PHYSICO-CHEMICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CASSAVA STARCH PRODUCED IN THE STATE OF SANTA CATARINA

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Cassava cultivation is widely distributed throughout Brazil and, in 2011, its production was estimated to be around 27.1 million tons. Great amount of this raw material is destined to the flour industry, since it's considered to be a very energetic and low cost food. Taking that into account, this study aimed to evaluate the physico-chemical characteristics of cassava flour from the dry group produced in different regions of the Santa Catarina state. Parameters such as moisture, ash, aqueous-soluble acidity and starch amount of 55 samples were analyzed. All of them presented moisture and ash values within the limits set by legislation (13 and 1.5%, respectively). The acidity ranged from 0.98 to 8.71 mL of 0.1 mol.L⁻¹NaOH/100g, in which 8 samples were above 3.0 mL, classified as high acidity, which is characteristics of some regional kind of production due to fermentation of the cassava in the press step of the processing. The starch amount ranged from 70.65 to 92.17%, where 6 samples were below the minimum value (75.0%) estimated by legislation. The low starch content in flours can be explained by the poor quality of the raw material from which it derives. Despite the inequalities observed, the major amount of samples analyzed was within the limits considered ideal by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply. Nevertheless, this kind of study is important to show that improvements in the supply chain are necessary, regarding the standardization of the production of the cassava flour.