CHANGES IN THE PHYSICOCHEMICAL PROPERTIES OF DEEP-FROZEN RABBIT MEAT AS DEPENDENT ON THAWING METHOD

Iwona Chwastowska-Siwiecka[1], Jacek Kondratowicz[1], Andrzej Gugołek[2], Paulius Matusevičius[3]
[1]*Department of Commodity Science and Animal Raw Material Processing, Faculty of Animal Bioengineering University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn; Oczapowskiego 5, 10-719 Olsztyn, Poland*
Phone: (48 89) 523 34 75; Fax: (48 89) 523 38 33; E-mail: iwona.chwastowska@uwm.edu.pl
[2]*Department of Fur-bearing Animal Breeding and Game Management, Faculty of Animal Bioengineering University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn; Oczapowskiego 5, 10-719 Olsztyn, Poland*
[3]*Department of Animal Nutrition, Veterinary Academy of Lithuanian University of Health Sciences Tilžės18, LT-47181, Kaunas*

Abstract. The objective of this study was to determine changes in the physicochemical properties of deep-frozen rabbit meat thawed in a microwave oven and in the atmospheric air. It was found that samples of *m. longissimus dorsi* thawed in a microwave oven and in the air were characterized by similar acidity and a lighter colour, compared with chilled samples. Cooled muscles were formed by slightly lower pH_1 (6.26). The mean values of pH_{24} were comparable in the experimental groups and were typical of RFN meat. The values of water-holding capacity and natural drip loss were lower in chilled *m. longissimus dorsi* samples (3.62 cm^2 and 0.70% respectively) than in samples thawed by the above two methods. Microwave thawing did not deteriorate the quality and processing suitability of rabbit meat.

Keywords: rabbit meat, microwave oven, atmospheric air, physicochemical properties.