

Abstract

The meat value chain in pastoral regions is characterized by large post-slaughter losses due to lack of appropriate preservation technologies. Reports indicate that sun-drying, salting and deep frying have been practiced for meat preservation in the pastoral regions but there is limited empirical information on the manner and extent of practice of these methods. This study was therefore designed to collect and authenticate information on meat preservation technologies practiced in the pastoral areas. Using a structured questionnaire, key informants interviews and focused group discussions, data was collected from four pastoral counties, namely Marsabit, Turkana, Garissa and Kajiado counties, in a cross-sectional survey. Data was also collected from processors and handlers in Nairobi County to provide reference of modern handling and processing. Results revealed that different communities in the pastoral areas have adopted preservation technologies based on deep frying, salting and sun-drying while cooling and curing are practiced in the modern processing facilities in Nairobi. The main storage containers used in the pastoral districts are wooden, metallic and plastic containers. Meat handling was done by men, while by-products handling was by women, the two processes are usually separated in the production floor. Deep-frying, salting and sun-drying were predominantly done to extend the shelf life and to impart the distinct flavor of pastoral meat products. Where wooden containers were used, the containers were fumigated with smoke from burned wood (Adung). Meat quality deterioration was caused mainly by unhygienic handling practices which results to microbial contamination. Spoilage was aggravated during sun-drying which is a slow process. The study concludes that there are technologies of meat processing and preservation in the pastoral areas with the potential for upgrading in terms of process hygiene and product quality to reduce postharvest loss and make the products competitive.