

# UNIVERSIDAD DE CÓRDOBA

# PROGRAMA DE BIOCIENCIAS Y CIENCIAS AGROALIMENTARIAS

# CARACTERIZACIÓN DE PRODUCTOS DEL CERDO IBÉRICO MEDIANTE EL ANÁLISIS MULTIFRACTAL DE IMÁGENES

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# TITULO: Caracterización de productos del cerdo ibérico mediante el análisis multifractal de imágenes

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#### TÍTULO DE LA TESIS: Caracterización de productos del cerdo ibérico mediante el análisis multifractal de imágenes

#### DOCTORANDO: FRANCISCO PERÁN SÁNCHEZ

#### INFORME RAZONADO DEL/DE LOS DIRECTOR/ES DE LA TESIS

(se hará mención a la evolución y desarrollo de la tesis, así como a trabajos y publicaciones derivados de la misma).

La tesis doctoral llevada a cabo por Francisco Perán Sánchez explora la viabilidad del análisis multifractal de las imágenes digitales de muestras de carne de cerdo ibérico, en concreto solomillo y jamón, como proveedor de información para las bases de datos que se emplean en la predicción de su calidad mediante *data mining* o *machine learning*. De esta forma, la dificultad de normalizar y controlar la calidad de un producto que presenta un tejido conectivo graso con una distribución caótica se verá reducida gracias a la aplicación de esta técnica no destructiva.

La primera cuestión que se abordó fue comprobar si la naturaleza multifractal estaba presente en la distribución espacial de tejido conectivo graso del solomillo y, en caso de que fuera así, si las métricas que se obtenían eran suficientemente diferenciadas para las muestras de cerdo ibérico y blanco. Esta investigación fue objeto del trabajo publicado en *Meat Science (2013, 93: 723-732)* en el que se demostró no sólo que el patrón caótico del tejido graso mostrado en las imágenes digitales adquiridas era autosemejante sino que, también, determinadas dimensiones fractales mostraban rangos de valores diferentes según se estuviera considerando el solomillo de cerdo ibérico o blanco.

El resultado prometedor de esta investigación inicial fue el germen de la tesis doctoral que se presenta y planteó la conveniencia de extender este estudio a otro producto del cerdo especialmente valorado por el consumidor y de reconocimiento internacional, como es el jamón ibérico. En este caso, se comprobó si la metodología diseñada era capaz de producir información útil para ser usada en técnicas predictivas de la calidad de este producto. Para ello se adquirieron imágenes digitales de muestras de las diferentes designaciones comerciales de jamón ibérico (bellota 100% ibérico, bellota ibérico, cebo de campo ibérico y cebo ibérico). Tal y como se recoge en el artículo publicado en Meat Science (2019, 148: 55-63), las investigaciones llevadas a cabo mostraron que, cuando el loncheado se hacía por corte manual usando un cuchillo, sí era posible obtener dimensiones fractales cuyos valores eran sensiblemente diferentes para las distintas designaciones comerciales. Esta circunstancia era más evidente cuando se comparaban las designaciones de bellota 100% ibérico y cebo ibérico. Sin embargo, el corte a máguina tenía un efecto devastador sobre la distribución espacial del tejido conectivo graso haciendo superflua la aplicación del análisis multifractal con fines comparadores.

Precisamente, las diferencias encontradas para los parámetros multifractales obtenidos para las designaciones de jamón de bellota 100% ibérico y cebo ibérico planteó la pregunta de cuánto podrían mejorar los resultados del método aplicado

hasta ese momento si se optimizaba el método de adquisición y tratamiento de las imágenes digitales de las muestras cortadas a cuchillo estudiadas. Era pertinente comprobar si, mediante esta actuación que implicaba la automatización del proceso reduciendo considerablemente el error humano, se podía obtener una diferenciación más clara del producto de más calidad del resto. Tal y como se demostró en el trabajo publicado en *Foods (2020, 9: Art. Nº 25)*, el uso de filtros de paso alto en el tratamiento de las imágenes digitales hizo que el análisis multifractal produjera resultados más precisos que, de manera evidente, marcaban diferencias entre jamón de bellota 100% ibérico y las demás designaciones comerciales.

En nuestra opinión, el resultado más destacable de esta tesis doctoral es la propuesta metodológica que se presenta, basada en el análisis multifractal de imágenes digitales de muestras de carne ya que puede exportarse al estudio predictivo de la calidad de otros alimentos. Esta metodología es el fruto de las investigaciones descritas en los trabajos citados, todos ellos publicados en revistas indexadas en *Journal Citation Reports (JCR)*, cuya referencia completa se expone a continuación:

1. Serrano, S.; Perán, F.; Jiménez-Hornero, F.J.; Gutiérrez de Ravé, E. (2013).

Multifractal analysis application to the characterization of fatty infiltration in Iberian and White pork sirloins. Meat Science 93: 723-732, doi: 10.1016/j.meatsci.2012.11.015.

2. Serrano, S.; Perán, F.; Gutiérrez de Ravé, E.; Cumplido, A.; Jiménez-Hornero,

F.J. (2019). Multifractal analysis application to the study of fat and its infiltration in Iberian ham: Influence of racial and feeding factors and type of slicing. Meat Science 148: 55-63, doi: 10.1016/j.meatsci.2018.10.004.

 Perán-Sánchez, F.; Serrano, S.; Gutiérrez de Ravé, E.; Sánchez-López, E.; Cumplido, A.; Jiménez-Hornero, F.J. (2020). Digital Image Filtering Optimization Supporting Iberian Ham Quality Prediction. Foods 9: Art. Nº 25, doi:10.3390/foods9010025.

Los resultados más recientes descritos en esta tesis doctoral tienen una incipiente difusión como prueba la publicación del siguiente artículo divulgativo en una revista de gran relevancia en el sector cárnico español:

1. Serrano, S.; Perán, F.; Gutiérrez de Ravé, E.; Cumplido, A.; Jiménez-Hornero, F.J. (2019). El análisis multifractal aplicado al estudio del contenido graso y su infiltración en diferentes designaciones de jamón ibérico. Eurocarne 282 (diciembre).

Por todo ello, se autoriza la presentación de la tesis doctoral.

Córdoba, 14 de enero de 2020

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Firma de los directores

- 1. Hundred Horrero

Fdo.: Salud Serrano Jiménez

Fdo.: Francisco José Jiménez Hornero

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Con esta Tesis lograré alcanzar una gran meta, que debo agradecer a muchas personas que me han ayudado directa o indirectamente a conseguirla.

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La armonía total de este mundo está formada por una natural aglomeración de discordancias.

Lucio Anneo Séneca

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# **CAPÍTULO I: INTRODUCCIÓN**

### 1. CERDO IBÉRICO

#### 1.1 Raza y características.

Bajo la denominación de cerdo ibérico se hace referencia a un grupo racial derivado del cerdo arcaico mediterráneo (Sus mediterraneus o Sus scrofa meridionalis), el jabalí que antaño pobló ambas orillas del Mediterráneo y que es la última raza porcina de pastoreo de Europa, lo que la convierte en diferente y única, siendo autóctona del sudeste de la península ibérica. Presenta unas características peculiares que le distinguen notablemente del resto de razas porcinas entre las que se destacan la alta rusticidad, baja susceptibilidad al estrés, alta tendencia a la acumulación grasa y alto nivel de veteado graso en los músculos.

La alta rusticidad deriva de la adaptación de la raza al bosque mediterráneo autóctono (denominado dehesa) en el que se ha desarrollado. Tienen una elevada capacidad para aprovechar los recursos naturales de la dehesa incluso en épocas de escasez y en condiciones climatológicas adversas (Ventanas, 2008).

Morfológicamente, su tamaño es medio, de capas coloreadas, pelo débil, hocico alargado, orejas en visera y sus patas son finas, largas y fuertes lo que posibilita el pastoreo en la dehesa.

Su peso puede oscilar entre los 100 y 150 kg para las hembras y entre 150 y 200 kg para los machos (no cebados). El peso adulto puede variar, dependiendo de la alimentación, cuidados, desarrollo, variedad racial, selección y otros.

Las hembras no suelen ser prolíficas en el parto teniendo una media de 4 a 6 lechones por camada.

La catalogación de individuos en porcino se realiza mediante los siguientes taxones:

- Raza: conjunto de animales con una dotación genética semejante en aquellos caracteres que se consideran imprescindibles en el patrón racial.
- Variedad: conjunto de individuos de una misma raza, que manifiestan diferencias fenotípicas en determinados caracteres.
- Estirpe: conjunto de animales que posee y transmite algunos caracteres fenotípicos, que permiten diferenciarlos y clasificarlos dentro de una determinada variedad.
- Línea: conjunto de individuos pertenecientes a una determinada variedad o estirpe y que proceden directamente de un número limitado de reproductores seleccionados.

Según la tonalidad de su piel y su pelaje, se identifican las distintas variedades de cerdo ibérico.

Entre las diferentes variedades del tronco ibérico destacan las siguientes:

I. <u>Negra</u>: Con dos subvariedades, la lampiña y la entrepelada. Es la agrupación racial con mayor proporción de grasa. Muestra una mayor velocidad de crecimiento con un mejor rendimiento a la canal. Los cerdos de estas variedades negras son más finos y de menor tamaño que los de las coloradas, pero con mayor predisposición a acumular grasa

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- a) Negra Lampiña: sin pelo y con pliegues transversales en la piel de la frente, tienen un tocino más espeso y mayor cantidad de grasa. Dan un mayor rendimiento en jamones, que el resto de los ibéricos. Esta variedad está prácticamente desaparecida.
- b) Negra Entrepelada: que presenta fuertes y tupidas cerdas a lo largo de todo el cuerpo, procedía de los cruces del retinto o del rubio andaluz, así como del lampiño, con el Large Black inglés, en el siglo XVI. Son cerdos de una excelente conformación, de línea más estirada y dan canales menos grasas que los anteriores. Su prolificidad no es
  - excesivamente baja (7-8 lechones por parto) y sus reproductoras son las más lecheras. Esta variedad está prácticamente extinguida.
- II. Coloradas: En la variedad colorada encontramos tres subvariedades: La rubia campiñesa, la colorada extremeña o retinta y la manchada de Jabugo.
  - Colorada Retinta o Extremeña: También llamada retinta a) u oliventina o colorada extremeña. La retinta es la variedad más extendida. Esta variedad presenta una capa roja con pocas cerdas, de coloración similar y, en su mayor parte, procede del cruzamiento del tipo retinto oliventino, con retinto portugués (raza alentejana), que es algo más precoz. Es una raza bien adaptada, con buena

capacidad de crecimiento, dando buen rendimiento a la canal, y con mayor proporción de músculo que las otras variedades ibéricas.

- b) Colorada Rubia o Cana: Son cerdos de tipo semigraso, tienen las cerdas muy sedosas. Tienen un jamón bien desarrollado y musculoso, y una prolificidad media, con 6-7 lechones por camada. Está prácticamente desaparecida, al ser absorbida por otras variedades.
- c) Colorada Manchada de Jaburgo: Llamada también de Jabugo. De color rubio con manchas negras o grises oscuras, de tamaño variable y distribuidas irregularmente, parece provenir del cruce del retinto con el Large-White y Berkshire ingleses. Posee buena precocidad, alcanzando, a los dos años en extensivo, un peso entre 120 y 190 kilos. Está casi totalmente extinguida.

En los últimos 30 años se han introducido razas extranjeras en

nuestra ganadería, seleccionadas para reducir el acúmulo de grasa y obtener mejores magros, pero la calidad es inferior a la del cerdo ibérico (Morcuende, D. et al., 2010).









- I. <u>Cruce con el Large Black:</u> Se mejora los índices de crecimiento y reproductivo, obteniendo cerdos muy gordos y bastos, jamón más grande, pero de peor calidad. No aprovecha bien la montanera y es un cerdo menos rústico.
- II. <u>Cruce con el Duroc Jersey:</u> Se logra un cerdo más prolífico y precoz, de ciclo productivo más corto y con bastante menos grasa, aumenta la camada en un lechón, aumenta 1 Kg al destete y al final del cebo aumenta una arroba. Tiene menor porcentaje de tocino, mejor y mayor longitud de canal, con un crecimiento mayor. Como inconveniente presenta un jamón de peor calidad.





Partiendo de las diferentes variedades y los distintos cruces tenemos una gran variedad de individuos con características morfológicas parecidas y que debido a los cruzamientos que existen entre ellas es muy difícil distinguir el patrón morfológico que determine que la sangre sea 100% ibérica.



Cruce 75% Ibérico 25% Duroc



Cruce 50% Ibérico 50% Duroc

La utilización de la raza Duroc como raza mejorante en el cruce con Ibérico permite que los cerdos cruzados presenten una serie de ventajas productivas y reproductivas como son un mayor rendimiento en piezas nobles y un incremento del número de lechones por cerda en comparación con el cerdo Ibérico en pureza (Espárrago, 1998; Benito *et al.*, 2001).

### 1.2 Ciclo de producción.

Existen 3 periodos claramente diferenciados del ciclo de producción tradicional del cerdo ibérico:

<u>Periodo de cría:</u> esta fase comprende el tiempo desde que nacen hasta que se destetan y comienzan con alimentación sólida y alcanzan un peso de unos 23 kg.

<u>Periodo de recría</u>: en este periodo se busca un óptimo desarrollo óseo y muscular, evitando un excesivo acúmulo de grasas. Para ello se raciona su alimentación, se aprovechan recursos pastables y se suministran piensos poco energéticos y ricos en fibra hasta que alcanzan unos 92-115 kg de peso.

<u>Periodo de cebo:</u> comprende el tiempo inmediatamente anterior al sacrificio del animal, en el que alcanza entre 160 y 185 kg de peso. Es la etapa de mayor influencia en la calidad de sus productos. Esta fase, en el sistema tradicional de cría se hacía coincidir con periodos de abundancia de alimento, de forma que la mayor parte de la energía de la dieta se destinaba a la síntesis de grasa.

Este cebo clásico se realizaba en montanera, es decir, basado en el aprovechamiento en extensivo de los recursos naturales que la dehesa ofrece (bellotas y hierba fundamentalmente). El cerdo ibérico puede llegar a consumir una gran cantidad diaria de bellotas entre 7 -10 kg (Esparrago *et al.*, 1999). En cuanto al consumo de hierba se estima que cubre el 30% de las necesidades energéticas. Diversos estudios determinan que el cerdo terminado en montanera es el que mejores atributos sensoriales posee en comparación con otros tipos de manejos. (Díaz-Caro *et al.*, 2019)

Existen diversos factores que han provocado la aparición de sistemas de explotación alternativos al tradicional de montanera durante la fase de engorde. Entre ellos se pueden destacar el incremento de la demanda de productos derivados del cerdo ibérico, la escasez de recursos y la limitación en el número de animales en la dehesa junto a su marcada estacionalidad. Estos sistemas se basan en la intensificación de parte o el total de la producción y la utilización de piensos compuestos durante toda la vida del animal.

La intensificación de la producción ha permitido evitar la limitación en cuanto a la necesidad de la dehesa como único lugar donde poder criar a los cerdos ibéricos. De esta intensificación ha surgido el tipo de producción de cerdo ibérico de cebo en los que los animales son criados estabulados como los cerdos blancos en sistema intensivo de cría.

La utilización de piensos durante la fase de cebo ha permitido incrementar los rendimientos productivos alcanzando el peso para sacrificio en menor tiempo. Tradicionalmente, los cereales eran la base de este tipo de piensos pero se han ido modificando con la incorporación de fuentes ricas en ácido linoleico (C18:2 n-6). Actualmente se han incorporado a estos piensos fuentes ricas en ácido oleico con el objetivo de conseguir un perfil de ácidos grasos similar al conseguido en montanera mediante el consumo de bellotas.

#### 1.3 Designaciones normativas para el ibérico.

Los tres principales pilares de la calidad de los productos del cerdo ibérico son la raza, la alimentación y el sistema de producción o manejo (Fernández, *et al.*,1999). En base a ellos y a lo largo de los últimos veinte años se han establecido las diferentes Normas de calidad del ibérico cuya última modificación es el Real Decreto 4/2014 de 10 de enero, por el que se aprueba la norma de calidad para la carne, el jamón, la paleta y la caña de lomo ibérico.

Entre las modificaciones realizadas por la nueva norma destacan la necesidad de mejorar la pureza racial de los animales, por lo que establece que los reproductores deben estar inscritos en el Libro genealógico de la Raza Porcina Ibérica, se han intensificado los condicionantes de manejo y alimentación de los animales así como reducido la carga ganadera autorizada, se exige el registro de la dehesa de aprovechamiento en el SIGPAC (Sistema de Información Geográfica de Parcelas Agrícolas) en los animales "de bellota", se ha mejorado el sistema de trazabilidad y control con la exigencia de precintos de colores que ayuden al consumidor a diferenciar los productos, se han reforzado las medidas de supervisión del cumplimiento de la norma de calidad y se han

establecido requisitos más estrictos y claros en relación con el etiquetado de los productos como la obligatoriedad de mencionar el porcentaje genético de raza porcina ibérica.

La denominación de venta de los productos se compone obligatoriamente de tres designaciones:

- Designación por el tipo de producto, bien sea elaborados o despiece de la canal comercializados en fresco.
- Designación por alimentación y manejo:

"De bellota": Para productos procedentes de animales sacrificados inmediatamente después del aprovechamiento exclusivo de bellota, hierba y otros recursos naturales de la dehesa, sin aporte de pienso suplementario y con una edad mínima de 14 meses.

"De cebo de campo": Tratándose de animales que, aunque hayan podido aprovechar recursos de la dehesa o del campo, han sido alimentados con piensos, constituidos fundamentalmente por cereales y leguminosas, y cuyo manejo se realice en explotaciones extensivas o intensivas al aire libre pudiendo tener parte de la superficie cubierta y con una edad mínima de 12 meses.

"De cebo": En caso de animales alimentados con piensos, constituidos fundamentalmente por cereales y leguminosas, cuyo manejo se realice en sistemas de explotación intensiva y con una edad mínima de 10 meses.

- Designación por tipo racial:

"100% Ibérico": Cuando se trate de productos procedentes de animales con un 100% de pureza genética de la raza ibérica, cuyos progenitores tengan así mismo un 100% de pureza racial ibérica y estén inscritos en el correspondiente libro genealógico.

"Ibérico": Cuando se trate de productos procedentes de animales con al menos el 50% de su porcentaje genético correspondiente a la raza porcina ibérica. Para obtener animales del 75% ibérico se emplearán hembras de raza 100% ibérica inscritas en libro genealógico y machos procedentes del cruce de madre de raza 100% ibérica y padre de raza 100% duroc, ambos inscritos en el correspondiente libro genealógico de la raza. Para obtener animales del 50% ibérico se emplearán hembras de raza 100% ibérica y machos de raza 100% duroc, ambos inscritos en el correspondiente libro genealógico de la raza.

En España existen cuatro denominaciones de origen protegidas (Jabugo, Dehesa de Extremadura, Guijuelo y Los pedroches) cuya calidad diferenciada y el origen de sus productos amparados en la misma, están verificados conforme a sus respectivos Pliegos de Condiciones.

#### 1.4 Situación económica del sector porcino en España.

En España el sector porcino supone en torno al 14% de la Producción Final Agraria, lo que indica su importancia en la economía del estado. Dentro de las producciones ganaderas ocupa el primer lugar en cuanto a su balance económico alcanzando cerca del 39% de la Producción Final Agraria según fuentes del Ministerio de Agricultura, pesca y alimentación.

En el ámbito mundial, Europa es el segundo productor de carne de porcino y España en concreto la cuarta potencia productora por detrás de China, EEUU y Alemania y la segunda europea con

un 19% de las toneladas producidas. En cuanto al censo, es el primer país europeo con cerca del 21% del censo comunitario y tercero a nivel mundial (datos 2018, Fuente: EUROSTAT y SG Análisis, Coordinación y Estadística, MAPA)

En cuanto al sector del porcino Ibérico, a lo largo del tiempo, el número de animales ha ido fluctuando de manera significativa en función de los cambios en las características socioeconómicas y climáticas de cada momento. Así, durante la década de los sesenta se asistió a un periodo de declive debido a diversas causas como la entrada masiva de cerdo blanco explotado en régimen intensivo, los repetidos cruces con razas extranjeras, la poca rentabilidad del producto, el abandono del campo, la reducción del autoconsumo (matanzas domiciliarias) y el problema con la Peste Porcina Africana.

A partir de 1985 se asiste a un resurgimiento debido, entre otras causas, a una mayor rentabilidad de la asociación cerdo-dehesa, a una corriente a favor de la recuperación de la raza, al fomento de la alta calidad de sus productos en el contexto de la dieta mediterránea y a la erradicación en nuestro país de la Peste Porcina Africana.

En los últimos años, se ha venido produciendo un aumento muy significativo en el número de cabezas de ganado porcino ibérico, coincidiendo con el incremento en el consumo, tanto de productos curados como de sus carnes frescas.

La dimensión económica del sector Ibérico ronda los 2.000 millones de euros, lo que representa en torno a un 6-7% del total de la industria cárnica española, cuarto sector industrial del país.

Según datos censales del MAPA del 31/12/2018 existen en España unas 5694 explotaciones y unos 737.419 animales que abastecen a unas 700 industrias relacionadas con el sector del cerdo ibérico. El mayor número de animales y explotaciones se sitúa en Extremadura, Andalucía, Castilla León y Castilla la Mancha (Figuras 1.1 y 1.2).



Figura 1.1 – Porcentaje del número de cerdos ibéricos por comunidad autónoma a fecha 31 de Diciembre de 2018. Fuente MAPA.

#### **CAPITULO I**



Figura 1.2 – Porcentaje del número de explotaciones por comunidad autónoma a fecha 31 de Diciembre de 2018. Fuente MAPA.

La asociación del cerdo ibérico a la dehesa sigue estando estrechamente ligada principalmente en Extremadura y Andalucía (Figura 1.3). En Castilla León, Castilla la mancha y Murcia los sistemas en intensivo o extensivo no ligado a la dehesa hacen que el número de animales por explotación sea mayor que en Andalucía y Extremadura.



Figura 1.3 - Mapa de distribución de la dehesa en la península ibérica. Fuente: FEDEHESA (Federación Española de la Dehesa) 2019.

#### **CAPITULO I**

El número de animales según su designación ha ido cambiando a lo largo de los años hacia un mayor número de ibéricos de cebo en detrimento de los ibéricos de bellota al igual que los 50 % y 75% ibéricos en detrimento de los 100% ibéricos. Asimismo, este dato cambia a lo largo del año debido a la estacionalidad de la montanera. De manera general el mayor número de animales son de cebo 50%, cebo de campo 50%, bellota 50% y bellota 100% (Figura 1.4).



Figura 1.4 - Censo de cerdos ibéricos por designación y trimestre. Fuente Infoiberico.com

El número de animales sacrificados ha ido en aumento en los últimos años tal y como se puede ver en la siguiente tabla siendo los animales sacrificados en la campaña 2017-2018 un total de 3.628.912 (Figura 1.5).



Figura 1.5 – Numero de cerdos ibéricos sacrificados por campaña. Fuente: ASICI (Asociación Interprofesional del Cerdo Ibérico).

En cuanto a los productos obtenidos del cerdo ibérico, en el año 2017, se identificaron con precintos de Norma casi 6.5 millones de Jamones y Paletas Ibéricas (Tabla 1.1). Solo en 2017, en los hogares españoles se consumieron 14.730,21 toneladas por valor de más de 430 millones de euros, según datos del Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación. Las exportaciones de productos ibéricos suponen en torno al 10-15% de la producción.

PRECINTOS NORMA DE CALIDAD					
JAMONES AÑO	BELLOTA 100% IBÉRICO	BELLOTA IBÉRICO	CEBO DE CAMPO IBÉRICO	CEBO IBÉRICO	TOTAL
2014	296.227	553.954	643.790	3.289.383	4.783.354
2015	412.678	567.145	1.155.473	3.456.442	5.591.738
2016	513.734	621.485	1.241.492	3.728.388	6.105.099
2017	594.868	675.345	1.327.547	3.882.559	6.480.319

Tabla 1.1 – Numero de jamones con precinto de norma de calidad por designación y año. Fuente ASICI (Asociación Interprofesional del Cerdo Ibérico).

En cuanto a los precios existe gran diferencia entre Ibéricos 100% de bellota y el resto de designaciones tanto en animal vivo como en productos, como se puede observar en las figuras 1.6 y 1.7:



Figura 1.6 – Precios actuales en € por @ mínimos y máximos de las distintas designaciones. Fuente: Infoiberico.com

#### **CAPITULO I**



Figura 1.7 – Precios actuales en € por kilogramo mínimos y máximos de distintos productos derivados del cerdo ibérico. Fuente: Infoiberico.com

De todos los datos aportados se puede apreciar la importancia que tiene el sector del cerdo ibérico en España tanto económica como funcionalmente para garantizar la sostenibilidad de la dehesa. Las diferencias en precio entre unas designaciones y otras derivan del gran esfuerzo que conlleva la crianza mediante montanera lo cual también se refleja en las características organolépticas tan especiales que poseen los productos cárnicos de los cerdos terminados en este sistema. Es por ello por lo que en los últimos años se han destapado casos de fraude en el etiquetado de productos y por lo que resulta esencial disponer de métodos analíticos que permitan conocer el porcentaje racial y el sistema de alimentación en su última fase.

### 2. CONTROLES ACTUALES

Las comunidades autónomas son las responsables de llevar a cabo controles oficiales a lo largo de todo el proceso desde la explotación ganadera hasta el consumidor de los productos acogidos a la Norma del ibérico de acuerdo con los correspondientes programas de control anuales.

Desde la entrada en vigor del Real Decreto 4/2014 (Norma de calidad del ibérico) se exige que los operadores deben contratar los servicios de una entidad de inspección o certificación que verifique su sistema de autocontrol.

Actualmente los métodos de control se basan en comprobar la edad, raza, alimentación y la auditoría del sistema de autocontrol de los productores.

La designación racial de los cerdos ibéricos se hace en función de caracteres morfológicos, por lo que puede estar influenciada subjetivamente. Según la normativa vigente el ibérico puro debe ser 100% ibérico y la designación de ibérico permite un 50% de genoma de origen de raza Duroc. Desde la publicación de la última Norma de Calidad de los Productos ibéricos se obliga a los ganaderos a que sus ejemplares reproductores tanto 100% Ibéricos como 100% Duroc estén inscritos en el Libro Genealógico. En caso de sospechas se realizan pruebas genéticas de paternidad, que son costosas y laboriosas. Hoy día se comienza a implementar la introducción de

marcadores genéticos para la identificación de la raza sin que esté aún muy difundida (Martínez, 2001).

El control de la alimentación se realiza por dos métodos: evaluación in situ de las explotaciones ganaderas y mediante análisis de la composición de ácidos grasos del tejido adiposo subcutáneo.

La evaluación in situ requiere de inspectores o certificadores para poder comprobar todas las fases de producción de los cerdos por lo que los programas oficiales establecen tan solo una evaluación anual de cada productor que en muchas ocasiones no es posible llevar a cabo en su totalidad. Este control es muy importante para el cálculo de la capacidad productiva de la explotación en función de una montanera que ningún año tiene los mismos recursos naturales para un determinado número de animales.

Mediante el método oficial de análisis para la determinación de la composición de ácidos grasos de los lípidos totales del tejido adiposo subcutáneo de cerdos ibéricos se pueden tomar muestras representativas de los lotes de sacrificio y así poder determinar mediante cromatografía de gases la calidad del cerdo ibérico (Orden PRE/3844/2004). Esta clasificación se hace en base a los porcentajes obtenidos de los cuatro mayores ácidos grasos (ácido palmítico C16:0, acido esteárico C18:0, ácido oleico C18:1 y ácido linoleico C18:2) y la suma de los ácidos grasos insaturados (Orden APA/3653/2007). Para cada campaña, la Asociación Interprofesional del Cerdo Ibérico (ASICI) propone al Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación (M.A.P.A) unos valores (intervalos) analíticos para cada uno de estos cuatro ácidos grasos.

Actualmente, gracias a los avances en alimentación animal se pueden hacer piensos compuestos que den un perfil lipídico de la grasa subcutánea prácticamente igual al de los cerdos alimentados con bellota al final de su desarrollo (Rey, 1999) (Pérez-Palacios, T. *et al.*, 2008). El empleo de estos piensos enriquecidos en ácido oleico hace en muchos casos difícil o imposible la clasificación de forma correcta de la materia prima según la alimentación recibida por los cerdos, en base exclusivamente al análisis de ácidos grasos de la grasa subcutánea. Así, por ejemplo, en el estudio de Ventanas (2007), en el que se han analizado muestras de tejido subcutáneo e intramuscular de cerdos ibéricos cebados en montanera y con pienso engrasado, este último enriquecido en ácido oleico (con un 70% de ácido oleico en la grasa, y que por ello no son correctamente diferenciados por el perfil de los ácidos grasos mayoritarios. Esto viene a confirmar algo de lo que los distintos sectores que rodean al cerdo ibérico están cada vez más convencidos, y es que el análisis de ácidos grasos de la grasa subcutánea, únicamente, no es un buen método de clasificación de las canales del porcino ibérico y, por lo tanto, por sí solo no es un buen indicativo de la calidad de la materia prima.

Además, existen numerosas limitaciones a la hora de implantar la determinación de ácidos grasos en grasa subcutánea mediante cromatografía de gases en industrias o entidades del sector, que deberían ser resueltas para lograr una sistemática de clasificación objetiva, fiable a utilizar por cualquier industrial, ganadero o técnico, tal como ocurre con los sistemas de clasificación de canales de porcino de razas blancas. Entre estas limitaciones cabe destacar el elevado tiempo y coste de análisis por muestra, la necesidad de uso del instrumental analítico por parte de personal especializado, los elevados costes de mantenimiento y la imposibilidad de realizar un análisis completo de todos los animales de cada lote. Todas estas limitaciones hacen que esta metodología no sea viable para poder ser implantada en numerosas empresas del sector, sobre todo en las de pequeño tamaño.

En la última década se han empleado numerosas técnicas analíticas para evaluar tanto la alimentación como la genética en el cerdo ibérico a partir de grasa (Casillas, 1994) o de músculos procedentes de su canal. Entre ellas destacan la técnica de espectroscopia de infrarrojo cercano (NIRS) para la determinación de ácidos grasos (García, 2002), la determinación del contenido en triglicéridos y de compuestos presentes en la fracción in-saponificable de la grasa (Ruiz y Petrón, 2000), de antioxidantes naturales en el músculo, el análisis del musculo mediante isótopos estables y mediante olfatometría electrónica de la grasa subcutánea propuestas por González-Martín *et al.* (1999 y 2000) sin que ninguna haya dado mejores resultados que el análisis de los ácidos grasos y siendo laboriosas de implantar en una industria.

Un gran reto al que se enfrentan actualmente las industrias del cerdo ibérico y las estructuras asociativas, tales como las diferentes Denominaciones de Origen, Asociaciones o Consorcios de Promoción y Exportación, es el de disponer de un sistema integral de control de calidad de animales y piezas, de forma que permita garantizar en todo momento la autenticidad de los productos y permita fijar su precio en función de las diferentes calidades existentes.

### 3. DISTRIBUCIÓN GRASA

La raza Ibérica presenta un alto grado de engrasamiento distribuido en grasa subcutánea y grasa de infiltración en las fibras musculares. El soporte físico para esta acumulación de grasa en los músculos lo otorga el tejido conectivo intramuscular. El veteado de la carne o "marmorización" (Figura 3.1), por tanto, será la suma del tejido conectivo intramuscular y la grasa intramuscular (GIM). La capacidad de infiltrar grasas entre las fibras musculares es propia del cerdo ibérico.



Figura 3.1 - Marmorización en carne de cerdo ibérico: a) presa y b) secreto. Fuente propia.

La genética y el tipo de alimentación provocan modificaciones en la grasa, lo que determina directa o indirectamente tanto los aspectos nutritivo-dietéticos como la mayor parte de las características sensoriales que percibimos. En la carne fresca como en los productos nobles de mayor valor de mercado del cerdo ibérico (solomillos y jamones), la cantidad, la composición y estructura de la GIM resultan determinantes para los atributos del aspecto, de la textura y del aroma, así como para el tipo de procesado, de sus condiciones y la duración del mismo (Ventanas, 2008). El mayor contenido en grasa intramuscular en los músculos del cerdo ibérico representa un aspecto fundamental para la mayor calidad de su carne con respecto a la de las razas blancas seleccionadas para la producción de carne y sacrificadas a los 4-6 meses de edad. La abundante grasa intramuscular tiene claros efectos sobre la palatabilidad de la carne (Giaretta. E. *et al.*,

2018): por un lado, disminuye la fuerza de corte durante la masticación, facilitando la separación de las fibras musculares y mejorando la sensación de terneza de la carne y, además, dado su carácter fluido e intensamente aromático, la grasa intramuscular es capaz de promover la producción de saliva durante la masticación, incrementando la jugosidad «sostenida» y la suculencia.

El cerdo ibérico es una raza adipogénica con gran capacidad para acumular grasa y ésta es una característica clave que determina la calidad de los productos (López-Bote, 1998). Se trata de un animal rústico, no sujeto a la presión de selección para producir carne a toda costa por lo que todo su cuerpo se encuentra cubierto de un espeso manto de tocino y sus músculos se infiltran de finas vetas de grasa. Además, los cerdos ibéricos destinados a la elaboración de jamones se sacrifican habitualmente a una edad avanzada (>10-14 meses) y un peso elevado (160-180 kg). El engrasamiento de la canal es pues extraordinario.

El contenido y distribución de esta grasa de infiltración parece ser dependiente de la raza, del cruce, y del nivel energético de la dieta. (Petrón *et al.*, 2004).

De este modo, recientes estudios han puesto de manifiesto que el nivel de infiltración es ligeramente superior en cerdos ibéricos que, en cerdos cruzados a igual nivel energético de la dieta, y que la distribución de esta grasa en los músculos se produce en vetas finas y distribuidas regularmente, en claro contraste con lo que sucede en el caso de los músculos de cerdos cruzados, en los que estas infiltraciones o vetas son de mayor tamaño y menos repartidas. (Morcuende *et al.*, 2003) (Tejada *et al.*, 2002) (Fernández *et al.*, 2003)

La edad también es importante para el modo de engrasamiento, pues los animales adultos poseen una mayor facilidad para deponer grasa entre las fibras musculares, ocasionándose así el veteado.

La concentración de mioglobina de las fibras también influye en el depósito de grasa infiltrada por lo que los animales más ejercitados, como son los cerdos ibéricos terminados en montanera, poseen mayor cantidad de grasa infiltrada que los cerdos criados en intensivo. Existe, pues, relación entre el veteado y el grado de ejercicio. (Dobao *et al.*, 1986) (Leseigneur-Meynier y Gandemer, 1991).

La alimentación también influye en el nivel de engrasamiento y de depósito de grasa en los músculos. Existen notables diferencias entre los ibéricos alimentados exclusivamente con bellota en su ciclo final, los recebados con piensos, o los cebados exclusivamente con pienso, siendo mayor el nivel de engrasamiento en los primeros y menor en el últimos. (Dobao *et al.*, 1986; Cava *et al.*, 1997; Tejada *et al.*, 2002; Juárez *et al.*, 2009).

El estudio pormenorizado de la materia prima (del pernil) procedente de cerdos ibéricos de montanera y de los cebados con piensos alto oleico (que reproducen fielmente el perfil de ácidos grasos de la bellota) revela que subsisten diferencias cuantitativas y cualitativas de la grasa, en particular de la grasa intramuscular, relevantes para la calidad de los productos elaborados. En primer lugar, hay un contenido en grasa de veteado en los músculos del jamón en fresco (tomados como referencia el músculo principal del jamón, el *Bíceps femoris*) significativamente más alto en los de montanera, aunque los animales se sacrificaron con un peso similar. Este hecho podría estar relacionado, entre otros factores, con el efecto favorecedor sobre la deposición de la GIM que han observado otros autores cuando la dieta es pobre en proteína (*P*) y rica en energía (*E*), dado que la bellota tiene una ratio *P/E* muy baja, o con el ejercicio que realizan los cerdos durante la montanera, ya que la GIM tiene un origen perivascular (Figura 3.2).



Figura 3.2 - Infiltración grasa en solomillo de cerdo: a) ibérico y b) blanco. Fuente propia.

#### 4. OBJETOS FRACTALES Y MULTIFRACTALES

#### 4.1 Objetos fractales

Los objetos naturales, tales como las montañas, las nubes o las redes de drenaje de una cuenca hidrológica, tienen características irregulares o fragmentadas, y difícilmente pueden ser caracterizadas con exactitud mediante la geometría tradicional o euclídea.

En contraposición a la geometría euclídea que describe los objetos mediante ecuaciones matemáticas, se sitúa la geometría fractal en donde se usan procedimientos recursivos para generar las infinitas partes de un objeto en lugar de ecuaciones para modelar los objetos. Esta geometría fractal también es conocida como "la geometría de la naturaleza" ya que la teoría fractal es capaz de describir sistemas muy complejos, irregulares y fragmentados como los que abundan en la naturaleza.

Un fractal es un objeto geométrico cuya estructura básica, fragmentada o aparentemente irregular, se repite a diferentes escalas. El término fue propuesto por Benoît Mandelbrot en 1975 y deriva del latín fractus, que significa quebrado o fracturado. Los objetos euclideos muestran formas suavizadas al ser ampliados mientras que los objetos fractales exhiben formas irregulares al ser sometidos a diferentes escalas.

Benoît Mandelbrot, en su trabajo de 1967 titulado *How long is the coast of Britain? Statistical self-similarity and fractional dimension* demostraba la incapacidad de la geometría euclídea para caracterizar ciertas dimensiones. En este artículo Mandelbrot demuestra que la medición de una línea geográfica real depende de la "regla de medir" o escala mínima usada para medirla, debido a que los detalles cada vez más finos de esa línea aparecen al usar una regla de medir más pequeña usando como ejemplo la costa de Gran Bretaña (Figura 4.1). La conclusión que extrajo fue que la longitud de un objeto irregular depende de la escala de observación.



Figura 4.1

Otro ejemplo fue el estudiado por Jens Feder en su libro Fractals publicado en 1988 para la costa de Noruega. Para conocer la medida de esta costa con fiordos tan irregulares, Feder superpuso cajas de diferentes tamaños sobre la costa y contabilizo el número de cajas necesarias para cubrir toda la costa (Figura 4.2). Demostró igualmente que el número de cajas para cubrirla dependía del tamaño de caja.



Figura 4.2 - Región occidental de la costa de Noruega. Fuente Feder 1988

Con el ejemplo de la costa de Gran Bretaña, observaremos al acercarnos que ésta es irregular y si nos aproximamos observamos los acantilados, las playas y las bahías, las cuales también muestran fracturas y rugosidades. Si continuamos acercándonos observamos rocas y piedras con aristas y bordes irregulares y acercándonos más llegaremos a distinguir los irregulares granos de arena que a nivel microscópico también presentan aristas y bordes irregulares.

Según la Real Academia Española de la Lengua un fractal es aquella figura plana o espacial, compuesta de infinitos elementos, que tiene la propiedad de que su aspecto y distribución estadística no cambian cualquiera que sea la escala con que se observe".

Los fractales se caracterizan por tener una determinada dimensión fractal (D), la cual, es invariante con la escala. En matemáticas, los elementos geométricos básicos tienen una determinada dimensión topológica: dimensión 1 para la recta, dimensión 2 para el plano y dimensión 3 para el espacio.

La dimensión fractal es la variación del detalle o estructura de un objeto (Hearn y Baker 2006). Dicho de otra manera, es un índice estadístico que determina cómo los detalles de un patrón u objeto cambian con la escala que se usa para su medición (Feder, 1988). Por tanto, en cierta medida nos indica la capacidad de un patrón o señal para "rellenar" el espacio en el que se encuentra incluido.

De este modo, una determinada curva tendrá una dimensión fractal superior a la dimensión topológica de 1 y se aproximará a 2 en la medida en la que sea capaz de recubrir el plano. De forma similar, una determinada superficie curva tendrá una dimensión fractal superior a la dimensión topológica del plano, esto es 2, y se aproximará a 3 en la medida en la que rellene el espacio. La propiedad matemática clave de un objeto fractal es que su dimensión métrica fractal es un número racional no entero.

Para entender el concepto de dimensión fractal es necesario explicar una de las características principales de los conjuntos fractales: el concepto de autosimilitud. La autosimilitud (o autosemejanza) es una propiedad física de los objetos fractales en la que una porción del objeto es idéntica (estadísticamente similar) al conjunto total. Como ejemplo de autosimilitud se puede observar la figura 4.3 del Tapiz de Sierpinski.



Figura 4.3 - Tapiz de Sierpinski y ampliación a una de las zonas para observar su autosimilitud.

Si se toma una curva y la reducimos aplicándole un determinado factor de escala, obtendremos otra curva de menor longitud. Si hemos tomado un apropiado factor de escala, se podrá cubrir la curva original -sin solapamiento- utilizando exclusivamente la nueva curva un determinado número de veces. Esta curva posee por lo tanto autosimilitud. Esto puede ser extrapolado tanto a una superficie plana como a objetos tridimensionales.

Esta propiedad de autosimilitud permite la clasificación de los fractales en (Hearn y Baker, 2006):

 Autosimilares: poseen partes que son versiones reducidas en tamaño del objeto entero. Comenzando por una forma inicial, se construyen las subpartes del objeto aplicando un parámetro de escala s a toda la forma. Se puede usar el mismo factor de escala s para todas las subpartes, o bien utilizar factores de escala diferentes en partes del objeto diferentes de escala reducida. Si también se aplican variaciones aleatorias a las subpartes de escala reducida, se dice que el fractal es estadísticamente autosimilar. Las partes, entonces, tienen las mismas propiedades estadísticas. Los fractales estadísticamente similares se utilizan habitualmente para modelar árboles, arbustos y otras plantas. La figura 4.4 muestra ejemplos de fractales autosimilares.



Figura 4.4 - Autosimilaridad: exacta (Triángulo de Sierpinski, izquierda); aproximada (romanesco, centro); estadística (helecho de Barnsley que simula *Asplenium adiantum-nigrum*, derecha)

Autoafines: poseen partes que se forman mediante parámetros de escala diferentes, *sx*, *sy*, y *sz*, según direcciones de coordenadas diferentes. También se pueden incluir variaciones aleatorias para obtener fractales autoafines estadísticamente. El terreno, el agua y las nubes se modelan habitualmente mediante métodos de construcción de fractales autoafines estadísticamente (Figura 4.5).



Figura 4.5 - Paisaje fractal simulado con el programa Terragen (Planetside Software LLC).

• Invariantes: se forman mediante transformaciones no lineales. En esta clase de fractales se incluyen los fractales autocuadráticos, tales como el conjunto de Mandelbrot descrito en la figura 4.6 (formado con funciones cuadráticas en el espacio complejo), y los fractales autoinversos, construidos mediante procedimientos de inversión.



Figura 4.6 - Conjunto de Mandelbrot: completo (izquierda) y detalles de cómo la forma inicial emerge conforme se aumenta el nivel de detalle. Fuente: www.wolfgangbeyer.de

Los conjuntos u objetos fractales se caracterizan por tener algunas de las siguientes características:

- Dimensión. En general, los objetos fractales poseen una dimensión no entera. Sin embargo, en determinados objetos fractales su dimensión coincide con un número entero.
- Invarianza de escala. Los objetos fractales mantienen su dimensión fractal ante cambios en la escala de observación.
- Detalle infinito. Al tratarse de objetos matemáticos, cada punto puede ser ampliado infinitamente y siempre aparece definido el conjunto fractal.
- Auto-recurrentes. Si se amplía o disminuye la escala de observación se observan las mismas estructuras del objeto. De este modo, se puede afirmar que una parte del objeto es idéntico al conjunto, siendo, cuanto menos, estadísticamente similar.

#### 4.2 Sistemas multifractales

Un sistema multifractal es aquel en el que una única dimensión fractal no es suficiente para describir su dinámica y requiere que la dimensión fractal sea sustituida por una distribución espectral de funciones de dimensión (Olsson *et al.*, 1993). En otras palabras, los multifractales se componen de una serie de fractales, cada uno con su propio exponente de escala (Lipschitz – Hölder o exponente de singularidad,  $\alpha$ ) y las dimensiones monofractales correspondientes (Aharony, 1989). Los multifractales se pueden representar de dos maneras, ya sea por un número infinito de dimensiones fractales generalizadas (*Dq*) o por la singularidad o el espectro multifractal (*f*( $\alpha$ )) (Figura 4.7).

La distribución de las dimensiones permite evaluar las distintas propiedades de escala existentes en un objeto multifractal. Ello implica que una determinada combinación de todos los conjuntos fractales interrelacionados en un sistema complejo producen un espectro multifractal que describe la variabilidad y heterogeneidad de la variable estudiada (Mendoza *et al.* 2009), teniendo la ventaja de que los parámetros multifractales son independientes del tamaño del objeto estudiado (Cox and Wang 1993) y que no es necesario asumir que los datos siguen una distribución específica.



Figura 4.7 - Esquemas de (a) espectro de dimensiones multifractales generalizadas, D(q), y (b) espectro multifractal o de singularidades,  $f(\alpha)$ . Fuente: Zamani y Agh-Atabai (2009)

Los fenómenos multifractales difieren de los (mono-)fractales en dos características (Stach y Cybo 2003):

- a. Se basan en las medias de los conjuntos y no en los conjuntos en sí mismos.
- b. Un conjunto de datos analizados mediante técnicas multifractales ofrece un espectro completo de dimensiones representadas en los rangos D(q) (espectro de dimensiones multifractales generalizadas, también conocido como de Rényi, con q siendo el orden del momento estadístico) o el espectro multifractal  $f(\alpha)$ . Ambos espectros están relacionados gracias a la transformada de Legendre.

Dentro de los valores de la dimensión fractal generalizada, los más usados para describir un determinado proceso son  $D_0$ ,  $D_1$  y  $D_2$ .  $D_0$  (dimensión de capacidad) es la dimensión fractal del conjunto para el que se está realizando el análisis.  $D_1$  es la información de dimensión que describe el grado de heterogeneidad en la distribución de la medida (mide la probabilidad de encontrar "materia" en una señal o región).  $D_2$  es la dimensión fractal de dimension, que está asociada a la función de correlación y determina la distribución media de la medida (Grassberger, 1983)  $D_q$  es una función decreciente respecto a q para una medida distribuida de la multifractalidad donde  $D_0 > D_1 > D_2$  (Hentschel y Procaccia, 1983).

Si la distribución es homogénea o monofractal el parámetro D(q) es un valor constante y su representación gráfica es una línea horizontal. En estos casos el valor coincide con el parámetro  $D_0$  y una única dimensión fractal es suficiente para caracterizar la distribución de valores de la señal (Figura 4.8).



Figura 4.8 - Representación esquemática de espectro de dimensiones multifractales generalizadas. Fuente: Zamani y Agh-Atabai 2009

En el caso de una distribución multifractal, la función decrece con el parámetro q, y las dimensiones de capacidad ( $D_0$ ), información ( $D_1$ ) y dimensión ( $D_2$ ) se definen como el valor de la función para los valores 0, 1 y 2 del parámetro estadístico q. Los valores de q se pueden considerar momentos estadísticos cuya misión es la de amplificar las diferencias entre las medidas de los intervalos. Cuando se toman momentos elevados (q>>1) se está amplificando la contribución de aquellos intervalos o celdas con valores grandes de  $\mu_i$ , por el contrario, si se consideran momentos negativos (q<<-1) se están magnificando la importancia de los intervalos o celdas con valores pequeños de  $\mu_i$ .

La dimensión de correlación generalizada D(q) está vinculada al espectro de singularidad  $f(\alpha)$  ya que la expresión inversa de su fórmula es la transformada de Legendre, la cual nos conduce a una representación paramétrica del espectro de singularidad (Zamani y Agh-Atabai, 2009).

Para procesos multifractales, el espectro multifractal o de singularidad presenta forma de parábola invertida. Para medidas monofractales, el valor de  $\alpha$  es idéntico para todas las zonas del mismo tamaño y  $f(\alpha)$  consiste simplemente en un punto (Kravchenko *et al.*, 1999). El mayor valor del espectro multifractal,  $f(\alpha)_{max}$ , se corresponde con el valor de la dimensión fractal  $D_0$  de la señal en estudio. La anchura del espectro viene determinada por la diferencia entre  $\alpha_{max}$  y  $\alpha_{min}$  y cuantifica la heterogeneidad de la estructura multifractal. El parámetro  $f(\alpha)$  indica la frecuencia con la que los eventos con igual valor de exponente  $\alpha$  suceden a lo largo de la señal (Figura 4.9).

#### **CAPITULO I**



Figura 4.9 - Representación esquemática de espectro multifractal. Fuente: Zamani y Agh-Atabai (2009)

La relación entre el espectro generalizado de dimensiones fractales Dq, y el espectro multifractal,  $f(\alpha)$ , viene dada por la secuencia de exponentes de masa  $\tau q$  (Hentschel y Procaccia, 1983).

La representación de  $\tau(q)$  frente a q nos permitirá establecer el test de multifractalidad, de tal manera que la representación gráfica de la función de masa  $\tau(q)$  frente a q será una curva convexa con una pendiente diferente para cada uno de sus puntos. En el caso monofractal, el valor de la pendiente es la misma para cada valor de  $\tau(q)$  y por lo tanto se corresponde con una línea con una pendiente determinada (Figura 4.10):



Figura 4.10 - Representación del exponente de masa  $\tau(q)$  frente a q. Fuente propia

#### **CAPITULO I**

## 5. ANÁLISIS MULTIFRACTAL

Existen diversos métodos para realizar el análisis multifractal entre los que se van a destacar dos métodos de conteo ampliamente utilizados actualmente: el box-counting y el sand-box (Figura 5.1).

El método de conteo de cajas generalizado (box-counting) se basa en el conteo de cajas. El procedimiento consiste en dividir la señal en un determinado número de cajas de lado r, asignándosele a cada uno de ellos una medida normalizada y contar el número de cajas necesarias para cubrir completamente la señal. El espectro de Renyi  $(D_q)$  es obtenido a partir de diferentes momentos de probabilidad q  $(-\infty,\infty)$  y de éste se deduce el espectro multifractal  $f(\alpha)$  frente a  $\alpha$  usando la transformada de Legendre (Halsey *et al.*, 1986). Los momentos estadísticos positivos (q>0) amplifican los intervalos con valores altos de señal, mientras que los valores negativos (q<0) amplifican los intervalos con valores bajos en la señal.

EL método de sand-box o caja de arena fue introducido por Tél *et al.* (1989) y desarrollado por Vicsek (1990) y ha sido implementado fundamentalmente para señales binarias. La ventaja principal de este método es que evita problemas derivados de los llamados "efectos de borde". Asimismo, permite una construcción más precisa de la parte de momentos negativos del espectro multifractal (De Bartolo *et al.*, 2004).

Este método se basa en seleccionar aleatoriamente puntos (*i*) pertenecientes a la señal, de modo que, tomándose ese punto como centro, se traza con un determinado radio r un círculo en los casos de análisis bidimensional o una esfera en los casos tridimensionales y se cuenta el número de pixeles pertenecientes a la señal que están contenidos en el círculo/esfera (M(r)). En este método se calcula en primer lugar las dimensiones generalizadas D(q) y a partir de éste se estima el espectro multifractal. D(q) que es calculada usando la media de M(r) para varios valores r de radio.



Fig. 5.1. Ilustración esquemática de las celdas y círculos utilizados en los métodos de conteo. En el caso del método de conteo de cajas generalizado (box-counting), el conjunto fractal está sistemáticamente cubierto por mosaicos de diferentes tamaños.  $\delta i y \delta i + 1$  se refieren al tamaño de las células en dos pasos posteriores. En el método sandbox, se colocan círculos de centros distribuidos aleatoriamente en los puntos. El radio de los círculos también se reduce paso a paso (Ri, Ri + 1). Fuente: Dombradi 2007

### 6. ANÁLISIS MULTIFRACTAL DE IMÁGENES.

En las últimas dos décadas ha habido un gran crecimiento tanto en la diversidad de las técnicas como en la gama de aplicaciones de los análisis de imagen a los alimentos. De este análisis se pueden extraer funciones de distintos parámetros como color, textura, forma y tamaño entre otros (Zheng, *et al.*, 2006). Estas características básicas de apariencia han permitido un análisis de precisión, objetivo y rápido para la clasificación y categorización de diversos alimentos. De hecho, estas propiedades se correlacionan en muchos casos con propiedades físicas, químicas y sensoriales que caracterizan el alimento (Hutchings, *et al.*, 2002).

El análisis multifractal de imágenes se ha aplicado recientemente al estudio de la estructura de los alimentos. La técnica fractal puede ser una herramienta útil para estudiar la morfología de los

alimentos debido a que las estructuras irregulares de los mismos dificultan la cuantificación precisa por medios convencionales (Valous, *et al.*, 2010).

El uso del análisis fractal en la industria alimentaria tiene lugar desde la década de los 90 (Barret y Peleg, 1995). Los métodos espectrales de Fourier fueron propuestos para evaluar la relación tensión-deformación de extrusionados hinchados almacenados bajo diferentes condiciones de humedad (Barrett *et al.*, 1992) y para la caracterización de los cambios de rugosidad en aglomerados de alimento en polvo (Barletta y Barbosa-Cánovas, 1993). También han sido estudiados los cambios microestructurales en las superficies de los alimentos mediante el análisis fractal de la imagen (Quevedo *et al.*, 2002).

Mas actualmente ha sido utilizado por ejemplo en la caracterización de las migas de pan (Baravalle *et al.*, 2015) en la caracterización composicional de filetes de cerdo y salmón (Verdu *et al.*, 2019), en la evaluación de cambios de color en la superficie de la carne fresca cortada (Quevedo *et al.*, 2013), en la evaluación de los efectos del almacenamiento en congelación de la tilapia (He *et al.*, 2015), en la evaluación de la calidad de la carne mediante imágenes de resonancia magnética (Ávila *et al.*, 2019) y en la cristalización de triacilgliceroles e inulina en alimentos (Joshi *et al.*, 2018).

El análisis multifractal es una herramienta particularmente útil para la caracterización de la morfología de los alimentos debido a que las estructuras altamente irregulares de muchos de ellos no permiten cuantificación precisa por métodos convencionales. También se han relacionado las dimensiones fractales con la funcionalidad del producto, historial de procesado y condiciones de almacenamiento.

Cada uno de los ejemplos anteriores es un alimento con una geometría compleja en la que existen irregularidades estructurales (poros, protuberancias) que constituyen atributos persistentes a cualquier nivel de magnificación, correspondiéndose con el concepto fractal propuesto por Mandelbrot (1982) como "medio para describir dimensiones entre aquellas convencionales y estructuras que no son líneas Euclídeas, superficies o sólidos.

El uso de medidas físicas no destructivas para la rápida caracterización de la composición de materias primas y productos finales es esencial para la industria alimentaria. En concreto, en la industria de la carne, se ha aplicado la tecnología del procesado de imágenes para realizar mediciones objetivas relacionadas con el aspecto visual (Kaya *et al.*, 2008; Kumar y Mittal, 2008; Fathi *et al.*, 2009) cuantificando patrones de color y textura que no pueden ser detectados por la visión humana (Mendoza *et al.*, 2009a; Mendoza *et al.*, 2009b; Valous *et al.*, 2009).

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# CAPÍTULO II: HIPÓTESIS Y OBJETIVOS A ALCANZAR

El estudio de la clasificación y caracterización de los alimentos es hoy en día uno de los temas de interés para las industrias alimentarias debido a la necesidad de buscar nuevos métodos económicos y rápidos que sean alternativos o, cuando menos, complementarios a los usados en la actualidad.

En las últimas dos décadas ha habido un gran crecimiento tanto en la diversidad de las técnicas como en la gama de aplicaciones de los análisis de imagen a los alimentos. De este análisis se pueden extraer funciones de distintos parámetros como color, textura, forma y tamaño entre otros. Estas características básicas de apariencia han permitido un análisis de precisión, objetivo y rápido para la clasificación y categorización de diversos alimentos.

El análisis multifractal de imágenes se ha aplicado recientemente al estudio de la estructura de los alimentos. Esta técnica ha demostrado ser una herramienta útil para estudiar la morfología de los alimentos debido a que las estructuras irregulares o caóticas de los mismos dificultan la cuantificación precisa por medios convencionales.

El objetivo general del presente trabajo es explorar si el análisis multifractal de imágenes de productos derivados del cerdo ibérico puede ofrecer información útil a incorporar en las bases de datos de técnicas predictivas de su calidad. A partir del objetivo general se desglosan los siguientes objetivos concretos:

- 1. Diseño, desarrollo y optimización de los materiales y métodos de adquisición de la imagen, tratamiento de la imagen y análisis multifractal de la imagen binarizada.
- Evaluación del carácter multifractal de la infiltración grasa en piezas cárnicas de cerdo ibérico y blanco (solomillo) y aplicación a la diferenciación y categorización de las mismas.

Objetivos 1 y 2 abordados en el artículo "Multifractal analysis application to the characterization of fatty infiltration in Iberian and White pork sirloins" Meat Science (2013, 93: 723-732).

 Evaluación del carácter multifractal de la infiltración grasa en jamón ibérico puro e ibérico (incluidas sus denominaciones de bellota 100% ibérico, bellota ibérico, cebo de campo y cebo) y aplicación a la diferenciación de las mismas.

Objetivo 3 tratado en el trabajo "Multifractal analysis application to the study of fat and its infiltration in Iberian ham: influence of racial and feeding factors and type of slicing" Meat Science (2019, 148: 55-63).

4. Mejora de la metodología mediante el empleo de filtros en las imágenes para su posterior procesamiento multifractal.

Objetivo 4 centro de las investigaciones descritas en artículo "Digital image filtering optimization supporting Iberian ham quality prediction" Foods (2020, 9: Art. Nº 25).

## CAPÍTULOS III, IV y V: ARTÍCULOS PUBLICADOS

## CAPITULO III: MULTIFRACTAL ANALYSIS APPLICATION TO THE CHARACTERIZATION OF FATTY INFILTRATION IN IBERIAN AND WHITE PORK SIRLOINS

Este capítulo es una versión adaptada del artículo: Aceptado el 10 de Noviembre de 2012 en la revista Meat Science.



Multifractal analysis application to the characterization of fatty infiltration in Iberian and White pork sirloins

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ABSTRACT

Article history: Received 30 March 2012 Received 10 November 2012 Accepted 10 November 2012 Keywords: Iberian pig White pig Fat connective tissue Multifractal analysis Image processing This paper applies the multifractal analysis based on the sandbox method to describe the distribution of fatty inflitration in Iberian and White pork meat with the aim of characterization and classification. This work was carried out by making photographs of sirioin cuts of both breeds and then treated with image analysis software. The obtained image data were stored in text format and constituted the input for multifractal analysis. The results obtained show that pork sirioin connective fatty tissue exhibits a multifractal type of scaling. Significant correlations were found between some of the parameters governing the multifractal behavior and fat percentage, especially in the case of Iberian sirioin. The differences found for the relationships between the generalized fractal dimensions and fat percentage provide information for the categorization of the studied meat pieces.

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#### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1. Iberian Pig

Under the name of Iberian pork refers to a racial group or groups of Iberian pork archaic Iberian Mediterranean (*Sus mediterraneus* or southern *Sus scrofa*) based in southerm and central areas of the Iberian Peninsula formed by different variants.

Peninsula formed by different variants. The main features of the lberian breed can be summarized as: high hardiness result of adaptation to the ecosystem of the meadow, a tendency to accumulate fat, high grain of muscles and low or no susceptibility to stress. This breed has an excellent ability to achieve an optimal utilization of natural resources, while from a production and reproduction point of view, has a number of deficiencies (less litter size and lower growth rate) compared to commercial pig breeds, which were achieved by cross mitigating other more selected pig breeds, mainly Durco (Ramirez, Morcuende, Ladero, & Gava, 2006).

The three pillars of the quality of Iberian pork products are race (genetic), nutrition and food processing. (Fernandez, Monin, Talmant, Mourot, & Lebret, 1999). Based on the food, the designation of the Iberian pigs is acorn or

Based on the food, the designation of the Iberian pigs is acorn or finished in acorn, gravel or finished in gravel and feed, and the acorn designation of the Iberian pigs is of higher quality and price. The use of improved breed Duroc and the junction with Iberian crossbred pigs allow producing a number of productive and reproductive advantages as high production of noble parts and an increase in the number of piglets per sow in detriment of the quality of meat.

#### 1.2. Fatty infiltration in the flesh

Pure Iberian pigs have a high degree of fat distributed in subcutaneous fat and fat infiltration in muscle fibers. The physic support for this fat accumulation in the muscles is provided by the intramuscular connective tissue. The grain of the meat will therefore be the sum of intramuscular connective tissue and intramuscular fat. The ability to infiltrate fat between muscle fibers is a characteristic of the Iberian pig.

The content and distribution of this fat infiltration appear to be dependent on race, crossing, and the energy level of the diet. (Petrón, Muriel, Timón, & Martín, 2004).

Thus, recent studies have shown that the infiltration is slightly higher in Iberian pigs than crossbred pigs with the same energy level of diet and that the distribution of fat in the muscles occurs in thin grains and is distributed regularly, in contrast to what happens in case of crossbred pig's muscles, where grains are larger and less dispersed. (Fernández et al., 2003; Morcuende, Estévez, Ramírez, de Alba, & Cava, 2003; Tejada, Gandemer, & Antequera, 2002).

Age is also important to the way of fat, as the adult animals have a greater ability to lay down fat between the muscle fibers, causing the grain.

The concentration of myoglobin fibers also influences the deposition of fat infiltrated by what the animals are exercised as the mast finished

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# Multifractal analysis application to the characterization of fatty infiltration in Iberian and White pork sirloins

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## Abstract

This paper applies the multifractal analysis based on the sandbox method to describe the distribution of fatty infiltration in Iberian and White pork meat with the aim of characterization and classification. This work was carried out by making photographs of sirloin cuts of both breeds and then treated with image analysis software. The obtained image data were stored in text format and constituted the input for multifractal analysis. The results obtained show that pork sirloin connective fatty tissue exhibits a multifractal type of scaling. Significant correlations were found between some of the parameters governing the multifractal behavior and fat percentage, especially in the case of Iberian sirloin. The differences found for the relationships between the generalized fractal dimensions and fat percentage provide information for the categorization of the studied meat pieces.

Keywords: Iberian pig, white pig, fat connective tissue, multifractal analysis, image processing.

## **1. Introduction**

#### 1.1 Iberian Pig

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The main features of the Iberian breed can be summarized as: high hardiness result of adaptation to the ecosystem of the meadow, a tendency to accumulate fat, high grain of muscles and low or no susceptibility to stress. This breed has an excellent ability to achieve an optimal utilization of natural resources, while from a production and reproduction point of view, has a number of deficiencies (less litter size and lower growth rate) compared to commercial pig breeds, which were achieved by cross mitigating other more selected pig breeds, mainly Duroc (Ramírez, Morcuende, Ladero, & Cava, 2006).

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Age is also important to the way of fat, as the adult animals have a greater ability to lay down fat between the muscle fibers, causing the grain.

The concentration of myoglobin fibers also influences the deposition of fat infiltrated by what the animals are exercised as the mast finished Iberian pigs have more fat marbling than pigs reared intensively. There is, therefore, a relationship between the grain and the degree of exercise. (Dobao, García, De Pedro, Rodrigáñez, & Silio, 1986; Leseigneur- Meynier & Gandemer, 1991).

The di*et al*so influences the level of fat and fat deposition in muscle. There are notable differences between the Iberian acorn-fed exclusively in its final cycle, the restriking with feed or fed exclusively with natural feed, being higher in the first and lowest in the last one. (Cava *et al.*, 1997; Dobao *et al.*, 1986; Juárez, Clemente, Polvillo, & Molina, 2009; Tejada *et al.*, 2002).

1.3 Current Analytics: advantages and disadvantages

The racial designation of the Iberian pigs is based on morphological characters, so it can be influenced subjectively. Under current legislation, the pure Iberian must be 100% pure Iberian and Iberian designation allows 50% Duroc's genome (Real Decreto 1469/2007).

If suspicions of paternity exist, then, it is carried out by genetic testing, which is expensive and laborious. Today, breeders are starting to implement the introduction of genetic markers for the identification of race without the situation being widespread (Martínez, 2001).

The feeding control is performed by control visits or through the analysis for the determination of fatty acid composition of total lipids of subcutaneous adipose tissue by gas chromatography (Real Decreto 1469/2007). The classification is done based on the percentages obtained from the four major fatty acids (palmitic acid C16: 0, stearic acid C18: 0, oleic acid C18: 1 and linoleic acid C18: 2) and the sum of unsaturated acids (Orden APA/3653/2007).

Thanks to the advances in animal feed compounders today that can give a lipid profile virtually identical to subcutaneous fat from pigs fed on acorns at the end of its breeding (Rey, 1999).

In addition, there are numerous limitations when implementing the determination of fatty acids in subcutaneous fat by gas chromatography in industry or sector entities, which should be resolved to achieve a systematic objective classification, reliable to use for any industrial, livestock or technical, as with the classification systems of white pig carcasses. These limitations include the high cost of analysis time per sample, the need for analytical instrumental use by qualified personnel, high maintenance costs and the inability to perform a complete analysis of all animals in each batch.

All these limitations make this approach not feasible to be implemented in many companies, especially small ones.

In the last decade many analytical techniques have been used to assess both food and genetics from the Iberian pig's fat (Casillas, 1994) or muscle. These include the NIRS technique for the determination of fatty acids (García, 2002), the determination of triglyceride content and compounds present in the unsaponifiable fraction of the fat (Ruiz & Petrón, 2000) of natural

antioxidants in the muscle, analysis of stable isotopes and muscle by using electronic olfactometry subcutaneous fat proposed by González-Martín, González-Pérez, Hernández-Méndez, Marqués-Macías, and Sanz-Poveda (1999) and González-Martín, Pérez-Pavón, González-Pérez, Hernández-Méndez, and Álvarez-García (2000) without giving any better results than the analysis of fatty acids and being laborious to implement in an industry.

The determination of intramuscular fat is an essential subject due to the demonstrated correlation between its chemical analysis (i.e. Soxhlet or Foss–Let methods) and marbling level that can be appreciated by means of sensory analysis (Van der Waal, Olsman, Garssen, & Engel, 1992). Successful researches in the last decade point sensory analysis as a powerful tool to correlate marbling effect with sensory acceptability of meat. The main disadvantage of this methodology is the limited human vision, specially referred to the intra or extracellular fat deposition in pork meat (Font-i Furnols, Tous, Esteve-García, & Gispert, 2012; Fortin, Robertson, & Tong, 2005; Ventanas, Ventanas, & Ruiz, 2007).

1.4 Fundamentals of multifractal analysis applied to food science

Over the last two decades, an explosive growth has been witnessed in both the diversity of techniques and the range of applications regarding food image analysis, which is capable of extracting from food surfaces various image features such as color, image texture, shape, and size among others (Zheng, Sun, & Zheng, 2006). These simple appearance features have allowed task-relevant analysis and interpretation with precision, objectivity and speed in the quality grading and classification of many foods. In fact, these appearance properties correlate well with many physical, chemical, and sensory indicators of food quality (Hutchings, Luo, & Ji, 2002). Consequently, they could also be used for the automation of meat product inspections and quality grading, through the incorporation of efficient image processing algorithms in industrial computer vision systems (CVS) (Valous, Mendoza, Sun, & Allen, 2009a, 2009b).

The usage of fractals (Mandelbrot, 1982) in the food industry is not new, dating back from early years of the applications of fractality concepts (Barrett & Peleg, 1995). Haussdorf fractal dimension of digital images for food quality evaluation and inspection was initially explored (Dziuba, Babuchowski, Smoczynski, & Smietana, 1999; Liao, Cavalieri, & Pitts, 1990). Fourier power spectrum methods were proposed for the assessment of the jaggedness of the stress–strain relationship of two kinds of puffed extrudates stored under different humidity conditions (Barrett, Normand, Peleg, & Ross, 1992) and in the characterization of ruggedness changes in tapped agglomerated food powders (Barletta & Barbosa-Cánovas, 1993). Evaluations of micro-structural changes in food surfaces using fractal image texture analysis were also explored (Quevedo, Carlos, Aguilera, & Cadoche, 2002).

Fractal analysis has been recently applied to the study of food structure. Fractal techniques can be particularly useful tools for characterizing food morphology because the highly irregular structures of many food materials elude precise quantification by conventional means (Valous, Drakakis, & Sun, 2010). Measured fractal dimensions also have been related to product functionality, processing history, or storage conditions. Many foods, like many other natural materials, are inherently irregular in conformation; it is, in fact, likely that several of the shapes cited by Mandelbrot (1982) are frequent qualitative descriptors of food structure. It is not a straightforward exercise, for example, to characterize quantitatively the physical structure of highly tortuous foods such as agglomerated particulates (i.e. instant milk or coffee), flowering vegetables (i.e. broccoli and cauliflower), or porous products (i.e. bread, or puffed cereals and snack foods).

Each of the preceding examples is a food with a complex geometry in which a large category of structural irregularities exists, including pores, protuberances, and apparently replicating structures. Also, in certain foods such attributes may persist overwide levels of magnification.

The multifractal theory (Feder, 1988) implies that the complex and heterogeneous behavior of a self-similar measure (i.e. statistically similar on any scale) can be represented as a combination of interwoven fractal sets with corresponding scaling exponents (Kravchenko, Boast, & Bullock, 1999). Multifractal analysis has been applied to characterize some aspects of food such as the fat-connective tissue size (Mendoza, Valous, Sun, & Allen, 2009) by applying a box-counting fixed-size method. This kind of algorithms is advantageous for computational aspects but has as main drawback the incorrect determination of the fractal dimensions for negative moment orders, due to the emphasis given to regions with few data points not centered on them (e.g., De Bartolo, Gaudio, & Gabriele, 2004). This problem can be minimized by using the fixed-size method known as sandbox algorithm (Tél, Fülöp, & Vicsek, 1989; Vicsek, 1990; Vicsek, Family, & Meakin, 1990) being especially suitable to describe the irregular structure of some food (i.e. fatty infiltration in pork).

The use of non-destructive physical measurements for the rapid characterization of the composition of raw materials and end-products is essential in order for the meat industry to improve their quality. Nonetheless, manufacturing processes which involve grinding and mixing of raw materials have highly variable fat-connective tissue/ lean compositions making standardization and control tasks difficult.

Computer vision technology has been implemented for quality assessment in meats and meat products, overcoming most of the drawbacks of traditional methods, e.g. human inspectors and instrumental techniques (Du & Sun, 2005, 2006; Kumar & Mittal, 2008, 2009; Quevedo & Aguilera, 2009; Quevedo, Aguilera, & Pedreschi, 2009; Zheng, Sun, & Tan, 2008; Zheng *et al.*, 2006). Image analysis techniques are capable of performing objective measurements not only of color, defects, image texture, etc., related to the visual appearance (Fathi, Mohebbi, & Razavi, 2009; Kaya, Ko, & Gunasekaran, 2008; Kumar & Mittal, 2008) but also of quantifying color and textural patterns from food surfaces, which cannot be detected by human vision (Mendoza *et al.*, 2009; Valous *et al.*, 2009a, 2009b). Textural patterns in natural objects are often complex, exhibit scale-dependent changes in structure, and are difficult to identify and describe by simple visual inspection (Plotnick, Gardner, Hargrove, Prestegaard, & Perlmutter, 1996). In meat and meat products, the fat-connective tissue size distribution represents a fundamental physical property used for quality assessment purposes.

The overall objective of this paper is to take advantage of the multifractal analysis suitability to describe the spatial pattern of a measure (e.g. Jiménez-Hornero, Giráldez, & Laguna, 2007; Jiménez-Hornero, Gutiérrez de Ravé, Giráldez, & Laguna, 2009) in order to characterize meat from Iberian pigs according to the distribution of marbling fat. Various pieces of meat from Iberian andWhite pigs have been analysed to study the multifractal nature of the structure of the fatty infiltration and their differences.

## 2. Material and methods

#### 2.1 Pork samples

For the study four pieces (2 Iberian pigs and 2 white pigs) of sirloin (psoas minor and iliopsoas muscles) were analyzed. The Iberian sirloins were obtained from Iberian–Duroc crossbreeding

(50% and Iberian mother). The white sirloins were obtained from hybrids based on Landrace breed. The pieces were cut into 1 cm(thickness) fillets for a total of 9 Iberian samples and 10 white samples obtained from the center of the piece. The ends of each piece were rejected due to their nonhomogeneous fat distribution. Each sample was analyzed by both sides for a total of 38 samples.

2.2 Development and optimization of materials and methods of image acquisition.

According to Valous *et al.* (2009a) the system for obtaining images requires a light source, a digital camera and imaging software.

In this study, the lighting system consists of four panels with four white fluorescent light tubes of 36 W, 5400 K color temperature. The four panels were mounted on a rigid structure with an inclination of  $60^{\circ}$  in order to obtain uniform illumination of the samples. On the support structure of the meat samples a black cardboard matte was placed to avoid reflections at the camera.

The camera (Nikon D60 with 18–55 mm lens) was fixed on a tripod structure which means that it is vertically adjustable, thus leaving a 15 cm of samples. The camera was connected via a USB cable to a personal computer equipped with a Nikon® software (Camera Control Pro 2) to modify the parameters of the camera and get the images remotely.

To standardize the images, tests were performed to determine the parameters for obtaining the photographs. These parameters were determined manually: 36 mm zoom, shutter speed 1/60 s, aperture of f/8, ISO 200, no flash and set the white balance using a gray card with 18% reflectance.

The light bars are lit 30 min before obtaining the images to reach the maximum light output. The samples, once placed in its structure were pressed with a glass to avoid reliefs on the surface of the meat to give errors by the existence of light reflections.

It took images of 3872×2592 pixels with fine quality in JPEG format.

#### 2.3 Image processing

After obtaining the color image processing is proceeded to blank (pixels occupied by fat) and black (pixels of lean meat). This operation was carried out using the imaging software Adobe Photoshop® CS3 10.0 setting a threshold in 175 black and white, a value that proved to be the most appropriate in different tests to obtain a clear differentiation of fat and connective tissue of lean. Then it cut a  $512 \times 512$  pixel area taken approximately in the center of themeat piece to avoid the influence of the edges on the results of the analysis. The new image obtained was stored in high quality JPEG format. Figs. 1 and 2 show two significant examples of the initial image of the sample and the black and white reduced images of Iberian and White pork sirloins, respectively.

With a toolbox of Matlab® (MathWorks, Inc., USA), the black and white image previously obtained was transformed into a data file with a structure in three columns, the first two determining the position of each pixel and the third containing the same color (1: for white fat, 0: color black refers to lean meat). This data file was stored as text format or TXT and constituted the input data that was provided to the multifractal analysis.



Fig. 1. Original image and image Iberian sirloin 512x512 pixel black and white, fatty infiltration and lean meat, respectively.



Fig. 2. Original image and image white sirloin 512x512 pixel black and white, fatty infiltration and lean meat, respectively.

#### 2.4 Multifractal analysis based on the sandbox method

According to De Bartolo *et al.* (2004), the presence of regions containing few data points is the principal cause of the biased assessment of the generalized fractal dimensions for negative moment orders in the box-counting method. The sandbox algorithm (Tél *et al.*, 1989; Vicsek, 1990; Vicsek *et al.*, 1990) overcomes this disadvantage by considering the mass (sum of the sample measurements), M(R), within a region *i* of given radius *R* (i.e. a circle in 2D) centered on the fractal. Choosing arbitrary points as centers, the average value of the mass and their *q*th moments over randomly distributed centers can be computed as  $\langle [M(R)]^q \rangle$ , q being the probability moment order.

Thus,

$$\sum_{i} \left(\frac{M_{i}}{M_{0}}\right)^{q-1} \frac{M_{i}}{M_{0}} \propto \left(\frac{R}{L}\right)^{(q-1)D_{q}}$$
(1)

#### **CAPITULO III**

where  $M_0$  stands for the total mass of the cluster or lattice mass and L is the lattice size, equal to 1 after normalization. Following Falconer (1990), this normalization does not modify the measure because it is a geometrically invariant transformation.

Considering the ratio  $M_i/M_0$  as a probability distribution on an approximating fractal, the following averaged expression can be derived for  $R \ll L$ :

$$\left\langle \left[ \frac{M(R)}{M_0} \right]^{q-1} \right\rangle \propto \left( \frac{R}{L} \right)^{(q-1)D_q}$$
(2)

According to Eq. (2), the selection of the centres has to be uniform on the approximating fractal. With this aim, the "minimal" random number generator of Park and Miller combined with a Marsaglia shift (Press, Teukolsky, Vetterling, & Flannery 1996) has been used to determine the position of the sphere centres in the pore phase sites.

Generalized fractal dimension,  $D_q$ , of moment order q is defined as (Tél *et al.*, 1989):

$$D_q(R/L) = \frac{1}{q-1} \lim_{R/L \to 0} \frac{\ln\left\langle \left[ M(R)/M_0 \right]^{q-1} \right\rangle}{\ln(R/L)}, \text{ for } q \neq 1$$
(3)

De Bartolo, *et al.* (2004) obtained the solution for  $D_q$  when q = 1 through the Taylor's expansion around 1+dq

$$D_1(R/L) = \lim_{R/L \to 0} \frac{\left\langle \ln\left[M(R)/M_0\right] \right\rangle}{\ln(R/L)} \tag{4}$$

Generalized dimensions can be obtained through the least squares linear regression as the slope of the scaling curves  $\ln \langle [M(R)/M_0]^{q-1} \rangle$  versus  $\ln(R/L)$  for  $q \neq 1$  and  $\langle \ln [M(R)/M_0] \rangle$ versus  $\ln(R/L)$  for q = 1, between  $\ln(R/L)_{lower}$  and  $\ln(R/L)_{upper}$ ,  $(R/L)_{lower}$  and  $(R/L)_{upper}$ being the inner and outer cut-off lengths.  $D_0$  is the fractal dimension of the set over which the measure is carried out while  $D_1$  is the information dimension and it describes the degree of heterogeneity in the measure distribution.  $D_2$  is the correlation dimension, associated with the correlation function, and determines the measure average distribution (Grassberger, 1983; Grassberger, & Procaccia, 1983).  $D_q$  is a decreasing function with respect to q for a measure multifractally distributed (Caniego, Espejo, Martin, & San José, 2005).

The relation between the spectrum of generalised fractal dimensions,  $D_q$ , and multi-fractal spectrum,  $f(\alpha)$ , with  $\alpha$  being the Lipschitz-Hölder exponent, is given through the sequence of mass exponents  $\tau_q$  (Hentschel and Procaccia, 1983), that is a function connecting the probability moments to the radius length of the covering regions, given by the expression

#### **CAPITULO III**

$$\tau_q = (q-1)D_q \tag{5}$$

Through this previous expression, it is possible to obtain the multifractal spectrum  $f(\alpha)$  by means of the Legendre transform defined by the relations (Halsey, Jensen, Kadanoff, Procaccia, & Shraiman, 1986):

$$\alpha_q = -d\tau_q/dq$$

$$f(\alpha_q) = q\alpha_q + \tau_q$$
(6)

The Lipschitz-Hölder or singularity exponent,  $\alpha_q$ , quantifies the strength of the measure singularities.  $f(\alpha_q)$  is an inverted parabola for measures multifractally distributed with a wider range of  $\alpha$  values when the heterogeneity of the distribution increases. In the case of measures monofractally distributed,  $\alpha$  is identical for all regions of the same size and the multifractal spectrum consists of a single point (Kravchenko, Boast, & Bullock, 1999). Multifractal spectrum highest value,  $f(\alpha_0)$ , corresponds to the fractal dimension  $D_0$  of the support of the measure.

#### 3. Results and discussion

In order to check the presence of multifractal type of scaling in the fatty infiltration of Iberian and White pork sirloins, a preliminary analysis was carried on the two  $512 \times 512$  pixels images shown in Figs. 1 and 2. Thus,  $M_0$  was calculated as the amount of pixels belonging to the fat-connective tissue. In addition, the mass M(R) was the sum of the sample flow velocity magnitudes falling in a circle of given normalized radius R. One hundred values of this radius R, equally distributed for (R/L) [0.015,0.25], were considered in the calculations with the aim of keeping R << L, L=1 being the normalized lattice size. This selection ensures accuracy when using the sandbox method (e.g. De Bartolo et al., 2004; Dombradi, Timár, Bada, Cloetingh, & Horváth, 2007). For each radius, the number of spheres, ns, whose centers were randomly located on the fat-connective tissue, was determined by L/R. The scaling curves shown in Figs. 3a and 4a, for Iberian and White pork sirloin, respectively, were obtained for selected values of  $q \in [-10, 10]$ . The range of q was limited in this work to avoid instability of the multifractal parameters, because higher moment orders may magnify the influence of outliers in the measurements. In addition, the selected range of moment orders has also been used for applying the sandbox method in several works such as those of De Bartolo et al. (2004) and Dombradi et al. (2007). Lower and upper cuts,  $(R/L)_{lower}=0.04$  and  $(R/L)_{upper}=0.17$ , were chosen to maximize the goodness of the fits obtained by applying the least squares linear regression to determine the generalized fractal dimensions Dq as the slope of these plots. The coefficient of determination yielded,  $r^2$ , was larger than 0.998 in all the cases. Figs. 3b and 4b show the spectra of the generalized fractal dimensions obtained with the sandbox method, for Iberian and White pork sirloin. Dq is a decreasing function in all the cases, with  $D_0 > D_1 > D_2$  denoting a multiscaling behavior.



Fig. 3. Iberian sirloin (a) Scaling curves. (b) Generalized fractal dimensions spectrum. (c) Mass exponents function. (d) Multifractal spectrum

From the spectra of the generalized fractal dimensions obtained with the sandbox method, it can be verified that  $D_0 < 2$  in all the cases,  $D_0 \approx 1.8$ . The values obtained for  $D_0$  demonstrate that fat-connective tissue does not fill the entire 2D domain where it takes place.

The sequences of mass exponents,  $\tau_q$ , are shown in Figs. 3c and 4c. The sequences were interpolated with fifth to seventh order polynomials (the polynomial order which produced the highest coefficient of determination,  $r^2$ , was selected), in order to obtain the Lipschitz-Hölder exponents,  $\alpha_q$ , and the multifractal spectra,  $f(\alpha_q)$ , from the Legendre transform defined by Eq. (6). The constraints  $\tau_0 = D_0$  and  $\tau_1 = 0$  were observed and  $r^2 > 0.9999$  was obtained in all the cases. As can be noted, the slopes of the  $\tau_q$  curves for q < 0 are different from those corresponding to q > 0 for the Iberian and White sirloin tested, indicating that they are concave and far from the monofractal case.

The multifractal spectra  $f(\alpha)$  obtained by applying the sandbox method are shown in Figs. 3d and 4d. The extreme values in the distribution of the fat-connective tissue are associated with low values of  $f(\alpha)$ ,  $f(\alpha_{\min})$  and  $f(\alpha_{\max})$ , in such a way that high and low amounts of fat-connective tissue pixels are related to left and right spectra tails, respectively. The spectra are

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inverted parabolas exhibiting a longer tail to the left of the value of  $f(\alpha_0)$ . The value of  $\alpha_{\max} - \alpha_{\min}$  determines the width of the spectra, in such a way that the wider the spectrum, the higher the heterogeneity in the local indices of the studied variable, and vice versa.



Fig. 4. White sirloin. (a) Scaling curves. (b) Generalized fractal dimensions spectrum. (c) Mass exponents function. (d) Multifractal spectrum

According to Figs. 3 and 4, Iberian and White pork fat-connective tissue exhibits a multifractal nature. So, these results suggested that the multifractal framework could be used to categorize different kinds of pork meat. With this aim, an extended study was performed for the 38 samples of pork sirloin before mentioned.

Fig. 5 shows that spectra obtained for the Iberian pork sirloin are wider and rounder than those estimated for the white pork, meaning that its fat-connective tissue exhibit higher variability for its spatial distribution. In addition, the spectra corresponding to white sirloin are more grouped than those yielded for Iberian pork being in agreement with the previous statement. Multifractal spectra shown in Fig. 5 have left tails, related to q>0, much longer than right tails. This fact reveals a greater heterogeneity in the concentrations with high amounts of pixels belonging to the fat-connective tissue. This circumstance is slightly more relevant for the Iberian pork sirloin. These differences of spatial distribution are different levels of marbling in pork meat and have been

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studied by several authors using sensory analysis methodology with the aim to know acceptability scores from consumers. In this way, Font-i Furnols *et al.* (2012) find a quite high correlation (r=0.89; P<0.001) between intramuscular fat content and marbling in pork loin (longissimus thoracis) sections. Ventanas *et al.* (2007) studied the influence of crossbreeding and rearing system on the sensory features of dry-cured loins, with special attention to the role of the intramuscular fat content in the sensory attributes, concluding that using pure Iberian or Duroc female as maternal line crossbred Iberian×Duroc pigs (50%) did not show any influence on sensory features of the studied loins. As well, these authors state that marbling and juiciness are related to intramuscular fat content and appears to adequately characterize dry-cured loins from Iberian pure breed pigs.



Fig. 5. Set of multifractal spectra: White sirloin and Iberian sirloin

The relationships between relevant multifractal parameter such as  $D_0$ ,  $D_1$ ,  $D_2$ ,  $D_0 - D_1$ ,  $\alpha_{max}$ ,  $\alpha_{min}$ ,  $\alpha_0$  and  $\alpha_{max} - \alpha_{min}$  and the fat percentage (% fat) were also analyzed. Tables 1 and 2 list the correlations coefficients, *r*, obtained for Iberian and white sirloin. Fat percentage shows significant correlations with  $D_0$ ,  $D_1$ ,  $D_2$ ,  $D_0 - D_1$ ,  $\alpha_{min}$  and  $\alpha_{max} - \alpha_{min}$  in the case of Iberian pork. On the other hand, the relevant correlations found for white pork were different involving the fat percentage with  $D_0 - D_1$ ,  $\alpha_{max}$  and  $\alpha_{max} - \alpha_{min}$ . However, these correlations were weaker than those determined for Iberian pork

Figs. 6–9 show the scatter plots of the multifractal parameters considered here against the fat percentage. As it can be checked according to the results shown for r in Tables 1 and 2, while the white pork does not exhibit any clear trend, the Iberian sirloin has a more defined tendency almost for all the multifractal parameters. This circumstance is especially significant for  $D_2$  and  $D_0-D_1$  (Fig. 7), where it is possible to perform linear fits for the scatter plots corresponding to Iberian pork with an acceptable goodness. In Fig. 7,  $D_2$  versus fat percentage, the points belonging to Iberian pork are located at the lower right zone of the plot while those representing the white pork are placed at the higher left area. When plotting  $D_0-D_1$  against fat percentage (Fig. 7), the points related with Iberian pork are at the higher right zone and those denoting white pork are mainly

concentrated at the lower left area. These situations allowed identifying three well defined regions for the plots shown in Fig. 10: Iberian, mixing and White. These zones were determined with the help of the linear fits ( $r^2$ =0.640098 for  $D_2$  and  $r^2$ =0.509732 for  $D_0$ – $D_1$ ) previously described for the Iberian sirloin (Fig. 7) fixing their position by considering the point of the Iberian plot with higher distance to the linear fit and the nearer point belonging to the white pork plot. For each of these points, a parallel line to the initial linear fit was plotted defining the mixed areas shown in yellow color in Fig. 10. Thus, taking into account both figures, 94% of the Iberian samples lay on the Iberian region and only 6% belong to the mixing area. In the case of white pork, 65% of the samples are located at the white zone and 35% are placed at the mixing area.

	% fat	$D_0$	$D_1$	$D_2$	$D_{0} - D_{1}$	$lpha_{ m max}$	$lpha_{_{ m min}}$	$lpha_{_0}$	$\alpha_{\rm max} - \alpha_{\rm min}$
1a	19,3	1,70803	1,47407	1,40017	0,23396	2,48141	1,27665	1,98418	1,20476
1b	14,5	1,65129	1,42915	1,33051	0,22215	2,31995	1,11829	1,88994	1,20166
2a	24,1	1,73358	1,62762	1,57088	0,10596	2,31365	1,38182	1,86599	0,93183
2b	24,0	1,77132	1,62054	1,52800	0,15078	2,43884	1,26308	1,94356	1,17576
3a	23,7	1,80172	1,60418	1,48876	0,19754	2,53107	1,23266	2,02132	1,29840
3b	30,4	1,80012	1,67812	1,60403	0,12201	2,38334	1,39458	1,94321	0,98876
4a	17,7	1,72054	1,43925	1,30700	0,28129	2,53214	1,12263	2,02327	1,40951
4b	19,9	1,80337	1,68961	1,59638	0,11376	2,32072	1,23921	1,92098	1,08151
5a	25,2	1,78699	1,67960	1,60827	0,10739	2,29573	1,42828	1,90603	0,86745
5b	24,6	1,73289	1,57625	1,50394	0,15664	2,37173	1,37142	1,91861	1,00031
6a	16,8	1,71986	1,53585	1,42894	0,18401	2,40776	1,19435	1,92369	1,21341
6b	23,7	1,73722	1,59414	1,52113	0,14308	2,40062	1,35290	1,91005	1,04772
7a	22,6	1,70036	1,48630	1,40805	0,21406	2,43457	1,28908	1,95161	1,14549
7b	35,8	1,83017	1,74245	1,68336	0,08772	2,35100	1,44080	1,93274	0,91020
8a	17,3	1,80976	1,61270	1,49148	0,19706	2,42433	1,21132	2,01328	1,21301
8b	21,1	1,73746	1,55620	1,47265	0,18126	2,40985	1,30975	1,94649	1,10010
9a	21,7	1,75953	1,54790	1,44488	0,21163	2,51458	1,22950	2,00318	1,28508
9b	17,4	1,68591	1,44708	1,32851	0,23883	2,41383	1,13454	1,94663	1,27929
r		0,63039	0,75020	0,80006	-0,71396	-0,21780	0,84641	-0,17415	0,63039

Table 1. Iberian sirloin. Multifractal parameters and correlation coefficients with fat percentage.



Fig. 6. Scatter plots of multifractal parameters  $D_0$  and  $D_1$  versus fat percentage.

Table 2. White sirloin. Multifractal parameters	s and correlation coefficients with fat p	ercentage
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	% fat	$D_0$	$D_1$	$D_2$	$D_0 - D_1$	$lpha_{ m max}$	$lpha_{ m min}$	$lpha_0$	$\alpha_{\rm max} - \alpha_{\rm min}$
1b	20,2	1,81568	1,70225	1,64517	0,11343	2,39996	1,42692	1,95988	0,97304
1b	23,9	1,76849	1,67976	1,61176	0,08873	2,28325	1,31539	1,86759	0,96786
2a	17,5	1,86026	1,74915	1,64869	0,11111	2,32199	1,27910	1,96939	1,04289
2b	18,8	1,78594	1,66727	1,58891	0,11867	2,31470	1,25406	1,91990	1,06064
3a	16,7	1,85115	1,73628	1,68728	0,11487	2,38281	1,51083	1,99210	0,87198
3b	13,4	1,80890	1,72339	1,65300	0,08551	2,26730	1,32548	1,89990	0,94182
4a	19,4	1,80018	1,67805	1,58687	0,12213	2,30022	1,32181	1,92607	0,97841
4b	22,2	1,80577	1,71053	1,62350	0,09524	2,25666	1,23640	1,90050	1,02026
5a	28,6	1,83010	1,77958	1,74215	0,05052	2,22810	1,49279	1,89140	0,73531
5b	17,8	1,80888	1,67120	1,59515	0,13768	2,38385	1,40516	1,96720	0,97869
6a	11,1	1,75290	1,57715	1,47227	0,17575	2,37585	1,18660	1,94398	1,18925
6b	16,5	1,79110	1,68497	1,60223	0,10613	2,29948	1,29610	1,90500	1,00338
7a	18,4	1,78715	1,69295	1,61500	0,09420	2,24345	1,33808	1,88506	0,90537
7b	24,3	1,85640	1,79280	1,75127	0,06360	2,30810	1,55490	1,93330	0,75320
8a	13,3	1,82940	1,68750	1,57816	0,14190	2,37830	1,16840	1,97756	1,20990
8b	14,1	1,84257	1,72479	1,64835	0,11778	2,39756	1,30085	1,98298	1,09671
9a	16,0	1,87540	1,79408	1,74440	0,08132	2,36120	1,53950	1,97356	0,82170
9b	13,5	1,83610	1,67755	1,54876	0,15855	2,36709	1,19430	1,99040	1,17279
10a	21,6	1,76795	1,66466	1,58947	0,10329	2,30209	1,23689	1,88426	1,06520
10b	18,8	1,78610	1,71570	1,67545	0,07040	2,24295	1,50300	1,87445	0,73995
r		-0,02940	0,39719	0,49178	-0,66894	-0,53294	0,42875	-0,51319	-0,02935



Fig. 7. Scatter plots of multifractal parameters  $D_2$  and  $D_0 - D_1$  versus fat percentage.



Fig. 8. Scatter plots of multifractal parameters  $\alpha_0$  and  $\alpha_{\min}$  versus fat percentage.



Fig. 9. Scatter plots of multifractal parameters  $\alpha_{max}$  and  $\alpha_{max} - \alpha_{min}$  versus fat percentage.



Fig. 10. Mixing areas determined for the scatter plots of multifractal parameters  $D_2$  and  $D_0 - D_1$  versus fat. These areas divide the plots in two regions called Iberian and white pork.

Food engineers and researchers need novel analysis methods based on physical or mathematical models to describe the fat connective tissue spatial distribution in order to successfully classify pork meat. Some papers have been published on the basic concepts of box-counting multifractal analysis (Mendoza, Valous, Allen, et al., 2009; Mendoza, Valous, Sun, et al., 2009), Fourier analysis dimension (Valous et al., 2009b), detrended fluctuation analysis (Valous, Drakakis, & Sun, 2010) and lacunarity (Valous, Sun, Allen, & Mendoza, 2010) applied to study the fat content and distribution in images of pre-sliced pork ham. The sandbox multifractal analysis proposed in this work improves the fat connective tissue description by obtaining accurate results not influenced by biased assessment of the generalized fractal dimensions. Thus, the high precision spectra yielded for characterizing fat connective tissue spatial distribution represent a relevant advance. As it has been shown here, the differences detected for scaling properties have helped to understand the significance of multifractal parameters spectra providing a promising tool for testing quality of pork meat images. According to Mendoza, Valous, Allen, et al. (2009) and Mendoza, Valous, Sun, et al. (2009), this fact is relevant because the use of non-destructive imaging techniques in the meat industry for the rapid characterization of the fat connective tissue distribution are needed in order to improve and guarantee the quality of final product. However, the procedures to obtain fat-connective tissue parameters from images are usually difficult to implement, especially for complex geometries. In this way Antequera, Caro, Rodríguez, and Pérez (2007) use MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) in combination with a fully automated image analysis method for the recognition of Biceps femoris and Semimembranosus muscles in Iberian ham, obtaining high correlation. In the present work, the multifractal sandbox analysis has been applied to catalogue pork meat for the first time and the findings suggest that it can be regarded as a suitable approach to satisfy the needing in quality control of pork industry.

### 4. Conclusions

Parameters of multifractal analysis are independent over a range of scales and that no assumption is required about the data following any specific distribution. Taking advantage of these features, a multifractal study of the fat-connective tissue in Iberian and White pork has been performed in this work based on the sandbox method. Images of high resolution corresponding to sirloin slices have been processed in order to get black and white maps of pixels that were used as data to carry out the analysis. The results obtained show the multifractal nature of the fat-connective tissue in Iberian pork. In all the cases, the fractal dimension of the set over which the measure was carried out was  $D_0 < 2$ , which is the capacity dimension of the support. This circumstance demonstrates that fat-connective tissue cannot fill the 2D domain that represents a sirloin slice. This situation is more relevant for white pork due to the features of its fat tissue infiltration, as it can be deduced from the corresponding multifractal spectra.

This work can be considered as being the first step in a research line that will study the possibilities offered by the multifractal analysis to classify the pork meat based on the fat connective tissue spatial distribution. Although further work is needed, the methodology and results reported here indicate that multifractal analysis can save money and time in many cases by avoiding the use of more complex methods.

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#### MULTIFRACTAL CAPITULO IV: ANALYSIS APPLICATION TO THE STUDY OF FAT AND ITS INFILTRATION IN IBERIAN HAM: INFLUENCE OF **RACIAL AND FEEDING FACTORS AND TYPE** OF SLICING

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Multifractal analysis application to the study of fat and its infiltration in Iberian ham: Influence of racial and feeding factors and type of slicing

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: Iberian ham Fatty infiltration Manual slicing Machine slicing Imago analysis image analysis Multifractal analysis

This paper explores the multifractal features of different commercial designations of Iberian ham (acom 100% This paper explores the multifractal features of different commercial designations of Iberian ham (acon 100%) therian ham, acon Iberian ham, [ced/pasture Iberian ham and [ced berian ham]. This study has been done by taking as input the farty infiltration patterns obtained from digital image analysis of ham cuts comparing me-chanic and manual slicing. The yielded results show the multifractal nature of farty connective tissue in berian ham, only when knife cutting is applied, confirming the differences between the designations according to their genetics and feeding. Thus, the multifractal parameters presented in this work could be considered as additional information for checking between the checks based on the combination of image analysis and predictive techniques. Meat industry can take advantage of these methods to evaluate meat products. encoulded products, especially when fat-connective tissue with complex pattern distribution is involved.

#### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1. The fatty infiltration in the Iberian Pig

The Iberian pig refers to a racial group derived from the Mediterranean archaic pig (*Sus mediterraneus* or southern *Sus scrofa*). This pig is located on southern and central areas of the Iberian Peninsula. The main benefit of this breed has its origin in its adaptation to the ecosystem. The quality of the Iberian pig products is based on genetic features (breed), nutrition and food processing (Fernandez, Monin, Talmant, Mourot, & Lebret, 1999). According to the type of nutrition, the Iberian pig products designations will depend on the amount of acorn in their diet (called "Montanera"). Referred to the process of elaboration, the peculiar characteristics of

the Iberian ham are closely linked with climatic and human process factors (in the know how to be transmitted between generations) that occur in several localities of the South-East of the Iberian Peninsula (Ventanas, 2008) and that have achieved just fame for the quality of their products. The different conditions (salt, moisture, temperature, time) that occur in the different stages of the process and in the hams nine) that occur in the universit stages of the process and in the names produced in different geographic locations modify the course of ri-pening reactions and, consequently, the balance of the flavours and aromatic compounds of the product. This fact justifies the existence of several Protected Designations of Origin (PDO).

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Another fundamental quality factor of the product is the long maturation period (about 2 years). The development of the aroma reac-tions is very slow, since the end products of many of them are the substrates of others that take place later. Only very late in the process occur dry conditions (low water activity) and increase in temperature allowing the formation of compounds capable of triggering the perception of characteristic aroma. Both the intensity and presentation of the aroma, as well as some specific aroma attributes (cured, nuts, etc.) and some less rancidity resent if the 9-12 months of maturation marked by the PDOs are not respected. The greatest characteristic of Pure Iberian pigs is the specific way of

fat distribution (Serrano, Perán, Jiménez-Horne & Gutiérrez De H 2013). The ability to infiltrate fat between muscle fibers is a feature of this race. This pattern of fat distribution is different between Iberian pigs and crossbred pigs (Fernández et al., 2003; Morcuende, Estévez, Ramírcz, Alba, & Cava, 2003; Tejada, Gandemer, & Antequera, 2002). Genetics and type of feed cause modifications in the fat, and par-

ticularly in the fat that we eat with the meat or with the ham; Which directly or indirectly determines both the nutritional-dictary aspects and most of the sensorial characteristics we perceive. In fresh meat as in products of the Iberian pig (loins and hams), the quantity, composition and structure of the intramuscular fat are decisive for the attributes of appearance, texture, and aroma, as well as for the type of processing conditions, and duration (Ventanas, 2008). The higher intramuscular

**CAPITULO IV** 

## Multifractal analysis application to the study of fat and its infiltration in Iberian ham: influence of racial and feeding factors and type of slicing

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### Abstract

This paper explores the multifractal features of different commercial designations of Iberian ham (acorn 100% Iberian ham, acorn Iberian ham, feed/pasture Iberian ham and feed Iberian ham). This study has been done by taking as input the fatty infiltration patterns obtained from digital image analysis of ham cuts comparing mechanic and manual slicing. The yielded results show the multifractal nature of fatty connective tissue in Iberian ham, only when knife cutting is applied, confirming the differences between the designations according to their genetics and feeding. Thus, the multifractal parameters presented in this work could be considered as additional information for checking Iberian ham quality by using non-destructive methods based on the combination of image analysis and predictive techniques. Meat industry can take advantage of these methods to evaluate meat products, especially when fat-connective tissue with complex pattern distribution is involved.

**Keywords**: Iberian ham; fatty infiltration; manual slicing; machine slicing; image analysis; multifractal analysis.

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 The fatty infiltration in the Iberian Pig

The Iberian pig refers to a racial group derived from the Mediterranean archaic pig (*Sus mediterraneus* or southern *Sus scrofa*). This pig is located on southern and central areas of the Iberian Peninsula. The main benefit of this breed has its origin in its adaptation to the ecosystem. The quality of the Iberian pig products is based on genetic features (breed), nutrition and food processing (Fernandez, Monin, Talmant, Mourot, & Lebret, 1999). According to the type of nutrition, the Iberian pig products designations will depend on the amount of acorn in their diet (called "Montanera").

Referred to the process of elaboration, the peculiar characteristics of the Iberian ham are closely linked with climatic and human process factors (in the know how to be transmitted between generations) that occur in several localities of the South-East of the Iberian Peninsula (Ventanas, 2008) and that have achieved just fame for the quality of their products. The different conditions (salt, moisture, temperature, time) that occur in the different stages of the process and in the hams produced in different geographic locations modify the course of ripening reactions and, consequently, the balance of the flavours and aromatic compounds of the product. This fact justifies the existence of several Protected Designations of Origin (PDO).

Another fundamental quality factor of the product is the long maturation period (about 2 years). The development of the aroma reactions is very slow, since the end products of many of them are the substrates of others that take place later. Only very late in the process occur dry conditions (low water activity) and increase in temperature allowing the formation of compounds capable of triggering the perception of characteristic aroma. Both the intensity and presentation of the aroma, as well as some specific aroma attributes (cured, nuts, etc.) and some less rancidity resent if the 9-12 months of maturation marked by the PDOs are not respected.

The greatest characteristic of Pure Iberian pigs is the specific way of fat distribution (Serrano, Perán, Jiménez-Hornero & Gutiérrez de Ravé, 2013). The ability to infiltrate fat between muscle

fibres is a feature of this race. This pattern of fat distribution is different between Iberian pigs and crossbred pigs (Morcuende, Estévez, Ramírez, de Alba, & Cava, 2003; Tejada, Gandemer, & Antequera, 2002; Fernández, de Pedro, Núñez, Silio, García-Casco, & Rodríguez, 2003).

Genetics and type of feed cause modifications in the fat, and particularly in the fat that we eat with the meat or with the ham; Which directly or indirectly determines both the nutritional-dietary aspects and most of the sensorial characteristics we perceive. In fresh meat as in products of the Iberian pig (loins and hams), the quantity, composition and structure of the intramuscular fat are decisive for the attributes of appearance, texture, and aroma, as well as for the type of processing, conditions, and duration (Ventanas, 2008). The higher intramuscular fat content in the muscles of the Iberian pig represents a fundamental aspect for the higher quality of their meat with respect to the white races selected to produce meat and slaughtered at 4-6 months of age. The abundant intramuscular fat has clear effects on the palatability of the meat: on the one hand it decreases the cutting force during chewing, facilitating the separation of the muscular fibres and improving the sensation of tenderness of the meat.

#### 1.2 Authenticity of breed

Under current legislation, they are designation of 100% Iberian and Iberian designation that allows 50% Duroc's genome. Farmers are required to the registration of their animals by means of a certification body that guarantees the breed purity (Real Decreto 4/2014).

The genetic testing is used if suspicions of paternity exist, but it is an expensive and laborious analysis. Several analytical techniques have been used with the aim to authenticate the Iberian pig's fat (Casillas, 1994) or muscle. These technics include analysis of (i) stable isotopes and muscle by using electronic olfactometry subcutaneous fat proposed by González-Martín, González-Pérez, Hernández-Méndez, Marqués-Macías, and Sanz-Poveda (1999) and González-Martín, González-Pérez, Hernández-Méndez, Marqués-Macías, and Álvarez-García (2000), (ii) the Near Infrared Spectroscopy technique for the determination of fatty acids (García, 2002), and (iii) the determination of triglyceride content and compounds present in the unsaponifiable fraction of the fat (Ruiz, & Petron, 2000), without any have given definitive results. The use of feed enriched in oleic acid in many cases makes it difficult or impossible to correctly classify the raw material according to the feed received by the pigs, based exclusively on the fatty acid analysis of the subcutaneous fat.

#### 1.3 Overview of multifractals and digital image analysis in food science

The fractal concept was proposed by Mandelbrot (1982). Fractal objects have the property of selfsimilarity (i.e. the geometrical or topological properties are invariant at different scales), and they are characterized by a non-integer (fractal) dimension 'between' the conventional Euclidean dimensions of 1, 2 and 3. However, there are cases where the fractal object exhibits different exponents under different scales. Those are called multifractals being characterized by a sequence of fractal dimensions that establishes the local variance of the geometrical properties under scale changes. It is assumed that these structures are composed by different fractals coexisting on the same support. The self-similarity can be described by the generalized fractal dimensions spectrum that establishes the specific fractal behavior of the set at a given scale. According to Baravalle, Delrieux, and Gómez (2015), who performed a categorization of bread crumb structure, the multifractal approach is suitable to perform food classification since variations in local regions are captured in an accurate manner. In this sense, previous works such as Serrano *et al.* (2013) demonstrated how some multifractal descriptors (i.e. particular fractal dimensions) were suitable to describe fatty infiltration in Iberian and White pork sirloins.

Both mentioned works are some samples of the benefits obtained, over the last two decades, by using fractal/multifractal approach to qualitatively characterize food morphology because the highly irregular structures of many food materials elude precise quantification by conventional means. Food with a complex geometry in which a large category of structural irregularities exists, including pores, protuberances, and apparently replicating structures is not easy to characterize. In this situation fractal/multifractal parameters can be regarded as suitable descriptors of food structure. Thus, recent works are focused in the application of the multifractal framework to describe food structure. It can find relevant examples in the literature such as Mendoza, Verboven, Ho, Kerckhofs, Wevers, and Nicolaï (2010) and Mendoza, Valous, Delgado, and Sun (2011), who characterize apple pore and ham fat-connective tissue size distributions, García-Armenta *et al.* (2016) for describing breakage patterns of tortilla chips, Cáez-Ramírez, Alamilla-Beltrán, and Gutiérrez-López (2017) who evaluated senescence advance in fresh-cut papaya and Jung and Yoon (2017), to determine the influence of relative humidity on the rupture patterns of dried marine algae.

In the referred works above, digital food image analysis (DFIA) plays a main role. There is diversity of techniques applied to DFIA, which is capable of extracting various features such as colour, texture, shape, and size (Zheng, Sun, & Zheng, 2006; Kaya, Ko & Gunasekaran, 2008; Kumar, & Mittal, 2010; Fathi, Mohebbi, & Razavi, 2009). These simple appearance features have allowed task-relevant analysis and interpretation with precision, objectivity and speed in the quality grading and classification of many foods (Hutchings, Luo, & Ji, 2002). Consequently, they could also be used for the automation of meat products inspection and quality grading (Valous, Mendoza, Sun & Allen, 2009a, 2009b; Romano, Masi, & Cavella, 2018). DFIA techniques can perform objective measurements of features related to the visual appearance and textural patterns not detected by human vision. In meat and meat products, the fat-connective tissue (FCT) size distribution represents a fundamental physical property used for quality assessment purposes. Recently, Serrano *et al.* (2013) applied the blend of DFIA and multifractal analysis as a non-destructive procedure to check quality in some meat pieces (i.e. pork sirloin) which exhibit very variable FCT.

The general objective of this paper is to explore the multifractal nature of the FCT distributions present in samples of Iberian ham designations (acorn 100% Iberian ham, acorn Iberian ham, feed/pasture Iberian ham and feed Iberian ham) obtained by using knife and slicer cutting. For this purpose, after performing a DFIA of the samples, the relationship between some multifractal descriptors and FCT spatial pattern was investigated.

#### 2. Material and methods

#### 2.1 Ham samples

Four Iberian ham designations according to Real Decreto 4/2014 were studied in this work. A brief description of them is given below:

Acorn 100 % Iberian Ham (A100IH): the piece is obtained from pigs whose progenitors, mother and father, are breeding pure Iberian pigs and they are slaughtered immediately after the feeding with acorns, grass and other natural resources, exclusively.

Acorn Iberian Ham (AIH): the piece is obtained as of pigs from crossing of breeding pigs: Iberian (100%) female and Duroc male as normative requisites, they are slaughtered immediately after the feeding with acorns, grass and other natural resources, exclusively.

Feed/Pasture Iberian Ham (FPIH): the piece is obtained as of pigs from crossing of breeding pigs: Iberian (100%) female and Duroc male as normative requisites, and after of a minimum of weigh with acorn their feeding is completed with cereal and leguminous feed till slaughtered, in extensive farming.

Feed Iberian Ham (FIH): the piece is obtained as of pigs from crossing of breeding pigs: Iberian (100%) female and Duroc male as normative requisites, and their feeding is with cereal and leguminous feed till slaughtered, in intensive farming.

Regarding to the Iberian ham samples analysed in this research, Livestock Breeders Cooperative "COVAP" provided 32 vacuum packs (with 12 slices each one) that were grouped into 4 sets (consisting of 8 packs each one) according to the four ham designations mentioned before. Thus, the configuration of each set corresponded to 4 packs containing slices obtained from manual cutting with knife and 4 packs including slices cut with machine. Half sample (6 slices per pack) was used for laboratorial determinations (total fat, moisture and water activity), which were made in duplicate, and the other half (6 slices per pack) for image and multifractal analyses.

Finally, it must be mentioned that commercial brand informed each pack came from a unique ham to follow its traceability

#### 2.2 Physicho-chemical determinations

Water activity (a<sub>w</sub>) was determined with Novasina® apparatus IC-500 AW-LAB (Swiss). Water content was obtained by desiccation till constant weight according to AOAC method (1980). Total fat was determined using AOAC method number 960.39 (1980). It was realized the variance analysis (ANOVA) using SPSS 13 software.

#### 2.3 Image acquisition and processing

The method proposed by Serrano *et al.* (2013) was followed here. The system for obtaining images consists of (i) light source (four panels with four white fluorescent light tubes of 36 W, 5400 K colour temperature), (ii) digital camera (Nikon D60 with 18-55 mm lens, fixed on a tripod structure vertically adjustable) connected via a USB cable to a personal computer, and (iii) imaging software (Adobe Photoshop CS3 10.0). The system took standardized images (3872x2592 pixels with fine quality in JPEG format) by manually setting the following parameters: 36mm zoom, focal distance 26mm, shutter speed 1/60 seconds, aperture of f/8, ISO 200, no flash and fit the white balance using a grey card with 18% reflectance. It was obtained one colour image from each slice included in a vacuum pack which was transformed into white (pixels occupied by fat) and black (pixels of lean meat) image by setting a threshold in 175. Afterwards, a square of 512x512 pixel was extracted as region of interest (ROI) from all the black and white images. The dimension of this ROI, power of 2 for computational purposes, was determined as the largest length that fits in all of these ham images ensuring, at the same time, locations far from the edges to avoid potential border effects on the results and optimizing the coefficients of determination r2 of the fits involved in the multifractal analysis introduced in the

next section (Mendoza, Valous, Sun & Allen, 2009). Consequently, the ROI position varied from one ham slice image to another. The new high-quality JPEG image was used to perform the multifractal analysis. With this aim, this image was transformed into a data file with a structure in three columns by using a toolbox of Matlab (MathWorks, Inc., USA). The first two columns referred to the position of each pixel and the third contained colour code (1: for white fat, 0: colour black refers to lean meat). This data file was stored in text format (TXT). Fig. 1 shows an example of the initial image of the sample and the squared black and white ROI.

#### 2.4 Multifractal sandbox method

The fixed-size box-covering algorithm (Halsey, Jensen, Kadanoff, Procaccia, & Shraiman, 1986) is widely used for multifractal analysis. According to De Bartolo, Gaudio, and Gabriele (2004), two methods can be applied with this algorithm: i) box-counting (i.e. Block *et al.*, 1990), in which a grid of size R is used; ii) sandbox (Tél, Fülöp, & Vicsek, 1989; Vicsek, 1990; Vicsek, Family, & Meakin, 1990), in which regions of size R are chosen around randomly selected points on the fractal set contained in the ROI. The presence of areas containing few data points, as it happens in the ham FCT distribution, is the principal cause of the biased assessment of the generalized fractal dimensions for negative probability moment orders, q, in the box-counting method (i.e. De Bartolo *et al.*, 2004; Dómbradi, Timár, Bada, Cloetingh, & Horváth, 2007). As the sandbox method overcomes this drawback, it has been selected to perform the multifractal analysis in this work.



Fig. 1. Original image of Iberian ham sample and selected ROI (512x512 pixel). Black and white pixels stand for fatty infiltration and lean meat, respectively.

The sandbox approach considers the amount of fat pixels in the ROI, M(R), within circles of given radius R. Each one of those circles is centered on a pixel occupied by fat which is randomly chosen. With this aim, the random number generator of Park and Miller combined with a Marsaglia shift (Press, Teukolsky, Vetterling, & Flannery, 1996) was applied. According to Tél *et al.* (1989), the generalized fractal dimension,  $D_q$ , of moment order q is determined by:
$$D_{q}(R/L) = \frac{1}{q-1} \lim_{R/L \to 0} \frac{\ln\left\langle \left[M(R)/M_{0}\right]^{q-1}\right\rangle}{\ln(R/L)}, \text{ for } q \neq 1$$
(7)

Where  $M_0$  is the total number of fat pixels in the ROI and *L* stands for the normalized image dimension. The brackets ( ) mean to take statistical average over randomly chosen centers of the circles.

When q = 1, the solution for  $D_q$  is yielded through the Taylor's expansion around 1+dq (e.g. De Bartolo *et al.*, 2004)

$$D_{1}(R/L) = \lim_{R/L \to 0} \frac{\left\langle \ln\left[M(R)/M_{0}\right]\right\rangle}{\ln(R/L)} \qquad (8)$$

Generalized dimensions can be found through the linear fit slope of the scaling curves  $\ln\langle [M(R)/M_0]^{q-1}\rangle$  versus  $\ln(R/L)$  for  $q \neq 1$  and  $\langle \ln[M(R)/M_0]\rangle$  versus  $\ln(R/L)$ , for q = 1. Linear fit is performed by considering  $(R/L)_{lower}$  and  $(R/L)_{upper}$  as the low and high limits. Following Grassberger (1983) and Grassberger, and Procaccia (1983),  $D_q$  is a decreasing function with respect to q for a measure multifractally distributed. Among the fractal dimensions, those denoted as  $D_0$ ,  $D_1$  and  $D_2$  are frequently used to extract information from image analysis results. A brief description of these parameters is given in the next lines. Thus,  $D_0$  is the the box-counting dimension (or fractal dimension of the set over which the measure is carried out. It describes how the geometric pattern covers the domain but is not sensitive to density distribution.  $D_1$  is the information or entropy dimension being related to the uniformity in the measure distribution (i.e. density of the fractal points).  $D_2$  is the correlation dimension and indicates the correlation between two points of the fractal (i.e. pattern complexity).

#### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1 Physicho-chemical parameters

Table 1 shows results for total fat, moisture and water activity  $(a_w)$ . The obtained results differ from authors such as Ventanas (2008), who states that Iberian ham does not have a high fat content in spite of appearances and, thus, pure Iberian hams from "Montanera", which are the ones with the highest infiltration, usually contain 8-10% infiltrated fat and, depending on the area of the ham and the type of cut, an additional 5-9% of subcutaneous and intermuscular fat. Faced with this range of 13-19%, this work obtains a range of 20-42% for A100IH and 18-49% for FPIH However, the mean total fat obtained for AIH coincides with Cabezas, Galán and Fernández-Salguero (2012), that obtain a value of 35.32%.

Table 1. Mean and standard error for fat, moisture and water activity in the four designations of Iberian ham.

	a <sub>w</sub>		Fat (%)		Moisture (%)	
Designation	Mean	Standard	Mean	Standard	Mean	Standard
		error		error		error
A100IH	0.823	0.00887	26.10	3.77625	35.09	1.71296
AIH	0.830	0.01213	31.41	3.95989	33.42	2.60812
FPIH	0.857	0.01285	33.80	6.49552	36.93	3.91204
FIH	0.865	0.01292	35.26	6.49400	37.16	2.77758

The statistical analysis of the results of total fat, humidity and water activity did not obtain significant differences between the four groups of samples.

#### 3.2 Multifractal analysis

The pixels of the processed images (knife and slicer cutting) belonging to the ham fat-connective tissue (FCT) were considered when performing the multifractal analysis. Thus,  $M_0$  was the total amount of these pixels and M(R) was the quantity of them falling in a circle of given normalized radius R. One hundred values R, equally distributed for  $(R/L) \in [0.015, 0.25]$ , were considered in the calculations with the aim of keeping R < <L, L = 1 being the normalized ROI dimension. This selection ensures accuracy when using the sandbox method (e.g. De Bartolo et al., 2004; Dómbradi *et al.*, 2007). For each radius, the number of circles, *nc*, whose centres were randomly located on the FCT, was determined by L/R. The scaling curves found look alike Fig. 2a in all the cases. These curves were obtained for selected values of  $q \in [-5, 5]$ . Lower and upper cuts,  $(R/L)_{lower} = 0.05 \pm 0.0035$  and  $(R/L)_{upper} = 0.18 \pm 0.03$ , maximised the goodness of the fits got by applying the least squares linear regression between them to determine the generalized fractal dimensions  $D_q$  as the slope of the linear part of these plots (see Fig. 2a). The coefficient of determination yielded,  $r^2$ , was higher than 0.995 in all the cases. Figure 2b shows a sample of the spectrum of the generalized fractal dimensions obtained with the sandbox method. For the different Iberian ham designations,  $D_q$  was a decreasing function resembling Fig. 2b, with  $D_0 >$  $D_1 > D_2$  denoting a multiscaling behaviour.



Fig. 2. Some results derived from multifractal sandbox method: (a) Scaling curves for q = -5, 0, 1, 5 with (*R/L*)*lower* and (*R/L*)*upper* as the low and high limits for the linear fits whose slopes determine fractal dimensions  $D_{-5}$ ,  $D_0$ ,  $D_1$  and  $D_5$ . (b) Generalized fractal dimensions spectrum

where the locations of the previously mentioned fractal dimensions are indicated by the corresponding color symbols.

According to the yielded results, the four designations of Iberian ham fat-connective tissue exhibits a multifractal nature. So, the next step was to apply the multifractal framework to describe different kinds of Iberian ham. With this aim, the same four parameters tested by Serrano *et al.* (2013) derived from the generalized dimensions spectra, were considered here:  $D_0$ ,  $D_1$ ,  $D_0 - D_1$  and  $D_2$ .

Table 2. Mean and standard error for the considered fractal dimensions in the four designations of Iberian ham when knife cutting is used.

	Fractal dimension					
	$D_0$		$D_1$		$D_2$	
Ham	Mean	Standard	Mean	Standard	Mean	Standard
designation	Wicall	error		error		error
A100IH	1.804	0,05180	1.612	0,06791	1.508	0,06791
AIH	1.769	0,04175	1.636	0,04065	1.557	0,06506
FPIH	1.758	0,05854	1.641	0,07989	1.579	0,09495
FIH	1.734	0,04778	1.640	0,05777	1.594	0,06016

Table 3. Mean and standard error for the considered fractal dimensions in the four designations of Iberian ham when slicer cutting is used.

	Fractal dimension					
	$D_0$		D1		$D_2$	
Ham	Moon	Standard	Moon	Standard	Moon	Standard
designation	Wieall	error	error	Weall	error	
A100IH	1,757	0,07674	1,570	0,08100	1,452	0,07521
AIH	1,754	0,04336	1,579	0,03242	1,493	0,04196
FPIH	1,790	0,05572	1,612	0,07649	1,511	0,08839
FIH	1,760	0,05229	1,587	0,07737	1,493	0,08269

Tables 2 and 3 list the fractal dimensions mean values and their standard errors obtained when knife and slicer cutting is considered. Multifractal nature is present in all the ham designation because  $D_0 > D_1 > D_2$ . There are not rules to set the acceptable standard error values when determining fractal dimensions (Benguigui, Czamanski, Marinov & Portugali, 2000). Although those found in this work are relatively high, they are suitable because all of them are lower than 0.1 (Chen, Wang & Feng, 2017). Each fractal dimension exhibits a clear ascending or descending trend following the order A100IH, AIH, FPIH and FIH for knife cutting (Table 2). This situation is not found in Table 3 for slicer cutting. In addition, similar mean values are listed for each fractal dimension in the same table, except for A100IH designation. Therefore, the multifractal description of ham designations is limited when the slicer cutting is used. Figures 3 to 6 show the relationships between these fractal dimensions and fat fraction (ratio between FCT pixels and the total amount image pixels) for the Iberian ham designations considered here. In the same figures, the data are grouped according to the kind of cutting performed. According to Figs. 3a, 4a, 5a and 6a there is a clear relationship between the multifractal parameters and fat fraction when the knife cutting is used. As it can be appreciated, this circumstance is evident for A100IH and FIH

#### **CAPITULO IV**

designations, which are in separated areas of the plots shown in these figures. When AIH and FPIH designations are considered, the situation described before is not so evident because there is some mixing of their points. However, the areas occupied in the plots by AIH and FPIH designations are always next to the places where A100IH and FIH, respectively, are. The tendency described above was not found for ham designation from samples cut with slicer. Figures 3b, 4b, 5b and 6b show that there are not specific locations for the ham designations in the plots. By contrast, the points are mixed in a narrow range for fat fraction values ( $\leq 0.3$ ) in all the cases. It must be noted that the same fat fraction is the boundary between the areas where A100IH and FIH designations data are placed in Figs. 3a, 4a, 5a and 6a. Thus, it can be inferred again that the multifractal discrimination of ham designations is not suitable when the slicer cutting is considered. However, it should be noted that the fat fraction dismisses, compared to knife cutting, mainly affects to AIH, FPIH and FIH designations showing similar values (0.1-0.25) for A100IH ham in both cases.



Fig. 3. Scatter plots depicting the relationships between the box-counting dimension (or fractal dimension),  $D_0$ , and fat fraction found for each ham designation when (a) knife and (b) slicer cutting are used.



Fig. 4. Scatter plots showing the associations between the information or entropy dimension,  $D_i$ , and fat fraction got for each ham designation when (a) knife and (b) slicer cutting are used.



Fig. 5. Scatter plots describing the links between the multifractal dimension increment,  $D_0 - D_1$ , and fat fraction yielded for each ham designation when (a) knife and (b) slicer cutting are used.



Fig. 6. Scatter plots illustrating the relationships between the correlation dimension,  $D_2$ , and fat fraction obtained for each ham designation when (a) knife and (b) slicer cutting are used.

Focusing on the revealed relationships between fractal dimensions and fat fraction for the knife cutting cases, it can be seen in Fig. 3a that A100IH has higher values for  $D_{\theta}$  than FIH designation. It means that A100IH needs less fat fraction to fill the slice surface than FIH suggesting different geometric distributions for the FCTs. Nevertheless, AIH and FPIH designations exhibit similar FCT slice covering according to the values obtained for  $D_0$ . However, this fractal dimension does not properly describe the FCT density distribution because similar  $D_0$  values might correspond to completely different FCT physical layouts. For this reason, it is advisable to consider  $D_1$  and  $D_2$ dimension. Figure 4a shows the yielded fractal information dimensions,  $D_1$ . As it can be checked, except for A100IH, the ham designations exhibit similar values for this parameter. Therefore, it is not possible to describe the FCT density distribution considering  $D_1$  alone. With the aim of overcoming this drawback,  $D_0 - D_1$  were used because lower this parameter higher uniformity in FCT density distribution. Figure 5a shows the  $D_0 - D_1$  values corresponding to each ham designations. A100IH has the highest records for this parameter meaning that its FCT density distribution is less uniform than the rest of the designations. In the same figure, it can be appreciated decreasing values for  $D_0 - D_1$  according to the order AIH, FPIH and FIH. This fact evidences that the FCT density distribution is more uniform in these ham designations as the fat fraction increases. Finally, Fig. 6a show the relationships between FCT fractal correlation dimension and fat fraction. The lower  $D_2$  values are displayed for A100IH designation implying that its FCT distribution shows the lesser complex pattern. This complexity grows as  $D_2$  increases for AIH, FPIH and FIH, by order, denoting a direct relationship to fat fraction.

Figures 7 and 8 depict the statistical distributions found for the fractal dimensions mentioned above (knife cutting case) by taking into account an interquartile range affected by a factor of 1.5 to determine whisker lengths and outliers. As it can be checked in Fig. 7,  $D_0$  and  $D_1$  considered as independent parameters do not provided any relevant information on ham designation. However, Fig. 8 shows significant differences for A100IH statistical distribution  $D_0 - D_1$ compared to the rest of designations. The same fact occurs when  $D_2$  is considered. According to the reported results, the combined use of  $D_0 - D_1$  and  $D_2$  provides a description of the FCT distribution for Iberian ham designations, especially A100IH and FIH.



Fig. 7. Box and whisker plots corresponding to  $D_0$  and  $D_1$  fractal dimensions obtained for each ham designation from samples cut with knife. Black dots represent the outliers obtained by considering an interquartile range affected by a factor of 1.5.



Fig. 8. Box and whisker plots corresponding to  $D_0 - D_1$  and  $D_2$  fractal dimension obtained for each ham designation from samples cut with knife. Black dots represent the outliers obtained by considering an interquartile range affected by a factor of 1.5.

There is a growing trend in the prediction of food quality based on the joint application of DFIA and data mining and machine learning (i.e. Ropodi, Panagou, & Nychas, 2016). Both techniques can be considered as non-destructive methods for the characterization of the composition of raw materials and end-products. They are recent examples of this growing trend that overcomes the drawbacks of the sensory analyses (i.e. destructive, time-consuming, costly, sample preparation, as Valous, Zheng, Sun, and Tan, 2016, stated). Data mining is an iterative process of creating a predictive and descriptive model, by detecting unidentified patterns in vast amounts of data to support decision making. It has been applied to determine sensory parameters in Iberian ham (Pérez-Palacios, Caballero, Caro, Rodríguez, & Antequera, 2014; Caballero *et al.*, 2016) and loin (Pérez-Pérez-Palacios, Caballero, Antequera, Durán, Ávila, & Caro, 2017; Caballero *et al.*, 2017; 2018). By other hand, machine learning refers to an algorithm that improves automatically

through experience based on data. Random forest (Breiman, 2001) is one of the most used algorithms, among the available ones for this technique, to categorize food. Thus, Liu, Wang, Wang, and Li (2013) applied it to the recognition of orange beverage and Chinese vinegar, Ai *et al.* (2014) to select premium quality vegetable oils, Barbon *et al.* (2016, 2017) to predict storage time prediction of pork meat and to evaluate marbling meat, respectively, and Santos Pereira, Barbon, Valous, and Barbin (2018) to forecast the ripening of papaya fruit. In all the cases, databases containing features obtained from computer vision techniques were required to perform the studies. However, fractal parameters were included in these databases few times. In this sense, it has to be remarked that Caballero *et al.* (2017; 2018) shown the higher accuracy in the prediction of pork meat quality when they were included in the studies. As it has been demonstrated by Serrano *et al.* (2013) for Iberian pork sirloin and here, for Iberian ham, the distribution of the FCT exhibits a multifractal nature described by fractal dimensions  $D_0 - D_1$  and  $D_2$ . As a consequence, these multifractal metrics can be seen as supplementary features of those considered in the databases extracted from DFIA and used to foresee pork meat quality.

#### 4. Conclusions

Digital food image analysis and sandbox method have been used here to perform a multifractal study of the fat infiltration in Iberian ham. The found results show the multiscaling behavior of the fat infiltration in Iberian ham. However, the results yielded from the multifractal analysis applied in this work are only useful to depict ham designations when knife cutting is applied. The investigation carried out in this work demonstrates that capacity and information fractal dimensions, through the values yielded for  $D_0 - D_1$ , and the correlation fractal dimension  $D_2$  can be regarded as features linked to ham quality. This situation is not so evident when machine cutting is usually made perpendicular to these fibers altering the distribution pattern of fatty infiltration. In fact, multifractal analysis results suggest some uniformity in the resulting patterns of applying this type of cut, with independence of the ham designation considered.

The use of non-destructive methods to predict meat quality is essential for the involved industry to overcome the difficulty of making standardization and control tasks due to the presence of highly variable fat-connective tissue. The findings reported in this work give the chance of including the metrics derived from the multifractal analysis as features in the databases used by data mining and machine learning to improve the results of these predictive techniques.

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## CAPITULO V: DIGITAL IMAGE FILTERING OPTIMIZATION SUPPORTING IBERIAN HAM QUALITY PREDICTION

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Article

MDPI

#### Digital Image Filtering Optimization Supporting Iberian Ham Quality Prediction

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Abstract: Digital images of food for later analysis tend to be heterogeneous in terms of color and luminosity. Improving these images by using filters is necessary and crucial before further processing. This paper compares the non-use of filters and the use of high-pass filters in the images of hand-cut Iberian ham that will be used in a multifractal analysis for the study of fat and its infiltration. The yielded results show that with the use of a high-pass filter, more accurate fractal dimensions were obtained, which can be featured in predictive techniques of Iberian ham quality.

Keywords: Iberian ham; high-pass filter; image analysis; fatty infiltration; manual slicing; multifractal analysis

#### 1. Introduction

The Iberian pig is a Spanish breed of great economic importance that is raised under different rearing systems. The dry-cured ham from this Iberian pig is classified in different categories, such as acorn or feed, depending on the feeding regimen that is provided. The main contributors to the quality characteristic and intense flavour of this product are the (i) meat quality, (ii) rearing system, mainly during the final fattening period, called "montanera", during which the pigs are fed with pasture and acorns from the Quercus genus, the predominant species in the "Dehesa" (Mediterranean silvopastoral system), (iii) age of animals, (iv) pig genotype, and (v) conditions of the ripening process [1].

Acorn-fed ham comes from Iberian pigs raised on free-range farms with a diet of acorns and grass, while feed-fed ham comes from pigs raised on confined farms and fed with concentrated feed. It is regulated by the Spanish government (Royal Decree 4/2014) [2].

Particularly, pure lberian pigs reared outdoor and fed on "montanera" provide the highest sensory quality and are the most highly appreciated by consumers [3]; therefore, their prices are consistently higher than those of other dry-cured meat products. Furthermore, Diaz-Caro et al. [4] stated that this type of feed is the most preferred attribute by consumers, in line with the sensory analysis.

Intramuscular fat (IMF), recognized by the consumer as marbling, is the most important characteristic for the Iberian ham quality. Marbling is a visual attribute of meat that affects the acceptability and palatability and that is defined as the amount and spatial distribution of the visible fat within the muscle [5]. Marbling can be assessed visually, or measured using image analysis, while chemical analyses are unable to supply the information on the spatial distribution and characteristics of streaks of fat [6].

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### Digital Image Filtering Optimization Supporting Iberian Ham Quality Prediction

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#### Abstract

Digital images of food for later analysis tend to be heterogeneous in terms of color and luminosity. Improving these images by using filters is necessary and crucial before further processing. This paper compares the non-use of filters and the use of high-pass filters in the images of hand-cut Iberian ham that will be used in a multifractal analysis for the study of fat and its infiltration. The yielded results show that with the use of a high-pass filter, more accurate fractal dimensions were obtained, which can be featured in predictive techniques of Iberian ham quality.

**Keywords:** Iberian ham; high-pass filter; image analysis; fatty infiltration; manual slicing; multifractal analysis

#### **1. Introduction**

The Iberian pig is a Spanish breed of great economic importance that is raised under different rearing systems. The dry-cured ham from this Iberian pig is classified in different categories, such as acorn or feed, depending on the feeding regimen that is provided. The main contributors to the quality characteristic and intense flavour of this product are the (i) meat quality, (ii) rearing system, mainly during the final fattening period, called "montanera", during which the pigs are fed with pasture and acorns from the Quercus genus, the predominant species in the "Dehesa" (Mediterranean silvopastoral system), (iii) age of animals, (iv) pig genotype, and (v) conditions of the ripening process [1].

Acorn-fed ham comes from Iberian pigs raised on free-range farms with a diet of acorns and grass, while feed-fed ham comes from pigs raised on confined farms and fed with concentrated feed. It is regulated by the Spanish government (Royal Decree 4/ 2014) [2].

Particularly, pure Iberian pigs reared outdoor and fed on "montanera" provide the highest sensory quality and are the most highly appreciated by consumers [3]; therefore, their prices are consistently higher than those of other dry-cured meat products. Furthermore, Diaz-Caro *et al.* [4] stated that this type of feed is the most preferred attribute by consumers, in line with the sensory analysis.

Intramuscular fat (IMF), recognized by the consumer as marbling, is the most important characteristic for the Iberian ham quality. Marbling is a visual attribute of meat that affects the acceptability and palatability and that is defined as the amount and spatial distribution of the visible fat within the muscle [5]. Marbling can be assessed visually, or measured using image analysis, while chemical analyses are unable to supply the information on the spatial distribution and characteristics of streaks of fat [6].

Image analysis has numerous applications to the food industry, such as classifying pork hams, evaluating the quality of cold meat, assessing the tenderness of beef carcasses, controlling the freshness of gilthead sea bream based on gill and eye color changes, and automatic fishbone detection. [7–12]. Visible image analysis is one of the most accessible techniques, from which many studies have offered successful results in diverse research areas on versatility and reduced cost possibilities.

The general procedure in most of these studies comprises three main steps: image acquisition, image analysis, and data analysis. Image acquisition requires the scrupulous design of the image capturing system and careful operation to obtain high-quality digital images. Image analysis includes numerous algorithms and methods available for classification and measurement. The automatic colour measurement using computer vision has the advantages of a superior speed, consistency, accuracy, and cost-effectiveness, and therefore, not only can it optimize the quality inspection, it also helps in reducing human inconsistency and subjectiveness [13].

Filtering is often considered as a prerequisite to many image analyses tasks. Digital image filtering refers to the modification of the pixels in an image based on some function of its neighboring pixels [14]. By adjusting the radius of the analyzed pixels according to the pixel on which the filtering is done, different results will be obtained.

Filtering can be carried out on the frequency and/or space domains. If it is about the frequency domains, they amplify or attenuate certain frequency components in an image. If the filter attenuates certain high frequencies of an image, it is commonly known as a low-pass filter. These filters provide smoothness to an image by suppressing high-frequency components. In contrast, high-pass filters suppress the low-frequency components of an image by enhancing its edges [14].

It has been shown that high-pass filters are good homomorphic filters for image enhancement [15]. The Gaussian filter is widely used in various fields such as medical x-ray images [16–18] and aquatic images [19].

Image analysis has recently been associated with fractal analysis, that is, a group of calculated algorithms used to study and characterize highly complex systems with chaotic structures to detect measurable patterns that can offer valuable information from a given sample [20]. The extraction of textural information from images is very common for exploring parameters related to food quality. The fractal concept studies the degree of self-similarity found in a structure at all scales. Mainly, the use of fractals allows the identification of recurring patterns. In recent years, there has been growing interest in the use of fractal analysis techniques [21]. Some examples are the characterization of fatty infiltration in Iberian and white pork sirloins, color changes on the surface of fresh cut meat, evaluations of the effects of frozen storage on the tilapia microstructure [22–24], quality of meat [25], crystallizing food systems [26], attributes of pork loin [21], and characterization of the pork and salmon composition [20].

The combination of digital food image analysis (DFIA) and predictive techniques to assess meat quality is arousing interest [27] because it offers some advantages over the sensory analysis, such as being non-destructive, less time-consuming, and low cost [28]. The first steps that have been taken to predict pork meat by applying data mining (Iberian ham [29,30] and loin [21,31,32]) and machine learning (marbling [33,34]) are recent. Pork meat quality prediction improves when the fractal analysis framework is taken into account [21,32]. In this sense, it has been shown that Iberian pork sirloin and ham have a fat connective tissue whose distribution can be described by means of some fractal dimensions [24,35]. As a consequence, the multifractal analysis can be regarded as a source of information for the databases used by pork meat quality prediction techniques.

In order to obtain suitable information based on the multifractal parameters, it is necessary to have precise and quick DFIA methods. Thus, it is necessary to increase the role of automated operations to obtain more accurate results. Previous studies, such as Serrano *et al.* [24,35], proposed a DFIA based on human intervention by manually setting some image acquisition parameters. This fact

supposed a potential source of errors that forced multiple revisions to avoid them, with the consequent cost in time. With the aim of overcoming this drawback, some alternatives were explored here in order to introduce a methodology that involves less human intervention.

### 2. Materials and Methods

#### 2.1. Ham Samples

For the study, a total of 121 samples of ham (hand-cut slices) were used, classified in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of samples and classification according to breed and nutrition.

Batch	A100IH	AIH	FPIH	FIH
1	12	26	12	11
2	13	21	14	12

A100IH: Acorn 100% Iberian Ham, AIH: Acorn Iberian Ham, FPIH: Feed/Pasture Iberian Ham, FIH: Feed Iberian Ham.

The samples were donated by the company COVAP (Córdoba, Spain) in vacuum containers. For each designation, two different batches of samples were used.

Due to the complexity of taking pictures of complete slices, a different number of samples were made from each package, depending on the possibility of taking full slices.

It should be mentioned, as this is important for the study, that the samples were not taken from the same areas of the ham, so that in the same package slices could be taken from different muscles of the leg of the pig, with the consequent heterogeneity in the color of the muscle fibers and the amount of infiltrated fat and accumulated fat clusters.

#### 2.2. Image Acquisition

For the acquisition of the images, the method proposed by Serrano *et al.* [24,35] and based on Valous *et al.* [36] was used.

The system consists of a cubicle with four Osram fluorescent light sources of 36 w and a color temperature of 5400 K, with an inclination of  $60^{\circ}$  on a surface with a dark matte cardboard where the samples are placed. The light source must be turned on 30 min before taking pictures to reach the correct color temperature.

The system was completed with a Nikon D60 camera with an 18–55 mm lens placed vertically about 15 cm above the black cardboard. The images were taken using standardized parameters to avoid differences in light and color in the samples. The parameters that gave the best results when taking the images, in terms of the sharpness of the images and homogeneity of light and color, were the following: image size  $3872 \times 2592$  pixels in JPEG format, 36 mm zoom, focal length of 26 mm, speed of 1/60 s shot, f/8 aperture, ISO 200, without flash, and white balance adjusted by gray letter with 18% reflectance.

#### 2.3. Image Processing

Photoshop CC 2018 software and Matlab R2019a software were used to process the images.

First, the method used by Serrano *et al.* [24,35] was carried out by using Photoshop to cut the 512  $\times$  512 pixel images of the manually established areas.

Subsequently, the squared color images were transformed into black and white using three methods to be compared (Figure 1). Then, they were transformed into black and white binary images via a manual threshold set at 175 through which the red colors, belonging to lean tissue, were transformed into black, and through which the white and yellow ones, belonging to fatty tissue, were transformed into white. Afterwards, the images were processed through a high-pass filter to overcome the problems of heterogeneity in the color of the slices of ham. Two radii of the high-pass filter were established for comparison, 25 and 50 pixels, and were superimposed on the original image. Subsequently, the images were transformed into black and white images setting a threshold of 150. Figure 2 shows an original image of the sample and the quadrate white and black region.



Figure 1. The steps to obtain binary images from the original  $512 \times 512$  pixels image.



Figure 2. Representation of the original image, and square area of 512 pixels selected and processed to black (lean meat) and white (fatty infiltration) for analysis.

Once the black and white images were obtained by both methods, the images were finally transformed using Matlab into a binary code of three columns, which indicates the horizontal

position, vertical position, and pixel color ("1" white color for fat; "2" black color for muscle). This data file was the one used for the performance of the multifractal analysis.

#### 3. Results and Discussion

The multifractal nature of the Iberian ham samples was exhibited for the three image processing methods considered here. Thus, the next step was to check the accuracy of these methods by comparing the values obtained for the following fractal dimensions:  $D_0$ , box-counting dimension or fractal dimension, related to geometric patterns but insensitive to density distribution.  $D_1$ , information or entropy dimension, linked to the uniformity in the measure distribution.  $D_2$ , correlation dimension, indicating the pattern complexity. More details on the multifractal sandbox method that was performed to yield these fractal dimensions can be found in Serrano *et al.* [24,35] and references cited in these works.

Table 2 lists the fractal dimensions' mean values and their standard errors for each method used. The data were analyzed by using SPSS Statistics (v.26) software (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA).

		Fractal Dimension						
Method	Ham	$D_0$		$D_1$		$D_2$		
Methou	Design	Mean	Standard	Mean	Standard	Mean	Standard	
			Error		Error		Error	
Unfiltered Image	A100IH	1.7991	0.0094	1.5967	0.0148	1.4885	0.0171	
	AIH	1.7609	0.0051	1.6184	0.0067	1.5364	0.0078	
	FPIH	1.7520	0.0075	1.6011	0.0131	1.5269	0.0165	
	FIH	1.7101	0.0120	1.6055	0.0143	1.5589	0.0148	
High-Pass Filter 25 Pixels	A100IH	1.8051	0.0048	1.6761	0.0146	1.5889	0.0209	
	AIH	1.7939	0.0053	1.6906	0.0113	1.6140	0.0154	
	FPIH	1.7914	0.0043	1.6760	0.0092	1.5875	0.0139	
	FIH	1.7456	0.0079	1.6174	0.0113	1.5410	0.0128	
High-Pass Filter 50 Pixels	A100IH	1.7650	0.0087	1.6021	0.0182	1.4978	0.0232	
	AIH	1.7400	0.0071	1.6043	0.0135	1.5147	0.0163	
	FPIH	1.7324	0.0071	1.5747	0.0119	1.4714	0.0151	
	FIH	1.6666	0.0118	1.5193	0.0122	1.4456	0.0118	

Table 2. The mean and standard error for the considered fractal dimensions in the fourdesignations of Iberian ham for each method used.

There are no rules to set the acceptable standard error values when determining fractal dimensions [36]. Although those found in this work are relatively high, they are suitable because all of them are lower than 0.1 [37]. Each fractal dimension exhibits a clear ascending or descending trend following the order A100IH (Acorn 100% Iberian Ham), AIH (Acorn Iberian Ham), FPIH (Feed/Pasture Iberian Ham) and FIH (Feed Iberian Ham) for the three methods.

Figures 3–5 show the relationship between the fractal dimensions and fat pixels in the image. For all these figures, plots (a) and (b) stand by high-pass filter 25 pixels and high-pass filter 50 pixels, respectively, while plots (c) correspond to unfiltered images. In the filtered methods analyzed, there is a clear relationship between the multifractal parameters and the fat fraction, as in the unfiltered method. As can be appreciated, the designations of A100IH and FIH are clearly



separated in the three methods. These separations are not so evident in the denominations of AIH and FPIH.

Figure 3. Scatter plots depicting the relationships between the box-counting dimension (or fractal dimension), *D*<sub>0</sub>, and the fat fraction found for each ham designation when (a) high-pass filter 25 pixels (b) high-pass filter 50 pixels (c) unfiltered images are used. A100IH: Acorn 100% Iberian Ham, AIH: Acorn Iberian Ham, FPIH: Feed/Pasture Iberian Ham, FIH: Feed Iberian Ham.



Figure 4. Scatter plots showing the associations between the information or entropy dimension,  $D_1$ , and the fat fraction obtained for each ham designation when (a) high-pass filter 25 pixels (b) high-pass filter 50 pixels (c) unfiltered images are used.



Figure 5. Scatter plots illustrating the relationships between the correlation dimension, *D*<sub>2</sub>, and the fat fraction obtained for each ham designation when (a) high-pass filter 25 pixels (b) high-pass filter 50 pixels (c) unfiltered images are used.

The greatest variation observed between the high-pass filter methods and the unfiltered method is the dispersion of the points belonging to AIH in almost all the multifractal parameters.

As can be seen in Figures 3–5, when we compare the designations of A100IH and FIH separately, we can observe that there is a greater separation for parameters D0 and D1 and that the separation between them is greater for high-pass filters than for the unfiltered method. Figures 6–8 represent the statistical distributions of the fractal dimensions (minimum, maximum, median, first quartile, and third quartile). As it happens to Figs. 3-5, plots (a), (b) and (c) in Figs. 6-8 show the results corresponding to high-pass filter 25 pixels, high-pass filter 50 pixels and unfiltered images, respectively. In general, the distributions are more grouped in filtering methods, which can establish a better discrimination of the results than the unfiltered method can.



Figure 6. Box and whisker plots corresponding to the  $D_0$  fractal dimensions obtained for each ham designation from samples when (a) high-pass filter 25 pixels (b) high-pass filter 50 pixels (c) unfiltered images are used.



Figure 7. Box and whisker plots corresponding to the  $D_1$  fractal dimensions obtained for each ham designation from samples when (a) high-pass filter 25 pixels (b) high-pass filter 50 pixels (c) unfiltered images are used.



Figure 8. Box and whisker plots corresponding to the  $D_2$  fractal dimensions obtained for each ham designation from samples when (a) high-pass filter 25 pixels (b) high-pass filter 50 pixels (c) unfiltered images are used.

In particular, there is a significant difference for A100IH and FIH on the  $D_0$ ,  $D_1$ , and  $D_2$  parameters and, more specifically, for the 25 pixels radius method.

According to Figures 6–8, the obtained results show the convenience of using high-pass filters because the error in the estimation of the multifractal parameters decreases compared to the unfiltered images. By means high-pass filters, the heterogeneity in the color of the muscle fibers is reduced, making the fractal dimensions distributions not as scattered as those obtained from the unfiltered images. A lower dispersion was found for the statistical distribution of the multifractal dimensions when high-pass filter 25 pixels was applied. This fact is especially evident for  $D_0$ , and it is a consequence of dismissing the sensitivity of the multifractal analysis to signal noise by means of high-pass filters.

#### 4. Conclusions

Quick methods to assess the quality of food and to detect food fraud offer numerous benefits for consumers and manufacturers. Nowadays, the determination of racial and feed designations of Iberian pigs requires expensive and slow methods that cannot be possibly applied online in slaughterhouses and cutting rooms.

The metrics derived from the multifractal-based image analysis of highly variable fat-connective tissue may be suitable for inclusion in the databases of predictive techniques of meat quality, such as data mining and machine learning. The multifractal approach extracts the information from the singularities detected for the image without applying any of the smoothing processes frequently used to transform discrete signals into continuous signals to compute their gradient. Therefore, no information is added or lost due to smoothing methods during the multifractal analysis. In addition, the independence of multifractal parameters over a range of scales and the fact that a specific data distribution is not required, as is the case when considering statistical methods, can be regarded as advantages of this approach. The digital food image analysis proposed in this work reduces the human bias, overcoming the sensitivity to noise shown by a multifractal analysis.

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## **CAPÍTULO VI: CONCLUSIONES**

#### Conclusión 1

La distribución de tejido graso-conectivo en solomillo de cerdo blanco e ibérico exhibe naturaleza multifractal.

En base a los resultados obtenidos, se ha cumplido una serie de requisitos que avalan la afirmación anterior. Entre ellos, destaca que, tanto en el solomillo de cerdo blanco como en el ibérico, el espectro de dimensiones fractales generalizadas es una función decreciente. Además, el espectro multifractal obtenido en ambos casos es una parábola invertida con dos ramas, propio de las distribuciones de variables autosemejantes.

#### Conclusión 2

La relación entre las dimensiones fractales y el porcentaje de grasa proveen información relevante para la diferenciación entre solomillo de cerdo blanco e ibérico.

Mediante la representación gráfica de las dimensiones fractales frente al porcentaje de grasa de cada imagen se puede observar una distribución diferenciada entre el solomillo de cerdo blanco y el ibérico. Este hecho es especialmente relevante para las dimensiones de correlación y la diferencia entre las dimensiones fractal y de información. En el caso del solomillo ibérico la sensibilidad mostrada por estos parámetros multifractales es más alta comparada con la exhibida para el cerdo blanco.

#### Conclusión 3

Se ha demostrado la naturaleza multifractal de la distribución de tejido graso-conectivo en cortes tanto a mano como a máquina de las diferentes categorías de jamón ibérico.

Al igual que en el solomillo, para las diferentes designaciones de jamón ibérico, el espectro de dimensiones fractales generalizadas es una función decreciente y el espectro multifractal obtenido es una parábola invertida con dos ramas. Esta circunstancia se ha constatado tanto en corte a máquina como a mano.

#### Conclusión 4

La relación entre las dimensiones fractales y el porcentaje de grasa y las distribuciones estadísticas de las dimensiones fractales proveen información relevante para ser usada en métodos predictivos de la calidad del jamón ibérico, obteniendo mejores resultados para el corte a mano.

En base a los resultados obtenidos, esta información es más trascendente en la distribución estadística de cerdo de bellota 100% y cerdo de cebo para las dimensiones fractales consideradas en comparación con el resto de las designaciones. Igualmente, los resultados son más específicos para el corte a mano que para el corte a máquina.

#### Conclusión 5

El tratamiento de las imágenes de lonchas de jamón ibérico mediante el uso de un filtro homomórfico de paso alto mejora la distribución estadística de las dimensiones fractales frente a imágenes sin filtrar.

En base a los resultados obtenidos, al reducir la heterogeneicidad de color en las imágenes mediante el filtro de paso alto, se obtienen distribuciones estadísticas de las dimensiones fractales menos dispersas que en imágenes sin filtrar.

Conclusión general.

Los resultados incluidos en esta tesis doctoral pueden ser usados para completar el conjunto de indicadores tenido en cuenta en métodos predictivos de la calidad de productos derivados del cerdo ibérico. La metodología no destructiva empleada puede ser aplicada en la descripción de alimentos que, aunque sean de naturaleza muy diferente a la carne de cerdo, exhiben una distribución caótica de alguna de sus características.

# **CAPÍTULO VII: RESUMEN**

La presente tesis doctoral se presenta como compendio de publicaciones en las que se propone una metodología no destructiva para la obtención de indicadores que pueden ser usados en métodos predictivos de la calidad de productos cárnicos derivados del cerdo ibérico. Para ello se ha aplicado el análisis multifractal de imágenes digitales de esos productos.

Dada la importancia del sector porcino en nuestro país resulta necesario la investigación de nuevas metodologías para el estudio de las características intrínsecas de la raza ibérica como es la infiltración grasa intramuscular que viene determinada por factores genéticos y de alimentación. A su vez, los competitivos precios sumados a la existencia de fraudes en las denominaciones comerciales hacen necesario que en este sector se desarrollen métodos de predicción que de manera rápida y barata ayuden a afrontar estos problemas. El análisis multifractal de imágenes cumple con estas dos características y actualmente está surgiendo como un método innovador en estudios relacionados con la determinación de la calidad y características de diferentes alimentos.

Con esta premisa, en una primera publicación se aborda la naturaleza multifractal de la infiltración grasa de solomillo de cerdo blanco y solomillo de cerdo ibérico. Así, se diseñó y se desarrolló el sistema y condicionantes técnicos de obtención de imágenes, el sistema informático de procesado de las imágenes y la metodología del análisis multifractal. El procedimiento general consiste en la obtención de imágenes a color en condiciones homogéneas, tratamiento de las imágenes para obtener una muestra de la región de interés y posterior transformación a blanco (tejido graso-conectivo) y negro (magro), binarización de la imagen a un archivo txt y tratamiento mediante algoritmos para determinar los parámetros multifractales.

Mediante este procedimiento, se determinaron los parámetros multifractales comprobando la existencia de autosemejanza en la distribución del tejido graso-conectivo y logrando, gracias a este hecho, la distinción de muestras de ambas razas.

El contenido de la segunda publicación se centró en constatar la naturaleza multifractal de la infiltración grasa muestras de jamón de las cuatro denominaciones de cerdo ibérico cortadas a mano y a máquina. Se comprobó la naturaleza multifractal del tejido graso-conectivo de las muestras y la capacidad de distinción entre denominaciones para ambos tipos de corte.

En la tercera publicación se propone una optimización en el procesado de las imágenes. Para ello se hace uso de un filtrado homomórfico de paso alto en las regiones de interés de los cortes de jamón ibérico cortado a mano mediante el uso de dos radios de filtro distintos, comparando los resultados del análisis multifractal de estas imágenes con los resultados de las imágenes sin filtro. El estudio llevado a cabo permite apreciar una notable mejora de los resultados para los cortes a mano de las cuatro denominaciones de jamón de cerdo ibérico.

Los resultados obtenidos sugieren la idoneidad de la metodología propuesta para generar parámetros descriptores de la distribución caótica del tejido graso-conectivo que pueden ser usados para la predicción de la calidad de la carne del cerdo ibérico.

### **SUMMARY**

This doctoral thesis is presented as a compendium of publications in which a non-destructive methodology is proposed to obtain indicators that can be used in predictive methods of the quality of meat products derived from Iberian pigs. For this aim, the use of multifractal analysis of images has been applied.

Due to the importance of the Iberian pig sector in our country, it is necessary to investigate new methodologies for the study of the intrinsic characteristics of the Iberian breed such as intramuscular fat infiltration that is determined by genetic and feeding factors. At the same time, the competitive prices added to the existence of fraud in the commercial denominations make it necessary for this sector to develop prediction methods that quickly and cheaply help to face these problems. Multifractal image analysis meets these two characteristics and is currently emerging as an innovative method in studies related to the determination of the quality and characteristics of different foods.

With this premise, the first study faces the multifractal nature of fatty infiltration of white pork tenderloin and Iberian pork tenderloin. In this study, the system and technical conditions for obtaining images, the computer system for image processing and the methodology of multifractal analysis were designed and developed. The general procedure consists in obtaining color images in homogeneous conditions, treatment of the images to obtain a sample of the region of interest and subsequent transformation to white (fatty-connective tissue) and black (lean), binarization of the image in a txt file and processing using algorithms to determine multifractal parameters.

Through this procedure, the multifractal parameters for both pieces were determined by checking the existence of self-similarity in the distribution of fatty-connective tissue and achieving, thanks to this fact, the distinction of samples of both races.

The content of the second publication focused on verifying the multifractal nature of the fatty infiltration of ham samples of the four denominations of Iberian pigs cut by hand and by machine. The multifractal nature and the ability to classify between denominations for both types of cut were checked.

The third article discusses an optimization in image processing. For this purpose, a high-pass homomorphic filtering is used in the regions of interest of the Iberian ham cuts cut by hand using two different filter radii, comparing the results of the multifractal analysis of these images with the results of the unfiltered images The study results in a remarkable improvement of the results for the hand cuts of the four designations of Iberian pork ham.

The results obtained suggest the suitability of the proposed methodology to generate parameters that describe the chaotic distribution of fatty-connective tissue that can be used to predict the quality of Iberian pig meat.

## ANEXO I: ÍNDICES DE CALIDAD DE LAS PUBLICACIONES
## TESIS PRESENTADA POR COMPENDIO DE ARTÍCULOS

Esta Tesis cumple el requisito establecido por la Universidad de Córdoba para su presentación como compendio de artículos. Consta de un mínimo de tres artículos publicados o aceptados en revistas incluidas en los tres primeros cuartiles de la relación de revistas del ámbito de la especialidad y referencias en la última relación publicada por Journal Citation Reports (SCI):

S. Serrano, F. Perán, F.J. Jiménez-Hornero, E. Gutiérrez de Ravé, Multifractal analysis application to the characterization of fatty infiltration in Iberian and White pork sirloins, Meat Science, Volume 93, Issue 3, 2013, Pages 723-732, ISSN 0309-1740, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.meatsci.2012.11.015. Factor de Impacto: 2.754, posición Q1 (17/124) en "Food Science & Technology".

S. Serrano, F. Perán, E. Gutiérrez de Ravé, A. Cumplido, F.J. Jiménez-Hornero. Multifractal analysis application to the study of fat and its infiltration in Iberian ham: Influence of racial and feeding factors and type of slicing, Meat Science, Volume 148, 2019, Pages 55-63, ISSN 0309 1740, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.meatsci.2018.10.004. Factor de Impacto: 2.699, posición Q1 (29/135) en "Food Science & Technology".

Perán-Sánchez, F., Serrano, S., Gutiérrez de Ravé, E., Sánchez-López, E., Cumplido, A., Jiménez Hornero, J.F. Digital Image Filtering Optimization Supporting Iberian Ham Quality Prediction. Foods 2020, 9(1), 25. https://doi.org/10.3390/foods9010025. Factor de Impacto: 3.011, posición Q2 (36/135) en "Food Science & Technology".

El Doctorando

Fdo.: Francisco Perán Sánchez

## **ANEXO II: OTRAS APORTACIONES**

## Comunicación Póster: Tratamiento de imagen y análisis multifractal aplicados a la clasificación de carne de porcino.

VII Congreso ciencia y tecnología de los alimentos.

Córdoba 14 de Junio de 2013

TRATAMIENTO DE IMAGEN Y ANA	LISIS MULTIFRACTAL APLICADOS
A LA CLASIFICACION DE CARNE DE PORCINO S. Serrano ", F. Perán ", F.]. Jiménez-Hornero <sup>*</sup> , E. Gutiérrez de Ravé <sup>*</sup> * Departamento de Bromatología y Tecnología de los Alimentos, Universidad de Córdoba, Campus Rabanales, Edif Darwin, anexo, Córdoba.	
<sup>a</sup> Departamento de Ingeniería Gráfica y Geomática, Univer INTRODUCCION	sidad de Córdoba, Campus Rabanales, Edif Mendel, Córdoba. RESULTADOS
Durante la ólitima decada numeronas itenziana de análisis se han stilizado para evaluar la dieta y la gandicia del credo beiros. Batter ellas podensos destanza la tenzian NIRS para la determina- ción de secidos gravos, la determinación del contenado en triglicieridos y de compaenos presentes en la fracción (nasposificabile de la grava, la determinación de los autoxidantes naturales en el misocido, el analiza del mísculos a traveis de la slovas que el análisis de los deidos gravos, y siendo de aplicación taboras en una industria. El analizis de imagen agiticado a campo de los alimen- nos ha tenido un desarrollo notable, siendo actualmente una hermanienta efecta y econômica para analizar la superficie del alimento y obmer divente du endíanse.	Los resultados obtenidos mostraron la naturalizza multifractal del tejido graso conectivo en la earte de cerdo. En todos los casos, la diamensión fractal fue inferior a 2, valor de la diamensión euclidos de las insignemes bidomesionadas analizadas. Acid la diatribución de grass inflittada no cubria toda in extensión de un fittet de solocallio. Este hecho es más relevante para las mostras de cerdo hebrico debido a las caracteristicas de su inflitucatios grass quedandos reflesado en los correspondientes espectros multifractales. Una esta de las estas de las deles estas estas de cerdo beiros debidos a las caracteristicas de su inflitucatios grass quedandos reflesado en los correspondientes espectros multifractales. Una de las desembles de las desembles de las demostradas las unidas estas multifractal como herramiente descriptiva de la dis- tribución de la infiltución grass es filetes de solomilio de cerdo, se tograros clasificar corresta- mente el 94% de las manestras de beiros, quedados un 6 % de las masestras, quedando el 25% de las mismas en ativacidos.
<ul> <li>Internative de la constance de constance de constance de constance de constance de la constance de constance de constance de constance de la constance de la constance de constance de constance de la constance de la constance de constance de constance de la constance mais de la la constance de la constance de constance d</li></ul>	
<b>METODOLOGIA</b> Se obtuvo imagen de un total de 19 muestras de solenillo de cerdo (9 de libérico y 10 de blanco) con cámara Nikor D60 conectada a ordenador con programa Nikorol Boffware distancia de la muestra. El procesado de la imagen se reali- a blanco y negor (filceles de grasa y magro, respectivame- blanco y negor (filceles de grasa y magro, respectivame- diante Matlabit (MatilWorks, Inc., USA), obtenifadore ko	For the other will using a statistical to be marked to the hitter. Takable picture of using marked to be marked to be a statistical to be marked to be a statistical
	Concerte la presente antidentita regress of presente et para ECONCLUSIONES Este trabajo anticipa el desarrollo ena línea de investigación que aplicará, en base a los resulta- presentados de carnes de carelo en fanción de su inflimación grasa. La metodología em- para la classificación de carnes de cerelo en fanción de su inflimación grasa. La metodología em- para la classificación de carnes de cerelo en fanción de su inflimación grasa. La metodología em- para la classificación de carnes de cerelo en fanción de su inflimación grasa. La metodología em- tente de completion.
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Comunicación Póster: Estudio del contenido graso y su infiltración en diferentes designaciones de jamón ibérico

VIII Congreso CYTA/CESIA.

Badajoz 9 de Abril de 2015



las muestras), dentro de una región de radio determinado R (i.e. un circulo) centrada en el fractal. La elección de puntos arbitrarios como centros, el valor medio de la masa y sus momentos qth sobre centros distribuidos aleatoriamente pueden ser calculados como ([M(R)]q) siendo q la probabilidad de

Dn es la dimensión fractal del conjunto sobre el que se toma la

ibérico puro bellota expresión.

82 % infiltra

Articulo divulgativo: El análisis multifractal aplicado al estudio del contenido graso y su infiltración en diferentes designaciones de jamón ibérico.

Revista Eurocarne nº 282

Diciembre 2019



## El análisis multifractal aplicado al estudio del contenido graso y su infiltración en diferentes designaciones de jamón ibérico

Mediante el empleo del análisis de imágenes y el método sandbox, se ha realizado un estudio multifractal de la infiltración de grasa en muestras de las diferentes designaciones de jamón ibérico, obtenidas mediante el uso de cuchillo y máquina loncheadora.

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ESTE ARTÍCULO EXPLORA las características multifractales de las diferentes designaciones comerciales de jamón ibérico (bellota 100% ibérico, bellota ibérico, cebo de campo Ibérico y cebo Ibérico). Este estudio ha sido realizado utilizando los patrones de infiltración grasa obtenidos del análisis de imagen digital de cortes de jamón comparando los cortes mecánico y manual. Los resultados obtenidos muestran la naturaleza multifractal del tejido conectivo graso en el jamón ibérico solamente cuando se aplica el corte con cuchillo, confirmando las diferencias entre las designaciones según su genética y alimentación. Por lo tanto, los parámetros multifractales presentados en este trabajo podrían

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