

ABSTRACT

Establishment of a panel for descriptive sensory analysis is a scientific approach of using human perception ability as a tool for quality assessment of foods. Meat is a major human food item with hundreds of different sensory attributes. To compete with other brands and to stay in the market the product has to be checked regularly for sensory acceptability. As the leader of the local processed meat industry, Keells food products limited wanted a well established sensory panel for descriptive sensory evaluation of their meat products. The study was targeted to establishing and training an internal panel for descriptive sensory analysis of sausage range products.

Among thirty three people twenty five were selected as the potential panellists by a pre-screening questionnaire and interview. In the screening test, the ability of assessors for detection and discrimination of sensory attributes of meat were tested by taste identification test, odour identification test, salt and spice level identification test and texture evaluation test. Then the selected twenty assessors were subjected to a training programme. The texture and flavour attributes of sausage range products were identified and defined clearly. The selected attributes were tenderness, juiciness, rubberiness, meatiness, spiciness, saltiness, hotness and odour. The assessors were trained to familiarize with those definitions, the sequence and specific points where the sensory attributes can be perceived. Then the assessors were trained with a modified score sheet for daily sensory evaluation. Finally, the assessors' performance was evaluated.

Almost all the assessors had previous experience of sensory evaluation. Few individuals were not selected from the pre-screening test due to lack of availability, special diets and health problems. Screening test showed that they had some problems with the texture evaluation and spice level identification. Most of the assessors had problems with the definitions of sensory attributes. The assessors were familiarized with the definitions of the sensory attributes of sausage range products in the training programme. The performance evaluation showed that the texture attributes were identified and discriminated correctly. There were problems with spice level identification. The results were analyzed using Analysis of variance. The results showed that the assessments of the panellists are not significantly different. So the established sensory panel can be successfully used for descriptive sensory evaluation of meat products.