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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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I10. Industrial and Food Microbiology and Biotechnology

P339. Chemical and microbiological characterization of Portuguese “innovative” alheiras

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Alheira is a well-known Portuguese fermented sausage traditionally made with pork and/or poultry meats. Recently, other varieties of alheiras (codfish, mushrooms, tofu, soy and vegetables) have been appeared in the market to meet different preferences of consumers. Therefore, the main objective of this study was to characterize these new products, regarding their microbiological and chemical characteristics.

For fourteen different products, microbiological characterization included enumeration of several indicator organisms and detection of important pathogens as *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Salmonella* spp. and sulphite reducing *Clostridium* spores. Chemical characteristics determined were water activity, pH, nitrite, nitrate, biogenic amines and acid organic content.

Despite water activity and pH levels were insufficient to assure microbiological safety of the analysed alheiras, nitrites, nitrates, biogenic amines and organic acids content were found to be within accepted limits for this kind of products. Also foodborne pathogens like *L. monocytogenes*, *Escherichia coli*, *Salmonella* spp., *Staphylococcus aureus* and sulphite reducing *Clostridium* spores were not found in any sample.

At our knowledge, this is the first study reporting characterization of this Portuguese “innovative” alheiras. What is now important to understand is why, for the same producers, traditional are more contaminated than “innovative” alheiras, since they are produced in the same facilities and, eventually, under the same conditions.