

Title: Hygiene practices in deli meats slicing sector in supermarkets in Sao Paulo, Brazil

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Abstract:

In retail foodservice establishments, meat slicers are among the most difficult items to clean. Employees are responsible for ensuring correct hygiene practices in the slicing sectors of these establishments, and therefore, they need to be properly trained. Poor hygiene practices in the ready-to-eat meat products slicing sectors may cause cross-contamination with undesired microorganisms, affecting their safety and shelf life. The purpose of this study was to conduct a survey of the hygiene practices in establishments where deli meats are sliced and retailed for immediate consumption. A questionnaire was developed based on Brazilian legislation related to SSOP and GMP, validated and applied in 10 randomly selected supermarkets in the city of São Paulo, Brazil. Questions addressed mainly hygiene practices during food handling and slicing, personal and environmental hygiene, and documentation. Eighty percent of the evaluated supermarkets followed the SSOP recommended by the Brazilian legislation, and had employees trained for the adoption of GMP in the slicing sector. The GMP manual was available for consultation in 70% of the establishments. However, the slicers had organic residues and some corrosion in 30%. In 20%, the employees did not remove the residues of slices when the cleaning was performed. Only 40% documented the frequency of cleaning and used sanitizers for disinfection of slicers. In 20%, the temperature of refrigerators did not follow the regulations (-4 C to 4 C). It was possible to observe that the most of employees responsible of deli meats slicing sector in the establishments were trained about Brazilian legislation and GMP, besides having those information available to them. However, they did not worry about hygiene practices and were not checking the legislation adequacy in some situations inside the slicing sector, contributing with risks associated to ready-to-eat meat products, like cross-contamination. This survey contributed to show that the employees need more awareness about the risks associated with inadequate cleaning and improve the hygiene practices in the slicing sector of retail foodservice establishments.

Key-Words: hygiene practices, meat products, ready-to-eat foods, cross-contamination

Financing: FAPESP, CNPq.