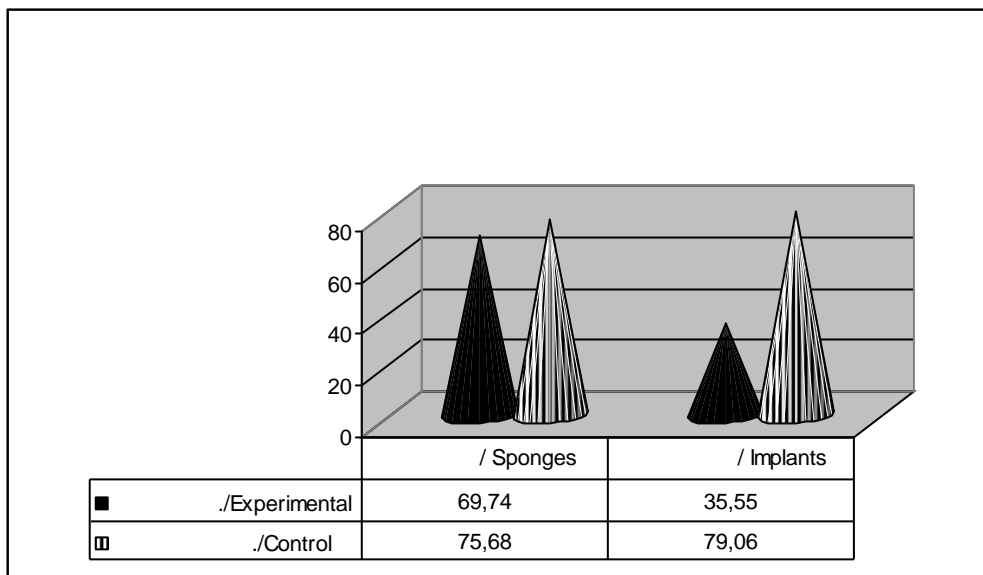
69,74%,
75,68%.
5,94%

35,55%,
- 79,06%,
43,51%

Figure 1 shows fertility with the two methods of hormonal stimulation. The average fertility for all three years after intravaginal sponges is 69,74%, and 75,68% for the control group animals. The experimental group animals show lower fertility (decrease by 5,94%) in comparison with the control group animals.

For the animals treated with melatonin implants, the average fertility for the two study years is 35,55% and for the untreated animals - 79,06%. The impregnation rate in the trial group animals is lower than that of the

34,19% - control group by 43,51%. The animals treated with intravaginal sponges show higher fertility (increase by 34,19%) in comparison with the animals treated with melatonin implants.



. 1.

(%)

Fig. 1. Fertility of Tracian Merino breed after hormonal stimulation (%)

2

134,57%,

127,21%.

7,36%

146,88%

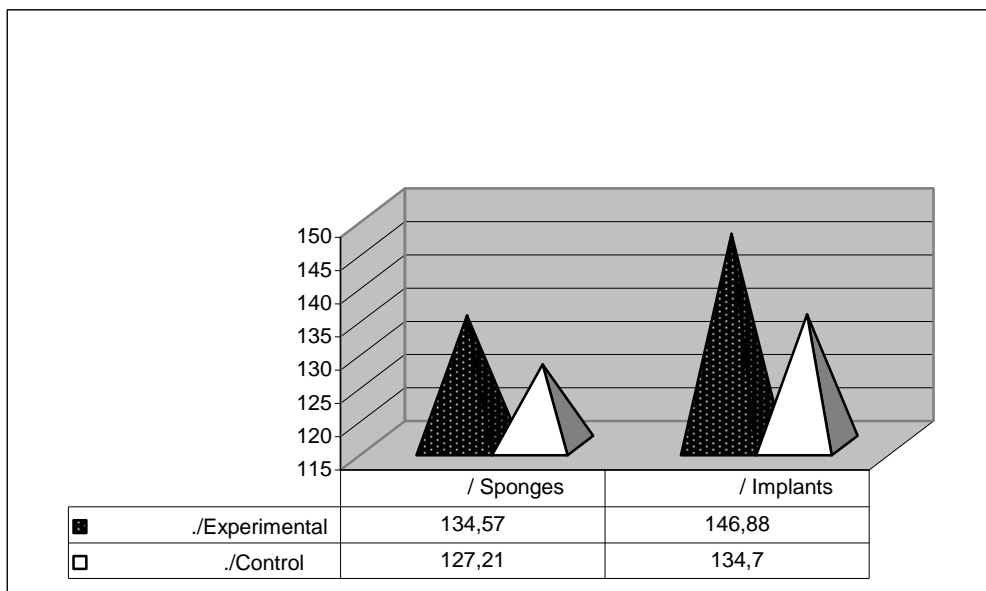
134,7%.

Figure 2 shows the effect from the two methods for hormonal stimulation. The animals from the experimental group treated with intravaginal sponges show average prolificacy for the tree years of 134,57%, and 127,21% for the control group animals. The trial group shows increased prolificacy by 7,36%.

The average prolificacy of the animals treated with melatonin implants for the two years is 146,88%, and that of the control group-134,7%. The trial

12,18% -
 ,
 12,31% -

group shows increased prollificacy by 12,18% in comparison with that of the control group. Ewes, hormonally stimulated with intravaginal sponges, show lower prollificacy (decrease by 12,31%) than the animals treated with melatonin implants.



. 2.
 (%)

Fig. 2. Prolificacy of Tracian Merino breed after hormonal stimulation (%)

- The application of
 - hormonal stimulation increase
 - productivity in animals from the
 - Thracian Merino breed. Fertility is
 - higher after hormonal stimulation
 - with progesterone sponges, but
 - prollificacy is higher in animals
 - treated with melatonin implants.

CONCLUSIONS

-

- 0,16%

-

10,21% 10,48%

-

18,14%, 36,16% 13,37%.

49,81%

33,43%

17,18%

4,52%.

7,36 %

12,18 %

34,19%

12,31 %

Fertility of treated with intravaginal sponges ewes is slightly higher than that of the untreated with 0.16% in the first year and lower in the second and third year, respectively 10.21% and 10.48%.

Progesterone sponges increase prolificacy in ewes during the three years studied, respectively 18.14%, 36.16% and 13.37%.

Fertility of the ewes treated with implants is lower by 49.81% the first year and by 33.43% in the second year. Melatonin implants increase prolificacy by 17.18% and 4.52%.

Prolificacy in animals fine fleece is increased by an average of 7.36% using the intravaginal progesterone sponges and to 12.18% when using implants compared with untreated hormonal stimulation.

Treated with intravaginal sponges sheep are 34.19% higher prolificacy, but with 12.31% lower fertility compared to treatment with melatonin implants animals.

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Tenderization effect of plant proteases bromelain and papain on buffalo meat

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SUMMARY

Tenderness is one of the most important flavor characteristics of the meat. The aim of this study is to investigate tenderization effect of plant proteases bromelain and papain on buffalo meat. Experiments are conducted with samples of raw meat in 3 different concentration levels of the enzyme solutions (50U/ml 100U/ml and 200 U/ml) and in 3 different time periods (duration) of treatment (24 h, 48 h, 72h). Upon treatment with solutions of 50 U/ml and 100 U/ml caseinolytic activity, the water retention rate is higher, while the degree of hydrolysis is lower. The processing of buffalo meat with papain preserves higher level native texture, color and moisture of fresh meat compared to variants tenderized with bromelain. The optimal conditions for hydrolysis with minimal loss of protein and highest retention of organoleptic qualities of the meat samples are established.

Keywords: tenderization, buffalo meat, bromelain, papain

INTRODUCTION

The quality of the meat is defined as a combination of sensory and technological characteristics, such as color, tenderness, water-holding capacity and texture (Istrati et al., 2014).

Tenderness is one of most important meat texture attributes which affects the perception of buffalo meat, by the customers (Brooks et al., 2000; Morgan et al., 1991).

Fragility depends on the structural integrity of the myofibrils and of connective tissue which surrounds the muscle fibers. It has been found that in aged animals, buffalo meat becomes more resilient, which structurally is due to the formation of multiple cross links between collagen molecules (Ionescu et al., 2008).

In the recent years interest is the development of better methods to produce meat with improved tenderness whilst preserving its nutritional qualities (Koochmaraie, 1996; Georgieva & Nacheva, 2007).

There are various chemical and physical methods for meat processing, but the use of proteolytic enzymes is one of the most popular methods for tenderization (Naveena at al., 2004).

In the meat processing, enzymes are interesting technological tools because they

- enabling the conduction of highly specific chemical reactions.

Sources of enzymes for tenderization with practical

- importance are: natural proteolytic enzymes in meat, enzymes of microbial origin and enzymes of vegetable or animal origin.

Meat tenderization in postmortem maturation is a result of endogenous enzyme activity in the muscles.

However, the ensuing biochemical process of autolysis causes enzyme inhibition.

Therefore, the proteolytic hydrolysis of the endogenous enzymes in the postmortem period is of reduced efficacy (Taylor et al. 1995).

(Taylor et al. 1995).

Proteolytic enzymes derived from plants such as papain, bromelain, ficin, etc. have been widely used as meat tenderizers in most parts of the world (Sunantha and Saroat, 2011). Plant proteases are superior to bacterial derived enzymes mainly because of safety problems such as pathogenicity or other disadvantageous effects (Qihe et al. 2006).

(Sunantha and Saroat, 2011).

(Qihe et al. 2006).

The aim of presented study is evaluating the tenderization effect of the plant proteases bromelain and papain over raw buffalo meat and determining the optimal conditions for the process of hydrolysis.

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MATERIAL AND METHODS

Materials

Meat – *Biceps femoris* buffalo muscle, breed Bulgarian Murrah.

– *Biceps femoris*
(Merck),

Enzymes – papain (Merck), bromelain (Merck).

Methods

Enzymatic processing of buffalo meat samples – The meat samples are treated with bromelain or papain with alternating enzyme concentration and duration of the process.

– I (50 U/ml), II (100 U/ml), III (200 U/ml), 0,9% NaCl, pH 6,30.

Enzyme solutions

Both enzyme solutions are with the following caseinolytic activity – I (50U/ml), II (100U/ml), III (200U/ml). The enzymes are dissolved in a solvent containing 0,9% NaCl, sodium hydrogen carbonate and citric acid. The active acidity of the enzyme solutions is pH 6,30.

Measuring the Water Retention Capacities

Meat samples of 3-5 grams are wiped with filter-paper to remove surface water and to weigh accurately in milligrams. This value is noted as raw meat weight (starting weight). The samples are then treated with bromelain and papain solutions at 4°C for 24, 48 and 72 hrs.

3-5 mg.
().
24, 48 4°C 72

Then, the surface water is removed with filter-paper. Alongside the samples, controls are assigned every full hour of treatment, in which the meat is

placed inside enzyme-free marinade. The processed meat is weighed and is assigned value after enzyme treatment (final weight). A water retention percentage is determined.

Enzymatic activity

The caseinolytic activity of the proteases papain and bromelain is measured by the substrate casein in a 50mM Tris/HCl buffer at pH 8.0 with 1mM CaCl₂, in accordance with Chen et al. (2003) method. One unit of enzyme activity is defined as the amount of enzyme needed to release 1 µg tyrosine from casein for 1 minute.

Quantity assessment of free amino acids – ninhydrin test (Urariu et al., 2003).

Samples of 2.0 g muscle or connective tissue are flooded with 40 ml of the enzyme solution and incubate at room temperature for 72 hours, then determine the concentration of free amino acids in soluble fractions after enzymatic hydrolysis.

Statistical analysis

All data are presented as means ±SD (standard deviation) for at least three replications for each prepared sample. Statistical analysis was performed using two-sample t-test. The results are considered to be significant when P<0,05. All statistical analyses

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Excel 2013.

were performed using Excel 2013.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Preservation of juicy and fresh look of buffalo meat is an important indicator for consumers. Therefore, in our study had traced the change in capacity for water retention of the meat, incubated in enzyme solutions type of marinade. It was reported the weight of the control and experimental variants processed with corresponding solutions of bromelain and papain and left for the forthcoming 4°C for 24, 48 and 72 hours. Based on the accounting differences in the weight of each option is calculated processing capacity for water retention in percentages (Fig. 1, 2)

24, 48 72
(. 1, 2)

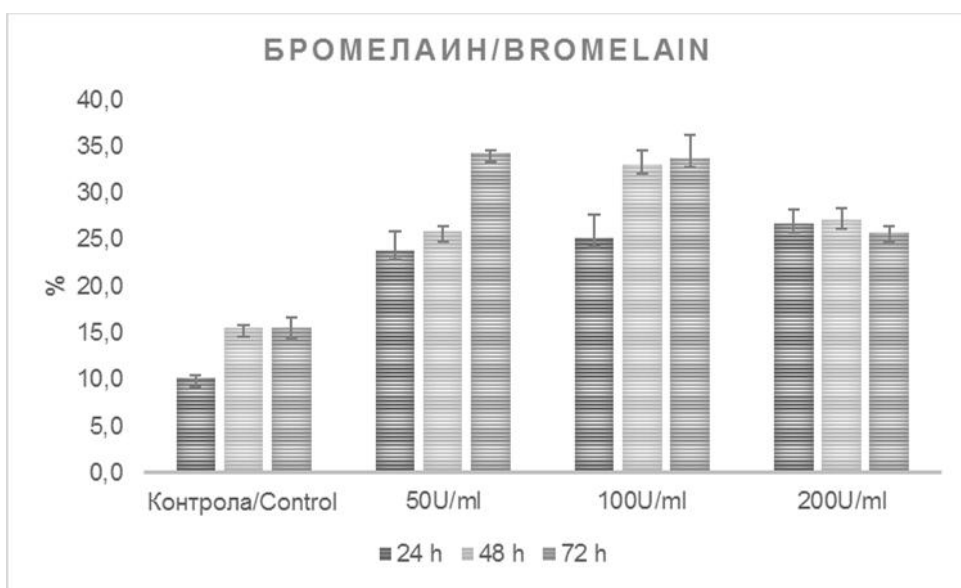


Fig. 1. Water retention capacity after bromelain processing (±SD)

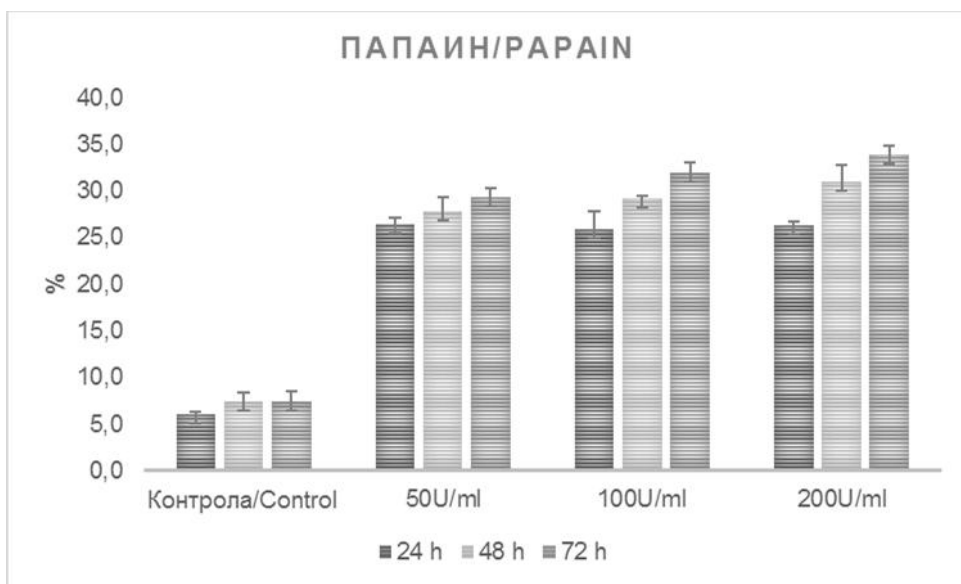


Fig. 2. Water retention capacity after papain processing (\pm SD)

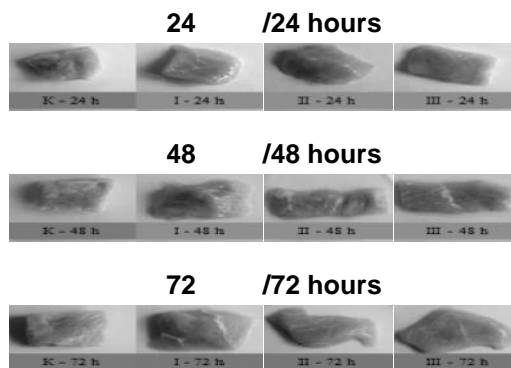
The above results indicate that, under treatment with solutions having the 50 U/ml and 100 U/ml caseinolytic activity, the rate of water retention increases with increasing time of treatment and the concentration of the enzyme. Upon hydrolysis with 200 U/ml, with a rise time of treatment with the enzyme bromelain is reported weight loss of experimental variants. This is due to the higher degree of hydrolysis of meat proteins, respectively, of the gelatinization of samples and release the terminal peptides and amino acids. Lighter effect is observed with the enzyme papain. In these experimental variants have seen a rise in the percentage of water retention, even at the highest concentration of enzyme and working up to 72 hours. Also

72

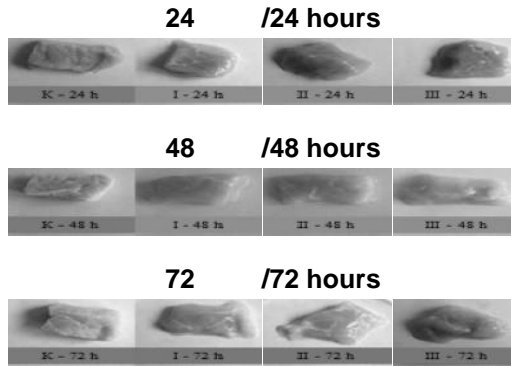
samples tenderized with papain have crisp color and better appearance, in comparison with the samples treated with the bromelain.

Bromelain and papain are vegetable cysteine endopeptidases. Bromelain is a non-specific protease, which attacks the peptide bonds between lysine and arginine in protein molecules with high affinity. Papain hydrolyzes the peptide bonds in protein molecules with the exception of those composed of amino acids proline and glutamic acid with a dissociated carboxyl group.

The influence of enzymes in tenderization on the appearance of the meat is an important factor in the choice of enzyme and conditions of processing.



3.
Fig. 3. Control and experimental variants processed with bromelain



4.
Fig. 4. Control and experimental variants processed with papain

			3	4
50	100 U/ml			
	24-			
			48	72

In the following visual materials (Fig.3 and 4) it is clear that the meat samples processed with 50 and 100 U/ml bromelain and papain for 24 hours retain their color and fresh look. In appearance, the structure of these experimental variants is similar to both control and monitor arranged muscle fibers. The samples from 48 and 72 hour especially muscle fibers start to deform and break down, the color fades and the surface of the samples it slimy.

- This change in the types of meat samples is more intense in the treatment with the enzyme bromelain. Dissociation of muscle fibers in such a degree is not desirable, since the appearance of the product is of particular importance for the consumers.

- The degree of activity of proteolytic enzymes papain and bromelain on meat proteins in samples raw buffalo meat was determined by analyses of the amount of free amino acid in the

72

- reactive liquid. The analysis was
- carried out after a stay of the meat
- samples from 72 hours in
- enzymatic solutions. The results
- obtained are presented in Table 1.

1.

1.

(±SD)

Table 1. Free amino acid content in the reactive liquid after enzyme hydrolysis of samples meat (±SD)

Variants	mg/ml Concentration mg/ml	
	Bromelain	Papain
K / Control	1,040±0,060	1,040±0,060
I	1,900±0,130*	1,353±0,052**
II	2,170±0,082**	1,373±0,064**
III	2,430±0,030**	1,455±0,120**

¹ : *p<0,05; **p<0,01

¹ Significantly different from the control group at: *p<0,05; **p<0,01

Parallel test was held for research of proteases surveyed on the connective tissue of the buffalo meat. The results of the analysis are given in Table 2.

2.

2.

(±SD)

Table 2. Content of free amino acids in the reaction liquid after the enzymatic hydrolysis of samples connective tissue (±SD)

Variants	mg/ml Concentration mg/ml	
	Bromelain	Papain
/ Control	0,730±0,016	0,730±0,016
I	1,952±0,047**	1,762±0,024**
II	2,926±0,033**	2,382±0,076**
III	5,081±0,094**	3,944±0,230**

¹ : *p<0,05; **p<0,01

¹ Significantly different from the control group at: *p<0,05; **p<0,01

1 2

The analysis of the results from Table 1 and 2 shows that as exogenous enzymes bromelain and papain have proteolytic activity to the meat as a substrate and they hydrolyzing individual components of meat proteins.

Also these plant proteases show significant hydrolytic activity to the connective tissue, which leads to more effective tenderization.

A higher amount of free amino acids is reported in both conducted experiments in variants treated with solutions of bromelain.

The obtained results are statistically significant ($P < 0,05$).

It shows higher activity of this enzyme in relation to meat samples of buffalo meat, which is the reason for degradation of more myofibrillar proteins and therefore higher levels of free amino acids in the reaction liquid.

Hydrolysis in such an extent is non-desired, as this leads to a higher level of destruction of the structure of the meat and muscle fibers and therefore deterioration of its texture. In order to achieve tenderization, but without structural degradation of buffalo meat processing with enzyme solutions type marinade should be carefully dosed and monitored.

It is recommended that treatment of buffalo meat to be

:
 24 50 U/ml,
 , 4° .,
 ,
 ,
 3
 (50 U/ml, 100 U/ml 200 U/ml
 3
 (24h, 48 h, 72 h).
 U/ml 100U/ml
 ,
 .
 , ()
 ,
 ()
).
 ,
 ,
 .

- made with the enzyme papain in the following parameters:
- concentration of the enzyme in the marinating solution 50 U/ml,
- lasting up to 24 hours at 4°C,
- followed by heat treatment, in which case it gets full inactivation of the enzyme components.

CONCLUSIONS

- Proper timing and temperature of enzymatic hydrolysis, are the conditions for effective tenderization of buffalo meat. In the experiments been varied 3 concentrations of the enzyme solutions (50 U/ml 100 U/ml, and 200 U/ml and duration of treatment 3 options (24h, 48h, and 72h).

In processing test variants with solutions having the 50 U/ml 100U/ml caseinolytic activity, the rate of water retention increases with increasing time of treatment and the concentration of the enzyme.

- The analysis of the content of free amino acids showed that both enzymes (bromelain and papain) hydrolyze protein complexes present in the meat (and connective tissue). The processing of buffalo meat with enzyme papain have better preservation ability, the fresh color and moisture of the meat, which makes this enzyme suitable for inclusion in the solutions type marinade to improve fragility of buffalo meat.

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