SENSORY ANALYSIS OF MUSSELS *Perna perna* IRRADIATED AND NON-IRRADIATED


The consumption of mussels, filtrating animals that directly reflect the environment conditions, may represent risks to public health. To be sold, must be technologically processed in order to reduce the microbial load of contaminants and increase shelf life. Irradiation is a process for this. As the search for foods that present sensorial characteristics similar to the *in natura* is increasing, irradiation must not affect these attributes. The objective of this study was to analyze comparatively and sensorily mussel samples irradiated, with a dose of 6kGy, and non-irradiated. These were divided into two groups: irradiated and non-irradiated, and analyzed by the acceptance test, verifying the attributes of appearance, texture, flavor and general acceptance, using a hedonic scale of 9 points. Fifty consumers were recruited to the test. The samples were served in random and monadic order, on coded disposable plates. The results were evaluated by analysis of variance. The samples were analyzed microbiologically before the acceptance test, and proved to be suitable for consumption. Regarding the sensorial acceptance there was no significant difference between the non-irradiated and irradiated in any of the attributes evaluated (p>0.05). To the appearance attribute, acceptance average ranged between the hedonic terms "indifferent" and "liked moderately." For the others attributes, the averages ranged between "liked slightly" and "liked moderately." The technique didn’t cause any significant change regarding to the general acceptance of the mussel, which indicates that the irradiation, on the applied dose, may be applied without changing the sensorial acceptance of the product by consumers.