ABSTRACT

Capsicum annum, a variety of chillies is extensively consumed throughout the world because of their colour, flavour and pungency. The quality of chilli pods is rather determined by observing the visual appearance of the pod as a practice. The colour of the pods is a deterministic factor frequently used in purchasing. The degree of pungency is not taken into consideration due to the lack of standardized scientific procedures. The available scientific procedures are also expensive and complex. Experienced persons for conducting these scientific procedures are also lacking.

Pungency in chillies is most widely measured in Scoville Heat Unit (SHU), based on a test scale devised in 1912, in which tasters taste ground chillies in a sugar or salt water solution in increasingly diluted concentrations, until they no longer feel mouth burn. Knowing the Scoville Heat Unit value is an essential factor in entering the international market for chilli traders.

The present study focuses on the development and training of a sensory panel as per the requirements of Lanka Spice (pvt) Ltd. An initial screening test was conducted to identify the persons to be trained and 9 were selected. Sex, age, educational level, communication ability, experience, service, knowledge of the products and health were the factors considered in selecting the persons for the tests. Recruitment, initiation, selection and training were conducted in keeping with international standards. (ISO 8586-1, 3972, 6658)

Scoville index determination of three different chilli samples was done according to the international standard, ISO 3513:1995(E) by using five assessors. The pungency levels of chilli samples which were subjected to study are 31,000-37,000 SHU for number 1 Sannam chilli sample, 50,000-60,000 SHU for number 2 Sannam chilli sample and 20,000-24,000 SHU for Mundu chilli sample.

The developed sensory panel functions as a product oriented sensory panel, and yet further training, monitoring and assessing are major requirements to convert it to a well-trained sensory panel.