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Nutritional value and sensory attributes of Ventricina del Vastese, an Italian traditional meat-product

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Rural development is one of the major objectives of EU policies, mainly focused on the development of traditional food products. The Italian diet is characterized by the consumption of a variety of traditional foods often based on ancient recipes. An example of traditional meat-product is a dry-fermented sausage, Ventricina del Vastese, produced in Abruzzo region (central Italy). Only natural ingredients and salt are added as microbial growth inhibitors. Moisture, protein, lipid, fatty acids, minerals, trace elements, vitamins were analyzed according to AOAC official methods. Twenty-three sensory attributes were selected and evaluated by nine professional judges. Ventricina, from six manufacturers, were collected after 6 months of ripening. Differences in proximate composition among manufacturers well describes the non-standardized recipe formulation and manufacture process. Moisture content ranged from 35 to 37.9%, protein from 22 to 34%, lipid from 23 to 35%, cholesterol from 85 to 108 mg/100g. The unsaturated fatty acid fraction accounted for 67% of total lipids. Among fatty acids, oleic acid was the most represented (50% of total lipids), followed by palmitic (23%) and linoleic acid (10.9%). Ventricina represented a very rich source of all trace elements, especially zinc and iron; differences in mineral content among manufacturers were observed especially for calcium and sodium (added as preservative). B group vitamins were well represented showing a high content of niacin (7.6 mg/100g) and thiamin (0.83 mg/100g). The mean sensory profile of the dataset showed a high variability for most of descriptors. Principal component analysis specifically allowed to discriminate the sensory profile of the industrial sample from most of artisan ones, as well as to identify the Ventricina sample which most corresponded to the mean sample of the dataset. This picture offers an example of how the manufacturing experiences, handed down locally, allows the production of high quality meat-products by safer preserving methods.

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