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Modeling risk-benefit in a food chain: nutritional benefit versus microbial spoilage risk in canned green beans

The canning process



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Introduction

The same factors such as time, temperature, pH and O_2 concentration, affect both microbial changes and nutrient degradation in a food processing line. Microbial risk assessment is increasingly performed to evaluate the effect of processing fresh and processed foods on the microbial fate. A similar approach could be used to evaluate vitamin degradation during food

processing operations. We therefore propose to model simultaneously the evolution of some bacteria and vitamin concentrations in a real food chain: a canned green bean processing chain. We aim to find a compromise on process parameters that optimizes nutritional benefit while keeping risk at an acceptable level.

Methodology

A risk and benefit second order Monte-Carlo simulation model was built, using literature data, data from a real green bean processing line, and expert opinions. Uncertainty and/or variability distributions were adjusted to model parameters using bayesian inference or maximum likelihood method, and performing a meta-analysis on heat resistance parameters.

Basic microbial and biochemical processes determining changes in bacterial and vitamin concentrations were defined at each step of the industrial process, as well as the most

relevant chemical and physical environmental factors affecting those changes.



The risk: Geobacillus Stearothermophilus Non pathogenic thermophilic bacteria, responsible of spoilage





The benefit: Vitamin C (AA and DHA)

Useful for immunity, cicatrization, antioxydant capacity



Low inactivation due to high temperature (80-90°C)
Cross-contamination by water

Possibility of cross-contamination by green bean debris

Cross-contamination via coverage liquid







(N_t: contamination in cfu at time t, T: temperature, D: decimal reduction time, z: increase in temperature causing to a 10-fold reduction of D, p: shape parameter, μ_{max} and μ_{opt} : maximal and optimal growth rates)

Predicted evolution of *G.stearothermophilus* and vitamin C concentrations:



Figure 1. Several evolution scenarios in some green bean cans (obtained from different random variability and uncertainty values)

- Physiological evolution models:
- Chemical reaction models⁽²⁾:

Arrhenius law :
$$k1, k3 = k_{ref} \cdot \exp(-\frac{E_a}{R}(\frac{1}{T} - \frac{1}{T_{ref}}))$$

• Diffusion at blanching : Fick law

(AA, DHA and CGA: Ascorbic, Deshydroascorbic and Ketoglutaric acids, O2: oxygen, []: concentrations, k,k1,k2: speed reaction coefficients, t: duration, T: temperature, Ea: activation energy, R: universal gaz constant)

 $\frac{d[AA]}{dt} = -k$

Figure 2. Simultaneous risk-benefice model graph, confrontation to reality:



The only commands common to bacterial inactivation and to vitamin degradation are the blanching and sterilisation times and temperatures.

 $\frac{d[AA]}{d[AA]} = -k1.[AA].[O2]^{\beta}$

 $\frac{d[DHA]}{d} = k1.[AA].[O2]^{\beta} - k3.[DHA]$

Non stability predicted rate: ≈ 6%
→ rather high compared to industrial data
Predicted vit C concentration: ≈ 12mg/kg
→ to be compared to ≈ 30mg/kg in litterature

A simple sensitivity analysis shows that the most impacting factors seem to be:
for *G.stearothermophilus:* heat resistance parameter D, green bean pH at sterilization, heat resistance parameter z_T, and cross contamination from blanching water.
for vitamin C: initial concentration of vit C and proportion of AA, size of the residual headspace

of air in the can, blanching and residence times, and kinetic rates of reaction k_{ref,AA} and k.

Discussion and perspectives

> The model is still in progress, but only few parameters seem to have an important impact on both vitamin C and *G.stearothermophilus* final concentrations.

➢The prediction of changes in vitamin concentrations and spoilage rate will be analysed and compared to measured data to validate the model. A more detailed sensivity analysis will permit to find the most impacting factors and possibly an optimization bivariate criteria.

References

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