

## FERMENTED SAUSAGES: YEASTS AS STARTER CULTURE

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Yeasts are one of the important groups beside lactic acid bacteria and catalase positive cocci in fermented sausage. In the early 1970s, work on the use of yeasts as starter culture for sausage fermentation was intensified. The strains used are all classified as *Debaryomyces hansenii*. Nowadays, *Debaryomyces hansenii*, the predominant species in fermented meat products, or its imperfect form, *Candida famata* is used as starter culture. *Debaryomyces hansenii* is characterized by a high salt tolerance, low pH and  $a_w$  resistance, and aerobic or weak fermentative metabolism. Also, it can grow at temperatures close to those used during the ripening of fermented sausages. However, yeasts cannot tolerate certain components in smoke, such as phenols and organic acids. Therefore, slight treatment with smoke kills yeast present on the surface. Nitrate reduction ability is not an important property of yeast starters. Yeasts' contribution seems to be related to the consumption of oxygen and the catalase production with the consequent peroxides degradation. Consequently, yeasts delay the autoxidative reactions and the onset of rancidity that take place in the fat. Yeasts contributes to formation of flavor with their proteolytic and lipolytic activities. This study presents a review of works on the use of yeasts as starter cultures in fermented sausages and discusses the functions of yeasts in the light of literature.

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