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Inhibition of *Clostridium Perfringens*Growth During Extended Cooling of Cooked Uncured Roast Turkey and Roast Beef Using a Concentrated Buffered Vinegar Product and a Buffered Vinegar Product

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Inhibition of *Clostridium Perfringens* Growth During Extended Cooling of Cooked

Uncured Roast Turkey and Roast Beef Using a Concentrated Buffered

Vinegar Product and a Buffered Vinegar Product

Andrew Mitchell Smith

A thesis submitted to the faculty of Brigham Young University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

Frost M Steele, Chair Michael L. Dunn Laura K. Jefferies

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ABSTRACT

Inhibition of Clostridium Perfringens Growth During Extended Cooling of Cooked Uncured Roast Turkey and Roast Beef Using a Concentrated Buffered Vinegar Product and a Buffered Vinegar Product

Andrew Mitchell Smith Department of Nutrition Dietetics and Food Science, BYU Master of Science

This research evaluates the effectiveness of a concentrated, buffered vinegar product (CBV) and a simple buffered vinegar product (BV) for controlling *Clostridium perfringens* outgrowth during extended cooling times of ready-to-eat roast turkey and roast beef respectively. Whole turkey breasts and beef inside rounds were injected with a typical brine, then ground and mixed with CBV (0.0, 2.01, 2.70 and 3.30% wt/wt) or BV (0.0, 1.75, 2.25, and 3.75% wt/wt) and a three-strain *C. perfringens* spore cocktail to a detectable level of ca. 2-3 log CFU/g. The meat was divided into 10g portions and vacuum packaged and stored frozen until tested. The meat was cooked in a programmable water bath to 71.6°C (160.8°F) in 5 hours. The meat was then cooled exponentially with the times between 48.9°C and 12.8°C (120°F and 55°F) lasting 6, 9, 12, 15, and 18 hours for the five different cooling treatments. The cooling continued until the temperature reached 4.4°C (40°F). *C. perfringens* counts were taken at 54.4°C (130°F) and 4.4°C (40°F). At a 2.01% concentration, CBV effectively limited *C. perfringens* growth to 1-log or less up to a 9-hour cooling treatment, while 2.70 and 3.30% concentrations were effective up to the 18 hour cooling treatment. BV had an inhibitory effect on *C. perfringens* outgrowth in roast beef, but did not limit growth to 1-log or less at any concentration tested for any of the cooling treatments.

Keywords: *Clostridium perfringens*, buffered vinegar, roast turkey, roast beef

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LITERATURE REVIEW

Summary

Clostridium perfringens is a bacterium which can cause foodborne illness in humans. This organism is found most often in meat products. Because *C. perfringens* creates spores which survive cooking processes and can multiply rapidly, cooling of cooked meat must occur quickly in order to limit its growth. The USDA-FSIS has established that the cooling process for uncured meat and poultry products must occur quickly enough to limit *C. perfringens* growth to 1-log or less. Cooling large diameter roasts fast enough can be difficult, and sometimes equipment failures or over packed coolers can lead to cooling deviations. In order to mitigate the risk of *C. perfringens* growth during longer cooling periods, antimicrobials may be added. Organic acid salts have been shown to be effective at limiting *C. perfringens* growth and extending the safe cooling periods in multiple studies. However, recent shifts in consumer demand have made it necessary to explore the efficacy of naturally derived antimicrobials, often containing the same organic acid salts as have been previously researched.

Clostridium perfringens **as a Foodborne Illness**

C. perfringens are Gram-positive spore-forming rod-shaped non-motile anaerobic bacteria. *C. perfringens* grows between 15-50°C. Most strains grow best between 43-46°C (Brynestad and Granum, 2002). *Clostridium perfringens* is found abundantly in soils, and in the intestinal tracts of both animals and humans. Meat may become contaminated with animal feces or soils during the slaughtering process. 92% of *C. perfringens* outbreaks reported to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control between 1998 and 2010 which identified the source of the outbreak were attributed to meat and poultry products (Grass et al., 2013).

The most common form of foodborne illness due to *C. perfringens* is caused by the *C. perfringens* enterotoxin (CPE). The foodborne infection occurs when large numbers of vegetative cells are ingested. The infective dose is reported to be $>10^7$ or $>10^6$ cells (Garcia and Heredia, 2009; Brynestad and Granum, 2002). The enterotoxin produced within the cell and is released when vegetative cells lyse and sporulate (Garcia and Heredia, 2009). CPE aggravates the intestinal tract by disrupting tight junction zones between intestinal epithelial cells (Veshnyakova et al., 2012). This induces fluid and electrolyte loss from the small intestine (FDA, 2012). Diarrhea and abdominal cramps are the most common symptoms reported with *C. perfringens* illness. Most cases have a fast onset of about 16 hours after ingestion of tainted food and resolve in 12-24 hours, however, symptoms may last 1-2 weeks in the infants and elderly (FDA, 2012).

C. perfringens is a particular concern for food manufacturers because it is an organism that persists in food after cooking. The spores of *C. perfringens* easily survive and grow into vegetative cells after a cook step and multiply rapidly in warm temperatures. Most strains have a generation time of less than 20 minutes between 33 and 49°C (Byrnestad, 2002), and some enterotoxin positive strains have shown generation times as little as 7.1 minutes in ground beef between 41 and 46°C (Labbe and Huang, 1995). Many cooked products, especially larger roasts and whole muscle cuts of meat will spend considerable time during their cooling cycle in this rapid growth temperature range.

Processing Standards to Control Risk of *Clostridium perfringens* **Contamination in Meat**

In order to manage the risk of *C. perfringens* contamination, the USDA Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) has issued a performance standard for temperature stabilization of uncured cooked ready to eat beef and poultry. That standard states that "there can be… no more

than 1-log10 multiplication of *Clostridium perfringens* within the product," ((9CFR 318.17(a)(2), 2014; 9CFR 381.150(a)(2), 2014). In appendix B of FSIS Compliance Guidelines for Ready to Eat Products, two cooling guidelines are offered. Option #1 is to cool the product from 54.4 to 26.6°C (130 to 80°F) in 1.5 hours or less, and cool from 26.6 to 4.4°C (80 to 40°F) in 5 hours or less. Option #2 says to cool from 48.8 to 12.8°C (120 to 55°F) in 6 hours or less, and continue cooling to 4.4°C (40°F). Producers may establish custom temperature stabilization protocols that are verified by a process authority. The authority may provide evidence for the efficacy of a process from the literature or from a challenge study (FSIS, 1999a).

Controlling Growth with Organic Acid Salts

Acetic acid, citric acid, lactic acid, acetates, citrates, and lactates in the United States are GRAS substances which are commonly found in foods (21 CFR 184, 2016). Organic acids and their salts can be effective as antimicrobials. It is generally accepted that small organic acids, such as citric and acetic acids, work as antimicrobials because they are able to cross the cell membranes of microorganisms in the neutrally charged state. When the acid transitions from a low pH environment in the food matrix where the acid is neutrally charged and crosses the microbial membrane to a higher pH environment inside the microorganism the acid dissociates and ionizes. The accumulation of ions inside the cell interferes with cellular functions and impairs growth. (Theron and Lues, 2007; Thippareddi et al., 2003). Buffering organic acids with organic acid salts shifts the equilibrium toward the undissociated neutral acid species. Buffered mixtures, therefore, have more neutral species to exert antimicrobial effect.

A review by Theron and Lues (2007) discusses several applications for using organic acids in meats as a preservative agent. Applications discussed include: rinses of lactic and acetic acid used to decontaminate whole beef carcasses from a variety of enteric bacteria; post-process

application for control of *Listeria monocytogenes*; and acid dips for whole cuts of meat. Mani-Lopez et al. (2012) discussed the efficacy of multiple organic acids used for controlling and reducing *Salmonella* in meat and poultry products. Organic acids are popular antimicrobials because they are inexpensive and are generally recognized as safe (GRAS) in the United States.

Organic acids and organic acid salts have been effective at controlling the germination and growth of *C. perfringens* from spores in meats during extended cooling treatments. Extended cooling treatments are those which cool slower than the FSIS prescribed 6.5 (option 1) or 6 hour cool (option 2). Table 1 below gives the summarized findings of eight papers which specifically address the use of organic acids for extending cooling times in uncured meat and poultry products using exponential cooling curves. The treatments used include sodium citrate, sodium diacetate, calcium- sodium- and potassium lactates, and proprietary blends of lemon juice and vinegar products (as sources of citrate and acetate). While each organic acid salt has slightly different efficacy on each meat system, depending on pH or species of the meat animal, generally citrates tend to be the most effective with the lowest usage rate, with acetates and lactates requiring more on a percent-weight basis to have similar effects. Of the lactates, calcium lactate is the most effective against the germination and outgrowth of *C. perfringens* during extended cooling treatments (Velugoti et al., 2007a).

Table 1. **Compared results extended cooling of uncured meat and poultry products by organic acid salts.**

Recent Trends for Natural Antimicrobials

In recent years there has been increasing consumer demand for more natural products containing ingredients that sound familiar to the lay consumer. In order to provide safe meat products while utilizing more readily recognizable ingredients researchers have been investigating natural sources of conventional preservative interventions. Vinegar and lemonvinegar combinations have been investigated by Li et al. (2012) and Valenzuela-Martinez et al. (2012) for inhibiting *C. perfringens* outgrowth in uncured meat and poultry products during cooling. Jackson et al. (2011) investigated several natural alternatives to conventional cures for frankfurters and hams, ingredients included vegetable-sourced nitrate, lemon powder (citric acid), vinegar (acetic acid), and cherry powder (ascorbic acid). King et al. (2015) investigated a tropical fruit extract, dried vinegar, lemon-vinegar blend, and a buffered vinegar blend with celery derived nitrite as an alternative and natural cure for turkey breast. McDonnell et al. (2013) conducted a study screening several natural products for their antimicrobial activity against *Listeria monocytogenes* during the refrigerated storage of ready-to-eat meat and poultry products, vinegar, vinegar blends and tea tree oil were most effective. Several other researchers have also investigated essential oils for their efficacy as antimicrobials in meat products (Jayasena and Jo, 2013). The evidence shows that many naturally-sourced antimicrobials have the potential to provide similar protection as conventional antimicrobial systems.

Common Inoculated Pack Study Methods

Inoculum

Most researchers have chosen to use a cocktail of *C. perfringens* spores in inoculated pack studies. Typically, three strains which are both fast growing and produce the *C. perfringens* enterotoxin are used. A comparison of 16 studies (Juneja et al., 1994; Sabah et al., 2003; Thippareddi et al. 2003; Sabah et al., 2004; Juneja and Thippareddi 2004a; Juneja and Thippareddi 2004b; Sanchez-Plata et al., 2005; Juneja, 2005; Juneja et al., 2006; Velugoti et al. 2007a; Velugoti et al., 2007b; Valenzuela-Martinez et al., 2010; Marquez-Gonzales et al., 2011; Li et al., 2012; Juneja et al., 2013; Kennedy et al., 2013) showed that most researchers used the same three strains, namely NCTC 8238, NCTC 8239, and NCTC 10240.

Spore Suspension Preparation

In the same comparison of 16 studies cited above, all the researchers followed a protocol developed by Juneja 1993 for the preparation of *C. perfringens* spore suspensions. The spore isolation method involves growing the organism, transferring to a sporulation medium, and then centrifuging the medium to obtain the spores in a more concentrated form. The spore culture method is explained in detail in the methods section.

Recovery Agar Media and Technique

Most commonly, *C. perfringens* is cultured with Tryptose-sulfite-cycloserine (TSC) or Shahidi-Ferguson-perfringens agar (SFP) agar. Harmon et al. (1971) created TSC as an improved culture medium over SFP because the D-cycloserine was a better selective agent than the kanamycin and polymixin present in SFP. TSC agar has been reviewed to be the best overall culture medium for enumeration compared to other culture media (Mead, 1985; DeJong et al., 2003) The FDA bacterial analytical manual for *C. perfringens* specifies the use of TSC agar with or without added egg yolk emulsion (Rhodehamel and Harmon, 2001). Many researchers have

not added egg yolk emulsion into either SFP agar or TSC agar when growing *C. perfringens*, Byrne et al. (2008) determined that egg yolk emulsion in TSC did not improve growth of the organism.

According to Velugoti et al. (2007a) a dual-layer pour plate method provided greater distinction of colony formation on plates. The dual-layer pour plate method is a regular pour plate with a thin layer of agar already laid in the bottom of the petri dish and a thin overlay on top of the poured portion.

Meat Preparation and Inoculation

Meat preparation for an inoculated pack study should be designed to mimic as closely as possible the conditions encountered in a real manufacturing setting. In order to recreate plant conditions, Steele and Wright (2001) inoculated whole turkey roasts by injection and mechanically blended half roasts (2 kg) after treatment in order to get a homogenous sample. Fourteen of the sixteen studies mentioned above created a smaller model (approx. 5-10 g) by first homogenizing the sample by grinding the meat, and then vacuum sealing the meat in smaller packages to mimic the low-oxygen present in the center point of roasts. Small samples of meat make it easier to control the cook process and provide better reproducibility, but it does remove the model from the actual state of the product. Grinding meat breaks down intact muscle tissue and brings bacteria into the inner matrix of the meat rather than on the surface only. While this is appropriate for roasts made from several pieces of muscle where muscle surfaces might be in the center point of the finished roast, it may seem like a step away from the real product being studied for single whole muscle roasts. However, it has been shown that needle and needleless injection of meat can carry surface contamination into the interior of whole muscles cuts of meat

(Jefferies et al., 2012; Ray et al., 2010). Half of the sixteen studies cited above added the inoculum into a larger batch of ground meat, then mixed and divided that meat to smaller subsamples; the other half of the studies first subdivided the sample, added the inoculum directly into a subsample bag, sealed the bag, and then massaged the bag manually to achieve homogenization.

Heat Shock vs. Cook Treatment

C. perfringens spores require a shock to germinate. In commercial meats, the shock required to cause spores to germinate is provided in the form of a cooking process. In the literature, most researchers studying the germination and growth of *C. perfringens* during the cooling of cooked meats place the meat in a 70-75°C water bath up to 20 minutes and then begin the cooling process. Some variations have included heating the meat up to 60-71.1°C over the course of an hour. The most underutilized method of heat shock has been an actual cook modeled after producer derived data. In 2012, Li et al. subjected their roast beef model to a 9.75 hour cook curve to 71.1°C before beginning the cool process. In a review done by Taormina and Dorsa (2004), it is suggested that inoculated pack studies be done as close to plant parameters as possible and advocated a simulated cook as a proper heat shock treatment for a cooling study. Sudden versus gradual heat treatments influence the growth and death of *C. perfringens* during the cooking process and how *C. perfringens* grows upon cooling (Taormina and Dorsa, 2004).

Cooling Treatment

The cooling curves used by most researchers are derived from exponential formulas which emulate real cooling data observed in plants. The formulas published by Sabah et al. (2003) and Sabah et al. (2004) were used in this study and were found to closely replicate the cooling behavior observed from producer data. Challenge studies with *C. perfringens* and extended cooling times of meat products usually control the cooling process between 54.4°C, just above *C. perfringens* upper growth temperature, and 7.2°C or 4.4°C, where no growth is expected to have ceased. The controlled cooling of small lab-scale samples is typically done in a temperature-controlled water bath, where the meat packets are vacuum sealed in plastic. The vacuum packaging simulates the relatively anaerobic environment of the center point of a larger roast, and provides a thin barrier across which heat can readily transfer.

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction

Clostridium perfringens is a gram-positive, spore-forming rod-shaped bacterium, which can cause foodborne illness in humans. Outbreaks attributed to this organism most often occur in meat products, especially when prepared in large quantities that require extended cooling periods (REF). Because *C. perfringens* creates spores which survive cooking processes and can multiply rapidly, cooling of cooked meat must occur quickly in order to limit its growth. The USDA-FSIS requires that the cooling process for uncured meat and poultry products occur quickly enough to limit *C. perfringens* growth to 1-log or less. Rapid cooling of large diameter roasts can be difficult; and sometimes equipment failures or over-packed coolers can lead to cooling deviations. In order to mitigate the risk of *C. perfringens* growth during longer cooling periods, antimicrobials may be added. Organic acid salts have been shown to be effective at limiting *C. perfringens* growth and extending the safe cooling periods in multiple studies. However, growing consumer demand for clean label foods have made it necessary to explore the efficacy of naturally-derived antimicrobials, which often contain these same organic acid salts, but from natural sources. The purpose of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of two

commercially-produced, naturally-derived antimicrobials - a concentrated buffered vinegar product (CBV) and a simple buffered vinegar product (BV) - for controlling *Clostridium perfringens* outgrowth during extended cooling times of ready-to-eat roast turkey and roast beef respectively.

The FSIS sets regulations for proper temperature control of cooked meat. The FSIS has set a process *standard* which cooling processes for ready-to-eat uncured meat must follow. The FSIS standard specifies that the cooling process must not allow more than 1-log multiplication of *C. perfringens*. To help processors meet this standard, the FSIS has given two *guidelines* for the cooling of ready-to-eat uncured meat which should help processors meet the process standard. The first guideline (option #1) is to cool the product form 130° F to 80° F in 1.5 hours then from 80°F to 40°F in 5 hours. The second guideline (option #2) is to cool the product from 120°F to 55°F in 6 hours, and continue cooling to 40°F before shipping. Option 2 was selected as the model for this study to create both the control (6-hour) cooling time, and the extended cooling times which apply to the 120°F to 55°F window.

Meat producers may require extended cooling times for a variety of reasons. Some products have smaller diameters which allow for adequate cooling as measured at the center point of the product, while other products by their nature have much larger diameters which can make them very difficult to cool to target temperature within the 6-6.5 hours recommended by FSIS. Due to normal fluctuations in demand, a producer might have more product in the coolers than the coolers have refrigeration capacity to cool within the FSIS timeframes. A producer may experience equipment failure in refrigeration systems which inadvertently prolong cooling. For many reasons, a producer may wish to include preservatives in their product in order to hinder

C.perfringens growth during cooling, such that a longer cooling time would not allow greater than a 1-log multiplication of the organism, and still produce safe and compliant product.

Materials and Methods

In this study roast models were constructed by grinding up raw roast as prepared by a commercial facility and packing the ground roast into 10g, vacuum-sealed portions. The bags were then submerged in a water bath which followed a heating and cooling program which replicates the temperature profile of the cold point of roasts as measured in a commercial process. For each cooling and antimicrobial treatment combination, two 10g portions were placed in the water bath. After the cook cycle was completed, one 10g portion was removed for bacterial enumeration, at the end of the cooling treatment the second 10g portion was removed for bacterial enumeration. The difference between the two portions represented the growth during the cooling treatment.

Experimental Design. Both roast turkey and roast beef were treated with an inoculation of *C. perfringens spores* and one of four levels of antimicrobial: a zero-level control, low, medium, and high. Roast turkey was treated with CBV at 0%, 2.01%, 2.70%, and 3.30%. Roast beef was treated with BV at 0%, 1.75%, 2.25%, and 2.75%. Antimicrobial usage levels were determined by their effect on the taste of the finished product. Each antimicrobial usage level was tested with each of five different cooling rates (6, 9, 12, 15, and 18 hours) with the exception of the control which was tested only for 6, 12, and 18 hours. Each cooling rate by usage level run was replicated three times for a total of 54 runs for roast turkey, and 54 runs for roast beef. The run order within each replication was randomized.

Statistical Analysis. Three replications of each cooling regimen by antimicrobial usage level were performed. All samples were plated in duplicate with one to three countable dilutions used to calculate a mean value for individual samples. The data was analyzed using analysis of variance on usage rate, cooling regimen, temperature point and run number. The growth of *C. perfringens* was calculated with using a pseudo-Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons giving pooled 95% confidence intervals with $p=0.05$.

Growth of Microorganisms. C. perfringens strains NCTC 8238, 8239 (University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst MA) and 10240 (Sigma-Aldrich, product no. RQC20106; St. Louis, MO). were used in this study. These strains were selected for this study because they are widely used in the literature and because they were isolated from foodborne outbreaks, are fast growing strains, and have a high heat tolerance they represent a worst-case scenario. The three strains were grown and maintained separately in fluid thioglycollate medium at 37°C for 18-24 hours between transfers. Spores were obtained according to procedures used by Juneja et al. (1993). All microbiological media used for this research were obtained from HiMedia Laboratories (Mumbai, India) unless otherwise stated.

Preparation of Meat Samples and Inoculation. Roast turkey and roast beef was obtained from a local processor. At the processor location, both meats were first injected and tumbled in 100 pound batches with a brine mixture containing ingredients typically used in the industry excluding the antimicrobial treatment. The meat samples were stored at 7°C and transported on ice to the lab where they were then frozen at -20° C until use (up to 6 months).

Meat was thawed overnight at 4-7°C, then ground using a KitchenAid K5 stand mixer (KitchenAid; Benton Harbor, MI) using a Chef's Choice 796 food grinder attachment and 4.5 mm plate (EdgeCraft Corp.; Avondale, PA). The ground meat was thoroughly mixed with the treatment antimicrobial to produce desired concentrations using a KitchenAid K5 stand mixer with flat beater attachment for 1 minute on setting no. 2. Equal amounts of spores suspended in water from all three strains were added to the meat to a total level of 3.7-log CFU/g as calculated from the known spore concentration of the spore stocks, and mixing was continued for an additional minute on setting no. 2. The inoculated meat was divided into 10 g portions and placed in 3 mil laminated nylon polyethylene vacuum bags (Ultrasource LLC; Kansas City, MO) with oxygen transmission rate of 50-70 cc/m²/24hr $@25\textdegree C$, and water vapor transmission rate of 6-7.5 g/m²/24hr @25°C, which were hand cut from bags of a larger dimension and sealed using a manual impulse sealer (Jores MMS-305, Technopack Corp., Sunrise, FL). After samples were placed in the small bags, they were vacuum sealed to a negative pressure of 0.085 MPa (VP 210, Vacmaster, Overland Park, KS) then flattened by a flat weight to a uniform thickness approximately 2-3 mm. All samples were frozen at -40°C up to 4 weeks, and then thawed for 18- 24 hours at 4-7°C before use. Samples were prepared in batches, such that all samples for a single replication were prepared at the same time and separate from other replications. For this experiment, three replications of each cooling regimen by antimicrobial usage level combination were performed. In total

Antimicrobial Treatments. The roast turkey was treated with a concentrated buffered vinegar product (CBV) at 0% (control), 2.01%, 2.70%, and 3.30% wt/wt. Roast beef was treated with a simple buffered vinegar product (BV) at 0% (control), 1.75%, 2.25%, and 2.75% wt/wt. Both CBV and BV were provided by IsoAge Technologies (Athens, GA). Concentrations of antimicrobial were determined by their final effect on product taste. The tested concentrations are near or below the concentrations at which the flavor of the product is adversely affected.

Cook and Cool procedures. For each individual cooling time and antimicrobial treatment, two individual meat sample bags were immersed in a programmed, recirculating, heated and refrigerated water bath (Model PP15R-30-A11B, PolyScience, Niles, IL) at 7°C. According to a preliminary study, it was determined that the internal temperature of the samples did not differ more than 0.3°C from the measured bath temperature. Cooking curves were obtained from a local processor in order to simulate typical processing conditions for roast turkey, and roast beef products. The roast turkey was brought to $71.1\degree C$ (160 $\degree F$) in approximately 5 hours, followed by cooling. The roast beef was brought to 57.2°C (135°F) for 37 minutes in approximately 6 hours, and then began cooling. The cook time and temperatures were chosen to produce a 7-log *salmonella* lethality to reflect industry cook processes; the roast beef is cooked for a longer period of time at a lower temperature to create a rare product. In this study, we chose to base the cooling treatments on the FSIS stabilization (cooling) guideline 2 in appendix B of the Compliance Guidelines for Cooling Heat-Treated Meat and Poultry Products (FSIS, 1999a). Option #2 is available to producers as an alternative cooling schedule which should meet the performance standard, however, it allows for a smaller margin of error. The second FSIS stabilization option was selected for this study because it would be a more abusive cooling regimen than the first option (option $#1$), and thus if antimicrobial treatment were sufficient with the more abusive process it would be presumably sufficient for a more conservative process.

Once samples reached the appropriate cook time/temperature, the water bath followed an exponential cooling curve which dropped from 48.9 to 12.8°C (120 to 55°F) in 6, hours and continued until it reached 4.4°C (40°F) FSIS Appendix B (FSIS, 1999a), additional extended cooling regimens were tested at 9, 12, 15, and 18 hours. The graphical representations of all

programs are shown in appendix C. The time and temperature points for cooling were determined mathematically using the model used by Sabah et al. (2004a, 2004b) in the following equation:

$$
T=T_{initial}e^{\wedge}(k_{cool}t)
$$

Where *T*=desired temperature, *T*_{*initial*}=initial temperature at start of cooling, *k*=cooling rate and t =time (hours). The cooling rate, k , is determined by the following equation:

$$
k=[ln(T2/TI)]/t_c
$$

Where *T2*=final cooling temperature, *T1*=initial cooling temperature, and *tc*=time in hours to cool.

Enumeration of Bacteria. After the cook process, a single 10 g meat sample bag was removed from the water bath at the beginning of the cooling process at 54.4°C (130°F) and a second 10 g sample was removed from the water bath at the end of the cooling process at 4.4°C (40°F) for enumeration. Samples were placed in a bed of ice to stop further cooking. The samples were aseptically transferred to a WhirlPak filter bag (Nasco, Fort Atkinson, WI) and homogenized (Smasher, bioMerieux, Marcy-l'Étoile, France) on fast setting with sterile 0.1% peptone for 2 minutes.

Appropriate serial dilutions of the homogenate were plated onto tryptose-sulfitecycloserine (TSC) agar using a dual layer pour method described by Velugoti et al. (2007a)*.* Each sample was plated in duplicate. The TSC plates were incubated anaerobically at 37°C in an

anaerobic chamber (DG250, Don Whitley Scientific, Shipley, U.K.) and counted after 18-24 hours. Typical black colonies were enumerated as *C. perfringens*.

Results & Discussion

The control turkey samples with 0% CBV showed growth greater than 1-log CFU/g over the 18, 12, and even 6 hour cooling treatments. Figure 1 and table 1 below shows the average growth of each hour-concentration combination as the average difference between samples enumerated at 54.4°C (start of the cooling process) and 4.4°C (the end of the cooling process). This study showed CBV to be effective at limiting the growth of *C. perfringens* in roast turkey to <1 log for up to 18 hours at 2.70 and 3.30% concentration, and up to 9 hours at 2.01% concentration (wt/wt) with p-value 0.05.

Figure 1. *C. perfringens* growth in roast turkey.

Mean growth of *C. perfringens* during the extended cooling of roast turkey with CBV. Mean growth was calculated as the difference of *C. perfringens* counts at 4.4°C from 54.4°C. Negative values indicate decreases in *C. perfringens* population. Values are shown with pooled, pseudo-Bonferroni corrected 95% confidence intervals with p=0.05, n=54.

Figure 2. *C. perfringens* growth in roast beef.

Mean growth of *C. perfringens* during the extended cooling of roast beef with BV. Mean growth was calculated as the difference of *C. perfringens* counts at 4.4°C from 54.4°C. Negative values indicate decreases in *C. perfringens* population. Values are shown with pooled, pseudo-Bonferroni corrected 95% confidence intervals with p=0.05, n=54.

No combination of BV usage level and hour cooling treatment yielded <1-log growth in the roast beef (see figure 2). However, the inhibitory effect of the BV was more pronounced at higher concentrations. We did not expect the control treatment at 6 hours for either meat to fail to meet the performance standard. The FSIS Appendix B document states that the second cooling guideline offers a "significantly smaller margin of safety" than the first cooling guideline. The second guideline admonishes producers that cooling should occur as rapidly as possible, and that if cooling remains between 48.9°C (120°F) and 26.6°C (80°F) for more than one hour then compliance with the performance standard is less certain. While the wording of this guideline is certainly full of admonition to cool quickly, it does not seem to require rapid cooling to 26.6°C (80°F), it only seems to require that 48.9° C (120°F) to 12.8°C (55°F) be 6 hours or less.

According to the FSIS, the temperature range of rapid growth for *Clostridia spp*. is between 54.4°C (130°F) and 26.6°C (80°F), thus product should be cooled as rapidly as possible from 54.4°C (130°F) and 26.6°C (80°F) (FSIS, 1999b). The treatment in this experiment was to cool the product from 48.9°C (120°F) to 12.8°C (55°F) in 6 hours and continue cooling to 4.4°C (40°F). The cooling curve was generated mathematically and closely approximated the cooling observed in full sized roasts observed at a local processor. The 6-hour cooling schedule did not move quickly through the rapid growth temperature range (48.9°C (120°F) and 26.6°C (80°F)). For the 6-hour treatments, both the turkey and the roast beef remained in the rapid growth range for approximately 3 hours 15 minutes. The longer than recommended time in the rapid growth temperature range likely caused the control turkey and beef roasts to fail to meet the performance standard. From this data it seems that FSIS option #2 allows for cooling schedules which may easily allow a 1-log or greater growth of *C. perfringens*.

Initially, we were concerned that the long cook would reduce the inoculum spore count and make enumeration difficult as was shown by Shigehisa et al. (1985) using a model system of fluid thioglycollate medium. Shigehisa et al. characterized the growth of a *C. perfringens* spore culture at different heating and cooling rates. Shigehisa et al. found that at cook rates of 13°C/hour and 7°C/hr, which most closely matched our roast turkey and roast beef cook rates (approximately 14°C/hr and 9.6°C/hr), the total inoculum decreased by almost one and two log cycles respectively. Because of a relative dearth of published research subjecting spores to a cook (a slow rise to cook temperature as seen in full sized roasts) rather than a heat shock (a rapid rise to cook temperature), we decided to inoculate at a higher level of ca. 3.7 log CFU/g to compensate for a possible one log cycle reduction. The cooked samples had a mean level of 2.8 log CFU/g, which agreed with the Shigehisa study; however, when we compared our cooked

sample and a heat shocked sample (20 min 75°C), both had similar levels of *C. perfringens* to each other, within 0.25 log cycles (data not shown). Both heat treatments yielded less than our calculated inoculation level based on the spore suspension counts. This discrepancy is likely due to the inability to capture all of the *C. perfringens* cells inside the matrix of the ground meat with stomacher style homogenization and not cell death in the meat matrices. Colwell style stomachers have become the preferred method of homogenization in food microbiology labs, however, other homogenization methods have shown to have even greater inner-matrix recovery of microorganisms (Rhode et al., 2015) but are limited by their inability to handle large volumes of sample. Marquez-Gonzales et al. (2012) showed that *C. perfringens* counts did not significantly change during heating of cured ground pork up to 75°C at rates of 75°C/20 min, and 12, 8, and 4°C/hr*.* This may explain why there was no observed difference between cooked samples and heat shocked samples.

The results of this experiment agree with previous research. Other researchers have seen effective control of *C. perfringens* using acetate sources alone (Juneja and Thippareddi, 2004b; Valenzuela-Martinez et al., 2010). The present study showed that the CBV is effective at limiting the growth of *C. perfringens* in roast turkey to less than 1-log for up to 18 hours at 2.70% and 3.30% concentration, and up to 9 hours at 2.01% concentration (wt/wt) during abusive cooling schedules. The BV used in roast beef at the concentrations tested was not effective at limiting *C perfringens* outgrowth to <1-log during any of the cooling treatments tested. The BV did have an inhibitory effect with increasing concentration and it may be effective at higher usage rates, however higher usage rates with a vinegar-based product can lead to undesirable changes in the flavor of the product. Juneja and Thippareddi (2004b) found that sodium acetate was able to safely extend cooling of marinated ground turkey breast to 15 and 21 hours at usage levels of

1.0% and 2.0% respectively. Valenzuela-Martinez et al. (2010) showed that a buffered vinegar blend was capable of inhibiting growth for 9 and 21 hour cooling treatments at usage rates of 1.25% and 2.50% respectively. The concentration of acetate ion is not known in the BV, and may be a contributing factor of why this product was unable to limit growth in the roast beef to acceptable levels. A difference between the current study and these other two studies cited is based in a difference of how the cooling process was designed. The current study set the time to cool from 48.9 to 12.8° C (120 to 55° F) in the prescribed hour treatment (6, 9, 12, 15, 18) and continued cooling until 4.4°C (40°F) was reached, whereas these two studies set the treatment time as the time to cool from 54.4° C (130°F) to 7.2° C (45°F) or sometimes 4.4° C (40°F). This difference means that more time is spent at higher temperatures during the present study than others cited herein. The fact that these other studies looked at a different product and meat species may also contribute to the difference in results.

Conclusion

C. perfringens growth is effectively inhibited by the concentrated buffered vinegar product (CBV) to less than 1-log up to 9 hours at a 2.01% usage rate and up to 18 hours with 2.70 and 3.30% usage. The simple buffered vinegar product (BV) did not effectively inhibit *C. perfringens* during extended cooling tested at the concentrations tested (1.75, 2.25, and 2.75%). Both roast turkey and roast beef controls produced more than 1-log growth of *C. perfringens* during the 6 hour cool designed to fit parameters allowed by FSIS appendix B option #2 (FSIS, 1999a). This study suggests that FSIS appendix B option #2 (FSIS, 1999a), which allows cooling of uncured ready-to-eat meat and poultry from 48.9 to 12.8°C (120 to 55°F) in 6 hours or less with continued cooling to 4.4°C (40°F) is insufficient for limiting *C.perfringens* growth to less

than 1-log CFU/g during the cooling cycle, and should be revised for clarity regarding cooling during the rapid growth temperature range from 54.4°C (130°F) and 26.6°C (80°F).

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APPENDIX A: WATER BATH VALIDATION

Introduction:

The cooking and cooling curves used to program the bath come from producer data taken at the center point of large roasts. Each 10 g meat pack is to be representative of what happens at the center point of the large roasts. In order to be able to practically equate the water bath temperature and the 10 g meat pack temperature, a validation study needed to be performed.

Methods:

Overview. In this validation, thirty meat packs were placed into the water bath and they were each packed to a target of 12 g, approximately 3-4 mm thick, with bag dimensions of 4.5 cm X 11 cm. A type-T thermocouple data logger was used to gather data from four individual meat packs, and from two points in the water bath.

The parameters of this test were designed to be conservative in relation to the parameters of tests planned for the overall research project. The tests used for the whole research project would have 6-16 meat packs in the water bath at once, and the meat packs would be packed to a target of 10 g, approximately 2-3 mm thick, with bag dimensions of 4.5 cm X 11 cm.

Meat preparation. Roast beef was ground as described in the extended methods appendix B and hand packed into plastic bags and sealed. The meat was also dyed red to indicate homogeneity after mixing the meat.

Thermocouple placement. Thermocouples were inserted into four meat packs. The resulting holes in the probed meat packs were suspended above the water line, while the ends of the probes measured meat temperature that was below the water line.

Program. The water bath was programed to reach 135.5F in approximately 7 hours and cool down to 40F in approximately 11 hours.

Results:

Temperatures were taken every minute for the entire cook and cool curve tested, totaling 17 hours 54 minutes. The difference of the average water bath temperature (from the two probes in the water bath) from the average meat pack temperature (from the four meat pack probes) was shown to be very small and practically negligible over the course of a long cook and cool curve. The average difference was -0.067°F with a standard deviation of 0.076°F. Table 4 below shows the descriptive statistics of the test, the histogram below (figure 3) shows the graphical distribution of the average pack – average water temperature differences.

Average Pack Temp. - Average Water Temp.

Figure 3. Histogram of water bath validation study

Conclusion:

The results of this preliminary study show that the meat pack temperature does not practically differ from the water temperature of the bath. Thus, the programmed temperature of the water bath may be considered the same temperature as the meat packs. There is no need to place thermocouple probes in a meat pack during each individual run to verify temperature.

APPENDIX B: EXTENDED METHODS

C. perfringens Stock Spore Preparation

From personal email communication with Marangeli Osoria and Vijay Juneja, from the Residue Chemistry and Predictive Microbiology lab at the USDA ARS. October 16, 2015.

1. Inoculate 10ml of freshly prepared Fluid Thyoglycolate medium (FTG) with 0.1 ml of spores (2-3 tubes per strain) and incubate overnight $(18 – 24h)$ at 37 \degree C. [Tip: Poor growth in FTG results in poor sporulation in DS medium.]

2. Transfer overnight culture (from tube that shows the best growth) to fresh FTG tubes and incubate at 37°C for 4h.

3. Use this to inoculate the Duncan Strong Medium (DS) and incubate for 24h at 37°C. Add culture at 1% concentration to DS medium. [Tip: Consider making 1L DS per strain to generate a large amount of spores at one time that can be stored frozen.]

4. Examine spore formation using phase contrast microscopy (oil immersion 1000x; yield 90- 95% spores) before harvesting. [See Procedures for Heat-Fixing Bacterial Smears and Endospore Staining sheet]

5. If spore yield appears to be less than 90%, continue to incubate the inoculated DS for another 24h and re-examine for spore formation as indicated in step 4. [Tip: I found that usually 24h is not enough for an approx. 90% spore yield, so I have incubated DS for 5-7 days and then examined spore formation.]

6. Harvest spores by centrifugation at 10000 x g for 15min at 4°C, wash twice with sterile dH2O, re-suspend in sterile dH2O and store at -20°C. [Tip: For 1L DS, you can spin down cells using

37

250ml sterile centrifuge bottles and wash/re-suspend with 50ml dH2O]. A working stock can be stored at 4°C until use.

7. Activate spores by heat-shocking spores at 75°C for 20min. To end heat-shock transfer tubes to an ice-water slurry for a few minutes.

8. Determine the number of spores by serially diluting heat-shocked spores in 0.1% peptone water and duplicate plating on Tryptose-sulfite- cycloserine (TSC) agar without egg yolk enrichment. Overlay plates with an additional 10ml of TSC agar and allow it to solidify before incubating plates for 48h at 37°C in an anaerobic chamber.

Recovery Medium: Tryptose-sulfite- cycloserine (TSC) = Shahidi Ferguson Perfingens (SFP) Agar Base without egg yolk enrichment + 1% D-cycloserine with overlay (10ml).

Procedures for Heat-Fixing Bacterial Smears and Endospore Staining

From personal email communication with Marangeli Osoria and Vijay Juneja, from the Residue Chemistry and Predictive Microbiology lab at the USDA ARS. October 16, 2015.

- 1. Heat-Fixing a Bacterial Smear
	- a. Use a wax pencil to draw a circle on the microscope slide to separate each type of bacteria that will be heat-fixed.
	- b. Place a drop of water onto the wax circle.
	- c. Use a sterile inoculation loop and obtain a sample of a bacterial colony.
	- d. Gently mix the bacteria into the water drop.
	- e. Let it air dry.
	- f. Pass the dried slide through the flame of a Bunsen burner or set over a hot plate with a wire mesh under the slide for a few seconds to heat-fix.
	- g. Stain slide.
- 2. Endospore Stain Procedure
	- a. Heat-fix bacterial smears.
	- b. Place water in a beaker and set over a hot plate to steam.
	- c. Set slides over the steaming water and apply Malachite Green (primary stain) to the smear for 5-10 minutes.
	- d. Continue to apply malachite green as needed so as not to allow the stain to dry out.
	- e. Rinse the slide gently with DI water.
- f. Apply Safranin (counterstain; not over the steaming water) to the smear for 1-2 minutes.
- g. Rinse the slide gently with DI water, blot dry and examine using phase contrast microscopy (oil immersion 1000x; yield 90-95% spores) before harvesting.
- h. Vegetative cells will stain red and spores will stain blue/green.

Duncan Strong Medium Preparation Protocol

Preparation

- 1. Suspend 34 g of HiMedia Duncan Strong medium in 990 ml of dH2O
- 2. Mix thoroughly. Heat if necessary to dissolve medium completely
- 3. Sterilize by autoclaving for 15 minutes at 15 lbs pressure (121°C)
- 4. Cool to \sim 50°C and add 10 ml of filter-sterilized 1% caffeine solution (w/v)
	- a. use syringe and 0.1 ul filter to filter sterilize

Spore Concentration Protocol

Centrifugation

- 1. Divide the Duncan Strong sporulation medium evenly among 250 ml sterile (autoclaved) centrifuge bottles
- 2. Close the centrifuge bottles **securely**
- 3. Take the bottles to LSB 3118 to use the Sorvall High Speed Centrifuge
	- a. set temperature to 4°C
	- b. Set RPM to 8120 (10,000 RCF)
	- c. Set time to 20 minutes
	- d. Select rotor code 28 (SLA-1500)
	- e. To insert a rotor:
		- i. Open door of centrifuge, latch button is on front face of machine, top right corner labelled DOOR
		- ii. Place rotor into centrifuge
		- iii. Insert samples into rotor
		- iv. Place lid on rotor and screw counterclockwise until tightened
		- v. Screw center pin counterclockwise until tightened
	- f. After rotor is secure, close the door and flip the START switch
- 4. Centrifuge at 10,000 x g (or RCF) at 4° C for 20 minutes

Washing the Spores

- 5. Remove centrifuge bottles from the Centrifuge
- 6. Decant and properly dispose of the supernatant
- 7. Add 50 ml of sterile dH2O
- 8. Re-cap bottle **securely**
- 9. Shake bottle to resuspend the culture
- 10. Centrifuge the spores again until the spores have been washed twice

Spores Suspension

- 11. Follow steps 5-9
- 12. Combine all spores suspensions of one strain together and shake to homogenize
- 13. Store suspension at 4°C

Heat Shock Spore Activation

Preparation

- 1. Set the programmable water bath to a static 75°C
- 2. Prepare an ice bath in a suitable container. Obtain ice from the ice machine in the Autoclave room (S-164)

Heat Shock

- 3. Place cultures or sample in water bath at 75°C for 20 minutes
- 4. After 20 minutes on heat, place the cultures in the ice bath to cool and stop the heat shock
- 5. Serially dilute and plate on TSC agar by dual layer pour method to determine amount of spores per gram.

Meat Grinding and Mixing Protocol

- 1. Cut meat into approximately 1 inch wide strips (in order to feed into the grinder) using a knife and cutting board.
- 2. Continue the rest of this procedure inside the bio-safety cabinet.
- 3. Grind meat through 5/4.5mm plate on a KitchenAid K5 stand mixer using a Chef's Choice 796 food grinder attachment on setting no. 2.
- 4. Thoroughly mix ground meat with antimicrobial using KitchenAid K5 stand mixer with flat beater attachment for 1 minute on setting no. 2
- 5. Inoculate meat sample with 3-strain spore cocktail to roughly a 2-log level
- 6. Mix thoroughly as in step four above 1 minute on setting no. 2

Tryptose Sulfite Cycloserine Agar Preparation Protocol

- 1. Suspend 23.5 grams of Perfringens Agar Base (T.S.C.) in 500 ml distilled water
- 2. Heat to boiling to dissolve the medium completely
- 3. Sterilize by autoclaving at 15 lbs pressure (121°C) for 15 minutes
- 4. Cool to 50°C and add rehydrated contents of one vial of TSC Supplement (add 2 ml sterile water to contents of one vial - 200 ug cycloserine)
- 5. Store prepared media between 2°C and 8°C

Notes:

- Watch carefully after flask reaches 80°C (using IR thermometer)
- Screw lid on a few turns to prevent boilover loss in autoclave

Tryptose Sulfite Cycloserine Dual Layer Pour Plate Method

Preparation

- 1. Prepare plates by pouring a very thin layer $(\sim 5 \text{ ml})$ of TSC agar
	- a. these may be stored for up to a week at 2 8°C

Dual Layer Pour Plating

- 1. Place 1 ml of sample onto the thin agar layer and pour ~10 ml of tempered TSC agar
- 2. Swirl the agar, and replace the lid
- 3. When the pour plates have solidified, add an additional 5 ml layer to the top of the plate
- 4. When the plates have solidified, incubate anaerobically at 37° C for $24 (\pm 2)$ hours

Programming the PolyScience Recirculating Water Bath

This document explains how to take time/temperature data from excel to a format which the PolyScience performance programmable water bath can utilize as a program.

Procedure:

1. Prepare the Data

Create an excel file with your times in one column and your temperature in another

column:

The PolyScience program requires both Celcius and Fahrenheit values. Create another column of temperatures using the formula *=convert(reference cell,"from unit","to unit")*

In the example case the formula is =convert($C2$," C "," F ")

Copy this formula to convert all your temperature units.

The PolyScience program will not read decimals in temperatures. Instead of 7.13°C use the number 713. To create this from your temperature columns, multiply every value by 100. Be sure to remove decimals from the value using the "decrease decimal" button.

2. Create the Program

Now, create a new excel document where you will input the information in the

PolyScience format. Make it look like the following:

When the file is completely assembled, save it as a .csv file.

Open that file in a text editor (like *notepad* or *notepad++*).

Make your file look like the file below. It should have commas between all cells, but not between lines. Put quotes around all heading data, and the stop command at the end of the string of numbers. Then save (as .csv) and upload to the PolyScience water bath via USB drive.

APPENDIX C: COMPLETE COOKING AND COOLING CURVES

Figure 4. Roast turkey cooking and cooling curves

Figure 5. Roast beef cooking and cooling curves

APPENDIX D: PLATE COUNT DATA

Table 3. Raw Data: plate counts for roast turkey and roast beef

APPENDIX E: STATISTICAL OUTPUTS

Turkey Statistical Output

The SAS System 10:22 Tuesday, May 10, 2016 1137

The Mixed Procedure

Model Information

Class Level Information

Dimensions

Number of Observations

Iteration History

The Mixed Procedure

Convergence criteria met.

Covariance Parameter Estimates

Fit Statistics

Type 3 Tests of Fixed Effects

The SAS System 10:22 Tuesday, May 10, 2016 1140

Beef Statistical Output

The Mixed Procedure

Model Information

Class Level Information

Dimensions

Number of Observations

Iteration History

Type 3 Tests of Fixed Effects

Least Squares Means

The Mixed Procedure

The Mixed Procedure

