

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(75) 593 final

Brussels, 3 december 1975

Amended proposal

for a

COUNCIL REGULATION

laying down common standards for the water
content of frozen and deepfrozen fowl carcasses

(submitted to the Council by the Commission
pursuant to the second paragraph of Article 149
of the EEC Treaty)

COM(75) 593 final

Explanatory memorandum

The "dry" preparation of poultry is impossible in modern slaughterhouses and the use of water at the various stages of treatment (plucking, evisceration and cooling) means inevitably that some water penetrates the tissues and cavities of the carcasses.

In order to improve the quality of foodstuffs and to prevent distortions of competition within the European Economic Community, it is necessary to fix the maximum quantities of extraneous water which may be absorbed by chilled and frozen poultry carcasses during preparation.

The scientific and technical documentation on the water content of frozen and deep-frozen poultry carcasses provides the following information:

1. The deepfreezing, freezing and storage of carcasses result in the dehydration of the product, which is detrimental to its organoleptic qualities. The introduction of water during preparation of the poultry thus constitutes an improvement in the quality of the product, provided that the quantity added is not excessive. The desired result is obtained by the addition of a quantity of water representing 6 - 8 % of the weight of the carcass.
2. Poultry carcasses normally contain a large proportion of physiological liquid largely composed of water. The proportion of this water to the weight of carcass is not constant but varies largely according to the quantity of fat which the carcass contains. Furthermore, it is impossible to make a chemical distinction between this physiological liquid and the extraneous water added intentionally or otherwise during preparation.

These considerations made it necessary to carry out a study, in which research laboratories of all the Member States participated. The conclusions of this work may be summarized as follows:

- (a) Laboratory experiments have shown that about 60 % of the water introduced into the carcass at the time of preparation is expelled at the moment of determining the water content by the drip method. This percentage includes a quantity of physiological liquid.

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- (b) The quantity of physiological water contained in the eviscerated carcasses of fowls treated "dry", with or without offal, frozen or deepfrozen, is constant in relation to the quantity of proteins of which the carcass is composed.
- (c) In the eviscerated carcasses of fowls treated according to present trade practices, the constant ratios indicated above are altered, and the difference thus ascertained permits the determination of the average quantity of extraneous water absorbed by the carcasses during preparation.

It is therefore possible to determine with accuracy whether the quantity of foreign water absorbed by the carcass during preparation exceeds the limit fixed by the Council. The Commission proposes that the Council should adopt the annexed modified proposal which is based on the results of research conducted by laboratories of the Member States. This modified proposition adapts the draft regulation put before the Council on 4 February 1974. These rules could be applied, separately from the marketing standards, from the 1 May 1976.

Draft

Amended proposal for a Council Regulation
laying down common standards for the water
content of frozen and deepfrozen fowl car-
cases

(submitted in accordance with the second paragraph of Article 149
of the EEC Treaty)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community;

Having regard to Council Regulation (EEC) No 2777/75 ⁽¹⁾ of 1 November 1975 on the
common organization of the market in poultrymeat, as last amended on

and

in particular Article 2 (2) thereof;

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission;

Whereas the marketing standards provided for in Article 2 (2) of Regulation
(EEC) No 2777/75 must be aimed at improving the quality of products and hence promote
sales; whereas, pending the adoption of more comprehensive Community rules in the
matter, the maximum extraneous water content of frozen and deepfrozen whole
fowls should be defined, since most of the products marketed in
which water content is a significant factor would thus be covered;

Whereas a method of rapid detection should be established for control purposes,
together with a reliable method for the precise determination of the content of
water added during the preparation of the carcasses; whereas no distinction should
be made between physiological liquid and extraneous water from carcass preparation,
since such a distinction would present practical difficulties;

(1) OJ No L 282, 1.11.1975, p. 77.

Whereas it is for each Member State to designate the agency or agencies responsible for control and to prescribe the penalties for infringements;

Whereas provision should be made for the adoption of common rules in this matter, notably with a view to ensuring that marketing standards are uniformly applied;

Whereas the provisions of this Regulation in no way prejudice Community provisions adopted with a view to harmonizing veterinary and foodstuffs legislation and to protecting human and animal health and preventing adulteration and fraud;

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HAD ADOPTED THIS REGULATION :

Article 1

1. Frozen or deepfrozen fowls may be marketed by way of trade within the Community only if their extraneous water content absorbed during preparation is not more than 8 % of the weight of the carcase.
2. The term "marketing" comprises every kind of marketing, including in particular possession with a view to selling, putting up for sale, sale, delivery and importation.

Article 2

1. Controls may be effected in respect of any quantity of fowls of not less than 1 000 kg in storage prior to or during marketing, and also upon importation from third countries.
2. The quantity to be controlled shall be divided into lots of from 1 000 kg to 5 000 kg. A sample of twelve carcasses selected at random shall be taken from each lot.

The control may cover all or part of the lot made up from the total quantity in storage.

Article 3

1. The carcasses selected shall be given an identification mark showing the lot from which they were obtained and shall be dispatched for analysis in the manner appropriate to the state in which they have been put up for sale.
2. The extraneous water content shall be determined by the rapid detection method laid down in Annex I.

If the limit laid down in paragraph 12 of Annex I is exceeded, an analysis shall be made by the method laid down in Annex II.

However, if there are grounds for supposing that use was made during preparation of absorbent substances which cause extraneous water to be retained in the carcase, determination of the water content need not be by the rapid detection method.

3. If the result of the analysis reveals an extraneous water content of more than 8 % of the total weight of the carcasses examined from one lot, the holder may request that a counteranalysis be made.

In that event, the sample of carcasses shall be taken from the lot in question in accordance with the foregoing provisions.

4. If under Article 6 (b) one or more alternative methods of analysis are accepted, the counteranalysis shall be effected by a method other than that used for the first analysis.

Article 4

1. If the result of the control reveals that a lot has an extraneous water content of more than 8 % of the weight of the carcasses, the lot in question may not be marketed in its existing state.
2. The costs of control, and in particular of the analyses, shall be borne by the holder of the lot only if the control results in marketing being prohibited in accordance with paragraph 1.
3. Member States shall take all steps necessary to penalize infringements of the provisions of this Regulation,

Article 5

Member States and the Commission shall conduct regular exchanges of views concerning the operation of this Regulation, in particular under the procedure provided for in Article 18 of Regulation (EEC) No. 2777/75.

If a lot from a Member State cannot be marketed following control carried out in another Member State, the latter shall immediately so inform the first Member State.

Article 6

In accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 17 of Regulation (EEC) No 2777/75,
(a) technical adjustments may be made to the Annexes to take account of progress made in methods of detection and analysis;

- (b) one or more methods of analysis alternative to those laid down in Annex II may be accepted, provided that they offer equivalent guarantees.
- (c) implementing provisions for this Regulation may be adopted.

Article 7

This Regulation shall enter into force on 1 May 1976.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

For the Council

The President

ANNEX I

Drip technique

- Rapid detection method -

1. Wipe the outside of the individual pack and weigh the bird in the pack.
2. Remove the bird from the pack and weigh the pack.
3. Establish the basic weight, which is the difference between weights 1 and 2.
4. Place the bird in a dry, waterproof plastic bag in such a way that the abdominal cavity is towards the closed end of the bag.
5. Plunge the bag into a basin of water at a temperature of between 40 and 45° C. Hold it in such a way that the knot closing the bag allows no air to escape, taking care to ensure that water from the basin does not enter the bag and that the sides of the bag lie against the bird.
6. The thawing time should be as follows, according to the size of the carcass:

800 g	65'
900 g	72'
1 000 g	78'
1 100 g	85'
1 200 g	91'
1 300 g	98'
1 400 g	105'

and thereafter increases of 7' per 100 g.

7. Empty the basin. Pierce the bottom of the bag to allow water produced by thawing to escape.
8. Allow the bird to drain for one hour.
9. Remove the bird from the bag and dry the carcass inside and out with filter paper.

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10. Weigh the bird to obtain the final weight.
11. Express the difference between the final weight and the basic weight as a percentage of the basic weight.
12. If that percentage exceeds 5.6 %, the carcasses selected should be analysed by one of the methods laid down in Annex II. If the percentage is 5.6 % or less, the lot in question shall be considered as complying with the limits set.

Notes:

- A. Where edible offal is included with the bird in the individual pack, the weight of such offal is added to the final weight of the carcass following thawing, evacuation of water and drying with filter paper.
- B. The bag must meet the following specifications:
 - thickness: 0.05 mm
 - height: for birds of a net weight of 1 250 g or less:
31 cm; circumference: 34 cm
 - for birds of a net weight of more than 1 250 g:
40 cm; circumference: 44 cm.
- C. If the bird is not in an individual pack, the test must establish that the basic weight corresponds to the weight of the bird.

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ANNEX II

Methods of analysis

The water content of cocks and hens or chickens may be analysed by the following method:

"Measurement of the water and proteins contained in whole carcasses,"

I. Measurement of the water and proteins contained in whole carcasses

In this method, the whole carcass, as put up for sale (frozen or deepfrozen), is crushed.

(a) Determination of moisture

This analysis is conducted in accordance with International Standard ISO 1442 - 1973 (1).

The percentage of moisture obtained by this method is multiplied by the mass of each carcass from which the analysed samples were taken and the result obtained expresses in grams the quantity of water contained in each carcass.

(b) Determination of proteins

The determination of proteins is effected by measuring the nitrogen as laid down in ISO Recommendation R 937/1969 (1).

The percentage of protein obtained by this method is multiplied by the mass of each carcass from which the analysed samples were taken and the result obtained expresses in grams the quantity of proteins contained in each carcass.

Conclusion to be drawn

If, for all the carcasses analysed, the weight of water exceeds the following values:

(1) In the version existing at entering into force of this regulation.

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- in respect of chickens: $y = 3,82 x + 47,69$ (2)

- in respect of hens and
cocks: $y = 3,78 x + 4,62$ (2)

the lot of carcasses controlled contains more than 8 % of extraneous water and does not comply with the standards laid down in this Regulation. If the lot of carcasses contains less than 8 %, it shall be considered as complying with the standards laid down in this Regulation.

(2) y = weight of water in grams

x = weight of proteins in grams.

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