

PORK QUALITY

Title: National Pork Retail Benchmarking Study - **NPB #11-163**

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Abstract: The objective of this study was to benchmark fresh pork quality in retail meat cases in the United States. Nationally, 117 retailers in 67 cities were selected for sampling. Center-cut loin chops were observed in-store, in package, to obtain subjective color (n=2795), and marbling (n=2767) scores. Enhanced and non-enhanced center-cut loin chops, sirloin chops, and blade steaks of each brand were purchased for measurements of pH, Minolta color (L*, a*, and b*), and tenderness (WBSF). Means for enhanced and non-enhanced loin chops were: color (3.19 vs. 3.18, SEM=0.03), marbling (2.39 vs. 2.47; SEM=0.04), pH (5.98 vs. 5.78; SEM=0.01), L* (54.31 vs. 56.10; SEM=0.15), a* (5.61 vs. 6.23; SEM=0.13), b* (3.62 vs. 3.82; SEM=0.08), and WBSF (21.00 vs. 25.24; SEM=0.25N), respectively. Means for enhanced vs. non-enhanced sirloin chops were: pH (6.01 vs. 5.68; SED=0.05), L* (51.33 vs. 52.24; SED=0.61), a* (20.06 vs. 17.68; SED=0.52), b* (9.69 vs. 9.94; SED=0.32), and WBSF (15.99 vs. 23.00; SED=0.70N), respectively. Means for enhanced vs. non-enhanced blade steaks were: pH (6.22 vs. 6.16; SED=0.04), L* (45.05 vs. 45.08; SED=0.37), a* (20.79 vs. 18.89; SED=0.26), b* (8.37 vs. 7.85; SED=0.21), and WBSF (15.76 vs. 17.13; SED=0.59N), respectively. This research provides retailers, processors, and other pork industry stakeholders with benchmark values of pork quality in center-cut loin chops, sirloin chops, and blade steaks which information to reduce variation and improve pork quality at the retail level.

These research results were submitted in fulfillment of checkoff-funded research projects. This report is published directly as submitted by the project's principal investigator. This report has not been peer-reviewed.

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