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## **PICK N PAY MOTIVATION REGARDING DESCRIPTORS ON STEAKS AND THE NUMBER OF DAYS MATURED.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

At Pick n Play our consumers are our first priority and we recognise their right to freedom of choice and full disclosure. The customer too has a right to consistent quality products that meet all the regulatory requirements.

### **THE PICK N PAY BEEF STEAK RANGE**

The steak range at Pick n Play consists of:

- Dry Age Beef Steak
- Lazy Age Beef Steak
- Free Range Lazy Age Beef Steak
- Matured Thick Cut Beef Steak
- Hand Trimmed Beef Steak

### **DRY AGE BEEF STEAK - 21 DAYS MATURED**

Process

- A detailed standard operating procedure (SOP) is in place with the store and the staff have undergone training to ensure they understand the correct process of dry aging.
- Each primal has a traceability tag.
- Only after 21 days will the store pack the steak into the service counter or pack for the consumer.
- Dry aging affect two main factors of the meat, namely flavour and texture. The action of enzymes on the protein changes characteristic, flavour and texture. Once the animal is slaughtered and the control systems in its cells stop functioning, the enzymes start attacking other cell molecules into smaller flavourful fragments. They break proteins into savoury amino acids and fats and fat like membrane molecules into aromatic fatty acids. All of these breakdown products contribute to the intensely meaty, nutty flavour of aged meat.
- Air movement is monitored to control the evaporation of moisture which causes the intense concentration of beef flavour.
- Natural enzyme called calpains break down the internal meat fibres during chilled storage to increase the tenderness of finished steak.
- By maturing the meat under these conditions we improve the beef cut in tenderness and flavour.

## **LAZY AGE BEEF STEAK – 28 DAYS MATURED**

### Process

- Our lazy aged beef steak 28 days matured, is manufactured at approved suppliers.
- A detailed product specification has been drawn up with our preferred supplier detailing all requirements and number of maturation days for wet age.
- Traceability is maintained by the supplier working back from the sell by date that is placed onto the pack at time of packing into the retail ready case. All documentation to be kept by the supplier for reference.
- Meat that is vacuum packaged in a sealed barrier film and held at a temperature above the freezing point of the meat is classified as wet age.
- The meat is packed in its own juices, allowing its natural enzymes to break down connective tissue but without the fluid loss.
- After 28 days the meat is cut by hand and packed in retail ready cases.
- By maturing the meat under these conditions we improve the beef cut in tenderness and flavour.

## **FREE RANGE LAZY AGE BEEF STEAK – 35 DAYS MATURED**

- Our Free Range lazy aged beef steak 35 days matured, is manufactured at approved suppliers.
- Beef is received from an approved free range beef abattoirs for our suppliers.
- The farms, abattoirs, deboning and processing facilities are all independently audited by SAMIC to ensure compliance and traceability to the Pick n Pay Free Range protocol.
- A detailed product specification has been drawn up with our preferred supplier detailing all requirements and number of maturation days.
- Traceability is maintained by the supplier working back from the sell by date that is placed onto the pack at time of packing into the retail ready case. All documentation to be kept by the supplier for reference.
- Meat that is vacuum packaged in a sealed barrier film and held at a temperature above the freezing point of the meat is classified as wet age.
- The meat is packed in its own juices, allowing its natural enzymes to break down connective tissue, but without the fluid loss.
- This process is done in a controlled environment for 35 days.
- After 35 days the meat is cut by hand and packed in retail ready cases.
- By maturing the meat under these conditions we improve the beef cut in tenderness and flavour.

### **MATURED THICK CUT BEEF STEAKS - 14 DAYS MATURED**

- A detailed SOP is in place with the store and the staff have undergone training to ensure they understand the correct process of wet aging for 14 days.
- The meat is vacuum packed in a controlled environment and have traceability.
- After 14 days these primals are then cut by hand into 20 – 30mm thick slices into retail ready cases available to our consumer.
- By maturing the meat under these conditions we improve the beef cut in tenderness and flavour.

### **HAND TRIMMED BEEF STEAK – 0 DAYS MATURED**

- The beef steaks have not undergone any maturation process and therefore we make no claim on these steaks relating to tenderness and flavour.

### **AGING PROCESS AND EFFECTS ON FLAVOUR AND TENDERNESS**

It is scientifically proven that steak matured for a pre-determined period of time is more tender and flavoursome than a steak cut from a freshly slaughtered carcass. For this reason we have made the following descriptions on our matured steak range:

- Free Range Lazy Age Beef Steak 35 days matured
  - Our free range products are obtained from animals raised in a free range environment. Produced under a strict set of standards, with the prohibition of growth stimulants, routine antibiotics and animal by-products. We then wet age it under vacuum under controlled conditions for a minimum of 35 days for flavour and tenderness.
- Lazy Age Beef Steak 28 days matured
  - Our hand cut and trimmed lazy age steaks are wet age under vacuum under controlled conditions for a minimum of 28 days for flavour and tenderness.
- Dry Age Beef Steak 21 days matured
  - Our hand cut and trimmed dry age steaks are dried under controlled conditions in store for a minimum of 21 days for flavour and tenderness.
- Matured Thick Cut Beef Steak 14 days matured
  - Our hand trimmed matured steak are wet age under vacuum under controlled conditions for a minimum of 14 days for flavour and tenderness.
- Hand Trimmed Beef Steak 0 days matured
  - No claim.

## **FOOD SAFETY**

- All our suppliers of meat and / or meat products have to successfully pass a food safety audit.
- The Pick n Pay food technologists regularly visit abattoirs, deboning and processing facilities that pack under the Pick n Pay brand to validate that the processes and food safety management systems are being maintained.
- Our Pick n Pay stores are independently audited each month to validate that the food safety principles in store are being maintained.
- Regional managers visit the store to ensure that products are being manufactured to the correct specification.
- The stores have a SOP on how to manufacture, mature and store products.
- Each product has an in store product specification detailing the individual requirements of that particular product.

## **QUALITY CONTROL**

- Our products are regularly purchased at random from stores or through our distribution centre to evaluate.
- During the evaluation the products are analysed to ensure compliance to our specification.
- The product is then prepared and a report is written detailing the organoleptic properties.
- Any non-compliance identified will be addressed with the store or supplier to rectify the matter.

## **REFERENCES**

International journal of gastronomy and food science: Neil Perry Pg. 78