

Validation of a sensory panel for “Jamón de Guijuelo” PDO cured- ham qualification

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Previous works revealed that there is a generalized lack of specific methods in the quality control of sensory characteristics of Protected Designation of Origin (PDO). In this sense, reported experiences about how to develop procedures for sensory quality control of PDO products includes not only the definition of the product, the selection and training of panelists but also the qualification process for expert panelist and the validation of the method for the selected product. This validation is compulsory according with the European Directive EN7450001 for certification entities.

According with the method proposed by Pérez-Elortondo et al., (2006), the sensory panel of Food Technology Area, that is formed by experienced panelists in QDA analysis, were trained to evaluate Iberico cured-ham. The sensory profile of this product was previously defined by Regulatory Board of “PDO Jamon de Guijuelo” and the panelists were trained for appearance, odour, flavor, aftertaste and texture using samples of PDO. Afterwards, panelists carried out harmonization tasting sessions where they discuss openly among themselves, with the intervention of panel leader as moderator. To validate the method, several tasting sessions were performed where a sample was tasted three times in a session and in three different sessions. This procedure was carried out for three different samples. The data of these tasting sessions were used to calculate the repeatability, reproducibility and discrimination capacity, considering these parameters as the validation criteria of the method. The value of 0.5 for repeatability and 0.8 for reproducibility were the maximum uncertainties accepted. Results showed that the values for repeatability was in general below 0.5 excepting for marbling, sweating and hardness, however the values for reproducibility were more frequently higher than 0.8. This could be due because the samples were cut with a knife and the same ham showed significant differences depending on the sampling.

Cured-ham, PDO, validation, sensory panel