

CARCASS AND MEAT QUALITY OF BROILER CHICKENS AT DIFFERENT STARVING PERIODS BEFORE SLAUGHTER

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Summary. The present study investigated the influence of varying lengths of starving periods on quality attributes of chicken meat. One hundred and eighty broilers of both sexes were divided into 6 groups, which were withdrawn from feed for 0, 2, 4, 8, 16 or 24 hours before slaughter. Slaughter took place without any stress caused by transport or waiting times. Six representative male and 6 female animals per group were selected for further studies. Data of slaughter weights, pH-values directly after slaughter and after 24 hours were collected. Meat samples were examined by a professional tasting panel. The level of significance was set to 5%. Increasing length of the starving period reduced body weight, mainly due to losses in breast and thigh meat. Both pH values rose slightly, but not sufficient to promote the development of DFD-meat. The tasting panellists preferred meat samples from animals with longer starving periods. The results indicate that the length of feed withdrawal has considerable positive influence on the sensory quality of the final meat product.

Key words: broiler chicken, meat quality, starving periods, slaughter quality, sensory quality