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Norsk Kjøtt [Norwegian Meat]
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Use of CO as Packaging Gas

In Norway, CO has so far been used in very minute quantities together with other packaging gases for gas packaged cuts of meat and ground meat. This packaging gas has not been approved in the EU yet, and has not been used in Denmark this far.

CO and the other packaging gases help ensure the storage life and color stability of fresh meat, which are important for central packaging and distribution of meat. The trend in Denmark is toward increased central packaging of fresh meat, since this is both efficient and ensures high microbiological quality. It would therefore be interesting to take advantage of the positive Norwegian experiences with the use of CO in this country, as well.

Published research shows that the risk of growth of a range of pathogenic bacteria is the same or reduced when using CO in combination with the traditional packaging gases. The use of this gas can thus help improve food safety (Food Microbiology and Food Safety into the Next Millennium, Proceedings of the Seventeenth International Conference of International Committee on Food Microbiology and Hygiene, Netherlands, 1999).

The use of CO in the given concentration of 0.3–0.5% should not represent any toxicological risk to consumers. CO is generally supplied in a concentration of 1% in a mixture with either N₂ or CO₂ and does therefore not represent any workplace hazard to operators during the packaging process.

We are not aware that the use of CO was discussed in the process of drafting Directive 95/2/EU of February 20, 1995 concerning additives other than colorings and sweeteners. This may be due to the fact that no country had expressed any interest in using this kind of gas at the time.

Since there are advantages to the use of CO as a packaging gas, as mentioned, and since there are no negative effects to either consumers or packaging operators, DANSKE SLAGTERIER can support an



application to the EU Commission to include CO on the list of approved additives, possibly limiting the amount.

Sincerely,

DANSKE SLAGTERIER

[Signature]

Anne Birgitte Lundholt

(Managing Director)

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