

Preface

The salting and drying processing of ham emerged in ancient times as a procedure to protect the good stage of meat. As a consequence of this process, a product with truly extraordinary organoleptic and nutritional characteristics appeared which is nowadays associated with the haute gastronomy.

The animal feeding before slaughtering and the dry-cured process are determinant in the final quality of the product. These two factors, together with the study of the aroma composition and the organoleptic characteristics have been the subject of numerous studies by many researchers.

All these subjects are analyzed in this special issue. It includes ten original papers and literature reviews. Four contributions deal with different aspects related to the classification of raw materials, the development of methods for pattern recognition, the influence of the type, time and feeding system, or the influence of anatomic location on the composition of lipids and aroma of the final product. One contribution studies the relation between the sensory attributes and the volatile profile. In relation to the dry-cured process, four contributions analyze the changes that are produced during this process and the influence on the final quality of the fundamental variables such as salting period, the effect of additives at this phase, or the changes occurred during the process according to the quality of raw material. Finally, one contribution on the nutritional properties and health benefits obtained by the consumption of dry-cured ham is also included.

This monograph, published by GRASAS Y ACEITES, is, therefore, a representative sample of the different topics to be discussed in the V World Congress of Dry-Cured Ham in which the studies of eminent world experts on the subject are collected.

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