

IDF Press Release



UNVEILING THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF SALT IN THE MANUFACTURE AND RIPENING OF CHEESE

Brussels, 1 April 2014 - Understanding the role of salt in the cheese making process is crucial in order to explore new sodium reduction strategies. The International Dairy Federation (IDF) has released a monograph on “The Importance of Salt in the Manufacture and Ripening of Cheese”, with renowned experts in the field having compiled the latest scientific knowledge available.

This monograph illustrates that the global dairy sector recognizes the impact of sodium intake on human health. It follows the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendation to reduce sodium from all food sources to reduce the risk of cardiovascular and coronary heart disease and stroke.

Salt has been used for thousands of years to preserve foods by inhibition of growth of undesirable micro-organisms and for technological properties and functionalities. Last but not least, salt also gives taste or enhances flavor. For these reasons it is widely used in many food products.

The IDF new publication explains that there are major differences in the role of sodium in different food products. This should be taken into account when defining sodium reduction strategies. *“For foods like cheese, the reduction of salt is limited by food safety considerations and technological/functional needs. In certain cases the food matrix can even reduce the impact of sodium on blood pressure, as has been demonstrated with certain milk products,”* commented Paul Paquin, Ph.D., Institute of Nutrition and Functional Foods, INAF/STELA, University Laval Canada.

“The reformulation of some foods, such as cheese, would be a much more difficult process compared to other foods. In order to reduce the salt content of cheese, reductions need to be made with care, so as not to affect the safety and quality of the product, and to allow for the consumers’ palate to adjust. In addition, manufacturing procedures need to be developed further. From the perspective of today, the addition of salt will still remain an integral part of the process of cheese-making,” added Dr Paquin.

Taking these considerations into account, the report provides enhanced understanding for improving means to control the addition of salt to preserve a large variety of safe, tasty and nutritious cheeses which are greatly enjoyed by consumers around the world.

This new monograph concludes that further research on the impact of salt reduction in the area of food safety is still required.

IDF will continue to guide the global dairy industry to develop innovative technologies and deliver healthy, nutritious and sustainable products to the consumer.

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Note to editors:

Special issue of IDF N° SI-1401/2014 "*The importance of salt in the manufacture and ripening of cheese*" can be ordered online at www.fil-idf.org

Drs. Paul Paquin and Steve Labrie are co-editors of the IDF Special Issue on "*The importance of salt in the manufacture and ripening of cheese*".

About IDF

The International Dairy Federation (IDF) provides science-based information to its National Committees as well as to international organizations, governments and legislators. IDF places great emphasis and importance on ensuring that the work conducted by its Standing Committees and Task Forces is of the highest scientific quality and integrity and is relevant and applicable to the entire dairy sector and industry worldwide. For more information, visit www.fil-idf.org.

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