

Butchers Sausages not full of Fat

In a report to the SFMTA AGM, **Chief Executive Douglas Scott** explained the results from a project with Food Innovation @ Abertay University that has enabled identification of fat and salt levels in the Beef Sausages of East of Scotland butchers. These were then related to the Food Standards Agencies food labelling system and comparison made throughout the region.

Beef Sausages from 23 butchers in the eligible post code areas sampled. These stretched from south of the Forth to the very far north. On fat content only five failed to be in the amber category (less than 20%) but on salt only three were into the amber grouping (less than 1.5%). The results give evidence of the state of play, shows what is possible, shows what has to be done, generates industry interest, stimulates changes in recipes to end up with Healthier Products.

Code	Salt level	Salt Rank	Fat level	Fat Rank
V	1.12	1	22.25	21
J	1.41	2	15.57	9
A	1.42	3	14.68	6
L	1.51	4	16.25	11
O	1.54	5	17.20	14
W	1.62	6	22.93	22
S	1.69	7	20.06	18
B	1.70	8	13.62	2
U	1.74	9	21.74	20
A	1.75	10	13.22	1
P	1.77	11	17.98	15
D	1.78	12	14.34	3
K	1.79	13	15.63	10
I	1.87	14	15.52	8
R	1.89	15	19.20	17
F	1.98	16	14.62	5
E	2.03	17	14.57	4
M	2.06	18	16.61	12
N	2.06	19	17.07	13
Q	2.10	20	18.99	16
H	2.11	21	14.98	7
T	2.23	22	20.55	19
AVERAGE	1.78		17.16	

One particular seasoning had four out of the top six ranked by lowest levels of salt. But one of the snags in looking at this is that we do not know if butchers stuck to the recipes recommended by the suppliers.

Seasonings supplied to the major sausage manufacturers have seen reductions this year between 15 and 20%.

Seasoning suppliers will reduce salt content if their customers demand it but this is not yet happening.

There will be cost implications since between 50% and 60% of seasoning is salt but the usage rate might end up less. Another difficulty in the analysis of results is that the salt in rusks is adding 0.125 to the salt content.

The recommended usage rate for seasonings currently in use should work out at 1.65% but then the rusks make that 1.77 or 1.78%.

There is nothing to stop seasoning blenders reducing salt content it just requires the trade to ask for it. As a result of the analysis several of those whose sausages were sampled have revisited their sausage recipes and consulted with their seasoning supplier.

Food innovation @ Abertay has now launched its website: www.foodinnovation.abertay.ac.uk. It explains services and facilities available to food and drink manufacturing businesses including sensory analysis, product testing and website and database design.