



TENDERNESS CHARACTERIZATION OF OSTRICH MEAT COMMERCIAL CUTS

CARACTERIZAÇÃO DA MACIEZ DE CORTES COMERCIAIS DE CARNE DE AVESTRUZ

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The ostrich meat has become an interesting source of protein as well as being an alternative to red meat, because of its healthy fatty acid profile, with a high content of polyunsaturated fatty acids and low content of intramuscular fat, which arouses the interest of people who want a low animal fat diet. Ostrich meat is also appreciated by the tenderness, since it is one of the larger impact characteristics on the acceptance of a meat product for consumers. The aim of this study was to evaluate the tenderness of different ostrich meat commercial cuts and certificate that all studied cuts present tenderness acceptable by consumers. The laboratory tests were performed at the Laboratory of Biochemistry of Proteins (FMVZ), being measured shear force of seven commercial cuts of ostrich meat. The cuts were: internal thigh, external thigh, filet plan, filet out, filet small, rump and filet fan. The samples were boiled in water bath controlled by time and temperature. After chilling, fragments of 1.0 x 1.0 x 3.0 cm were removed from samples. Shear force measurements were performed using a mechanical Warner-Bratzler Shear Force equipment. The shear force means were: internal thigh (3.5 kg), external thigh (2.8 kg), filet plan (2.4 kg), filet out (1.6 kg), filet small (3.5 kg), rump (3.3 kg) and filet fan (2.0 kg). All the commercial cuts evaluated had very low values of shear force, denoting meat extremely tender. The classification of meat tenderness is based on shear force values, being values below 4.6 kg considered meat with desirable tenderness. All ostrich meat commercial cuts analyzed had shear force values lower than 4.6 kg, being classified as meat of extreme tenderness. The results found in this work allow concluding that ostrich meat can be considered tender. These findings lead us to consider the ostrich meat as an interesting alternative to red meat, in relation to tenderness and healthy fatty acid profile, being favorable for people suffering from heart disease.

Key words: meat quality, *Struthio camelus*, shear force.