

Summary

In order to understand meat packaging, it is important to understand the needs of the meat product to be marketed. Research has shown that meat colour is a primary factor affecting consumer purchase decisions and the most favorable meat colour is red. Meat contains the protein myoglobin, which is responsible for bringing about the change in colour. Within its structure, myoglobin contains iron and a binding site for various biochemical components to attach. The state of the iron and the nature of the components attached to the binding site determine the colour of the meat.

Consumers have several indicators available to determine meat freshness and quality. In addition to colour and odor changes associated with the end of case-life, code dates are included on fresh meat packaging labels. Code dates indicate when a package should be sold or consumed in order to ensure freshness.

There are several practices used in packaging the different types of meat (beef, lamb meat or mutton and pork) such as vacuum packaging of primal cuts, vacuum packaged telescoped lamb carcass, gas-flushing of primal cuts, modified atmosphere packaging etc.