



Online Version ISSN: 1314-412X
Volume 3, Number 4
December 2011

AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

2011

An International Journal Published by Faculty of Agriculture,
Trakia University, Stara Zagora, Bulgaria

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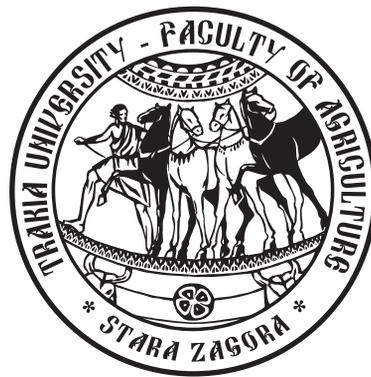
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*AGRICULTURAL
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY*

2011

An International Journal Published by Faculty of Agriculture,
Trakia University, Stara Zagora, Bulgaria

Near Infrared Spectroscopy for monitoring changes during yellow cheese ripening

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Abstract. . The aim of the study has investigation of the feasibility of Near infrared(NIR) spectroscopy in a diffusion reflection mode as a tool for the monitoring a chemical changes during ripening of Bulgarian yellow cheese from cow milk and classification of cheese according to ripening stage. The cheeses were made according to Bulgarian national standard for Bulgarian yellow cheese from cow milk. Samples for spectroscopic and chemical analysis were taken after 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40 and 45 days of ripening. Total protein, water-soluble protein, titratable acidity, dry matter, and sodium chloride content were determined for all samples. NIR measurements were performed by NIRQuest 512 spectrometer (Ocean Optics, Inc.) in the region 900-1700 nm using reflection fiber-optics probe. Partial least square regression with internal cross-validation was used for calibration models development for determination of tested parameters. Soft Independent Modeling of Class Analogy (SIMCA) was implemented to create models of the cheese samples according to maturity stages based on their NIR spectra. Differences in spectral data of cheese samples during ripening were found. The biggest variation in spectral data were observed at 1215, 1350, 1644 nm, region from 1415 to 1470 and 1682-1700 nm. Determination of water-soluble protein, dry matter content and titratable acidity with coefficient of multiple correlation bigger than 0.95 and ratio of standard error of calibration and standard deviation of data set bigger than 3 was excellent. Very good determination was found for maturity rate. Prediction accuracy was good for total protein content and poor for NaCl content of cheese. SIMCA model for discrimination of cheese samples according to ripening stage was developed. We can conclude from obtained results that NIR has a potential for assessing cheese ripening related to changes in the cheese matrix during maturity.

Keywords: Bulgarian yellow cheese, ripening, near-infrared spectroscopy.

Abbreviations: NIRS – near-infrared spectroscopy, PLS – partial least squares, PC – principal component, SIMCA – Soft Independent Modeling of Class Analogy, R – multiple correlation coefficient, SEC – standard error of calibration, SECV – standard error of cross validation, BNS – Bulgarian national standard.

Introduction

Cheese undergoes a complex series of chemical, bacterial and enzymatic reactions during maturation or ripening phase, which are responsible for transformation of fresh curd into a distinctive aged cheese. During ripening, degradation of lactose, proteins and fat are carried out and information regarding the evolution of lipolysis, glycolysis, and proteolysis may help the cheese-maker to better understand the biochemical kinetics of ripening to improve the ripening process. Determination of the degree of ripening and various chemical parameters is an important part of cheese quality evaluation. Classical methods for cheese chemical analysis are time-consuming and expensive. Considerable interest for development of instrumental techniques for objective, faster and less expensive assessments of cheese quality existed. Ideally, such techniques should also be non-invasive and non-destructive.

Near infrared (NIR) spectroscopy has been used as a method to predict the quality of different foods and agricultural products due to the speed of analysis, minimal sample preparation and low cost. The NIR spectrum of foods can give a global signature of composition which, with the application of chemometric techniques can be used to elucidate particular compositional characteristics in the food matrix. NIR has shown good prediction abilities for determination of fat, moisture, protein and inorganic salts in cheese (Adamopoulos et al., 2001; Blaquez et al., 2004, Curda and Kukackova, 2004). Cattaneo et al. (2005) used FT-IR and FT-NIR for analysis of the

Italian fresh cheese Crescenza. The authors found a successful discrimination between cheeses according to their storage time using the PCA and concluded that NIR could be a suitable technique for the evaluation of the shelf-life of Crescenza cheese.

The potential of NIR to predict maturity and sensory attributes of 24 Cheddar cheeses produced using five renneting enzymes and stored at 4 C for up to 9 months has been investigated by Downey et al. (2005). The authors showed that NIR spectroscopy has demonstrated the ability to predict cheese maturity and several sensory attributes with sufficient accuracy to be industrially useful and recommended the use of NIR reflectance spectroscopy for routine quality assessment of processed cheese.

The aim of the study has investigation of the feasibility of NIR spectroscopy in a diffusion reflection mode as a tool for the monitoring a chemical changes during ripening of Bulgarian yellow cheese from cow milk and classification of cheese according to ripening stage.

Material and methods

Cheese manufacturing, sampling and physico-chemical analysis

The cheeses were made using a classical semi-hard cheese making scheme, according to Bulgarian national standard for Bulgarian yellow cheese from cow milk BNS 14-2010. Samples for

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spectroscopic and chemical analysis were taken after 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40 and 45 days of ripening. Two or three subsamples were taken at every sampling day. Total protein, water-soluble protein, titratable acidity, dry matter, and sodium chloride (NaCl) content were determined for all samples according to the Bulgarian national standard (BNS), ISO standards and International Dairy Federation standards (IDF). The content of total protein was determined by Kjeldal method according to the BNS EN ISO 8968-1:2002 standard; the water-soluble protein by BNS EN ISO 8968-5:2002 standard; titratable acidity by Thorner method (BNS 1111:1980) and expressed in Thorner degrees ($^{\circ}\text{Th}$); dry matter by oven drying to constant weight at $102^{\circ}\text{C} \pm 2^{\circ}\text{C}$ (BNS 1109:1989); NaCl content by BNS 8274:1982; and maturity rate as relation of water-soluble protein and total protein content (IDF 20-5:2001), respectively.

Near-infrared analysis

NIR measurements were performed by NIRQuest 512 spectrometer (Ocean Optics, Inc.) in the region 900-1700 nm using reflection fiber-optics probe without destruction or any kind of treatment of the samples. Two or three measurements at different part of the samples were made to minimise any possible effects of structural variation in the samples.

A commercial program Pirouette Version 2.0 (Infometrics, Inc.,

Woodinville, WA, USA) was used for performing of spectral data processing. Partial least square regression (PLS) with internal cross-validation was used for calibration models development for determination of tested parameters. The statistics used to select the best equations were multiple correlation coefficients R and the standard error of cross-validation SECV. Moreover, the mathematical treatment of spectral data – smoothing or transformation as first or second derivative using Savitsky-Golay procedure were tested in the development of calibration models. Soft Independent Modeling of Class Analogy (SIMCA) was implemented to create models of the cheese samples according to maturity stages based on their NIR spectra.

Results and discussion

Chemical analysis

The results for the range, mean values and standard deviation of Titratable acidity, Dry Matter, Total Protein, Water-soluble protein, and NaCl content of cheese samples, determined by classical chemical analyses, and calculated Maturity rate are presented in Table 1. The biggest changes during ripening were observed in titratable acidity, dry matter and water-soluble protein content in cheese samples.

Table 1. Range, mean values and standard deviation (SD) of tested parameters in cheese samples

Parameter	Min	Max	Average	SD
Dry Matter, %	56.59	62.14	58.47	2.01
Total Protein, %	23.43	26.14	24.40	0.91
Water-soluble protein, %	2.26	5.08	4.52	0.87
NaCl, %	2.45	2.69	2.59	0.13
Titratable acidity	96.8	156.6	136.5	22.26
Maturity rate	9.38	21.68	18.17	3.47

Cheese spectra

Second derivative absorbance spectra of measured samples are presented in figure 1. The second derivative technique is often used to process NIR data. It helps to separate overlapping absorption bands, remove baseline shifts and increase apparent spectral resolution. Differences in spectral data of cheese samples during ripening were found. The biggest variation in spectral data were observed at 1215, 1350, 1644 nm, region from 1415 to 1470 and 1682-1700 nm. The absorption peak at 1215 and 1350 nm could be related to the second overtone of C–H stretch vibration. The absorption in the 1415–1470 nm region might be assigned to first overtone of O–H stretch and N–H in amino and amide groups. The bands at 1644 and 1682 nm correspond to the first overtone of the C–H stretch of CH_2 groups. Analysis of cheese spectra showed that main differences in cheese chemical composition during ripening, which were connected with changes in dry matter and protein fraction, influenced significantly cheese spectra in the investigated region.

Quantitative determinations of tested parameters

The results of the quantitative determination of Titratable

acidity, Dry Matter, Total Protein, Water-soluble protein, Maturity rate and NaCl content of cheese samples by PLS regression are presented in Table 2. The accuracy of each calibration equation was evaluated based on R – multiple correlation coefficient between values of cheese chemical parameter and NIR spectra, SEC-standard error of calibration, SECV – standard errors of cross validation and value of RPD- the ratio of standard deviation of data set SD to the SEC. The RPD evaluated the prediction errors in light of the standard deviation of the reference data and thus enables comparison between models for constituents with different variation ranges. The RPD values showed levels of prediction accuracy as follows: RPD between 1.5 and 2.0 indicates poor predictions; RPD between 2.0 and 2.5 indicates good prediction; RPD between 2.5 and 3.0 indicates very good prediction; and RPD >3 indicates excellent prediction. According to these criteria, determination of water-soluble protein and dry matter content and titratable acidity with $R > 0.95$ and $\text{RPD} > 3$ was excellent. Very good determination was found for maturity rate. Prediction accuracy was good for total protein content and poor for NaCl content of cheese. Unsuccessful prediction of NaCl could be explained by the fact that NaCl had not specific absorbance bands in the NIR region and determination of

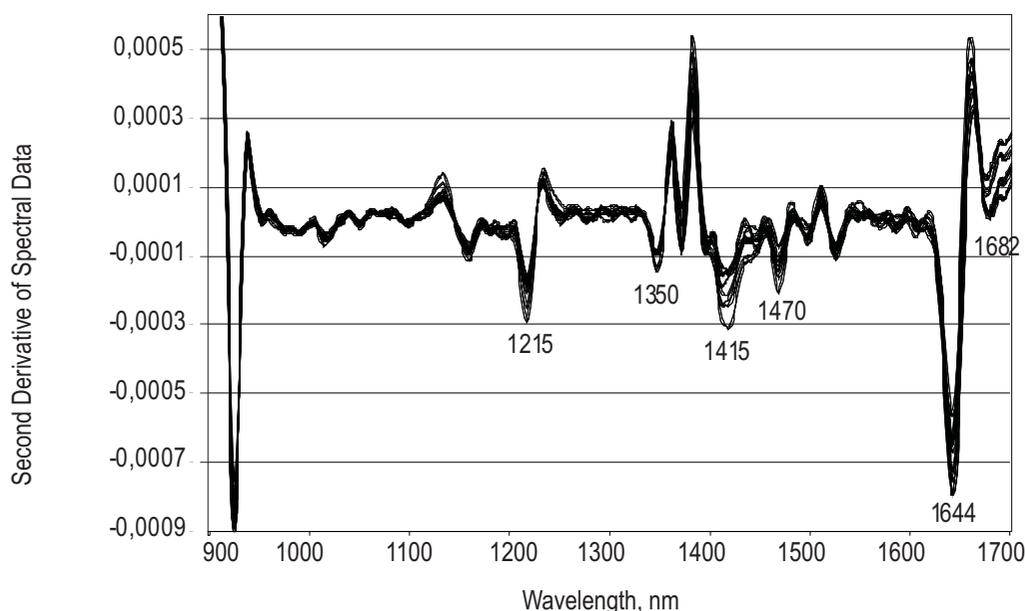


Figure 1. Second derivative absorbance spectra of measured cheese samples.

Table 2. Statistical data of the calibration equations for NIRS prediction of tested parameters' content in examined samples

Parameter	Data Transformation	PLS factors	SECV	SEC	R	RPD
Dry Matter, %	1D	7	1.40	0.65	0.95	3.11
Total Protein, %	Smooth	8	0.59	0.45	0.88	2.04
Water-soluble protein, %	1D	7	0.38	0.16	0.98	5.50
NaCl, %	Smooth	7	0.10	0.08	0.81	1.45
Titrateable acidity	1D	6	9.43	4.67	0.98	4.37
Maturity rate	1D	9	1.29	0.41	0.99	2.69

SEC – standard error of calibration, SECV – standard error of cross-validation, R – coefficient of multiple correlation, RPD – ratio between SD and SEC.

NaCl was indirect. Another explanation of the poor prediction of NaCl content would be the very small range of concentration in measured samples. Figure 2-4 graphically illustrate the relationships between actual and averaged NIR spectroscopy predicted values for each days of sampling for dry matter, water-soluble protein and maturity rate of tested cheese samples. These results were in agreement with previous finding reporting that NIRS could be a suitable technique for the prediction of chemical composition of cheeses. Karoui et al. (2006) reported RPD values bigger than 2.5 for determination of total protein, non-protein nitrogen and water-soluble protein content in Emmental cheese by NIR spectroscopy. The reported accuracy of determination of water-soluble nitrogen was better than those for total protein content. Unsuccessful prediction of NaCl content was reported.

Differences in prediction accuracy of total protein and water-soluble protein content could be explained with changes in milk protein fractions during ripening. Proteolysis is one of the principal biochemical events during the ripening of a cheese. Formation of large (water-insoluble) and intermediate-sized (water-soluble) peptides is initial result of caseins hydrolysis. In the next step of ripening peptides are degraded further by enzymes from the starter and non-starter microflora of the cheese. The final products of proteolysis are free amino acids. Therefore total protein is very

rough characteristics of protein content in cheese, which do not take into account changes in protein fraction of cheese during ripening.

Concentration of water-soluble proteins in cheese at any stage of ripening and maturity rate could be used as criteria for cheese maturity. Excellent NIR spectroscopy prediction accuracy of these parameters in investigated cheese, as well as titrateable acidity and dry matter content, suggested that NIR has a potential as a rapid screening tool for assessing cheese ripening related to changes in the cheese matrix during ripening.

SIMCA classification

SIMCA models for discrimination of cheese samples according to ripening stage were developed. Samples were divided into 3 classes – samples taken after 1, 5, 10 and 15 day after manufacturing formed class 1, samples taken 20, 25 and 30 days formed class 2, and samples taken 35, 40 and 45 formed class 3, respectively. Correct classification of all samples was obtained with models, based on smoothed raw data and 7 PC factors in the model for class1, 8 PC in the model for class 2 and 9 PC factors in the model for class3. Graphical presentation of obtained result was presented in figure 5. The interclass distance represents the distance between the classes in SIMCA models. Greater the distance between two classes the greater is the difference in composition of samples

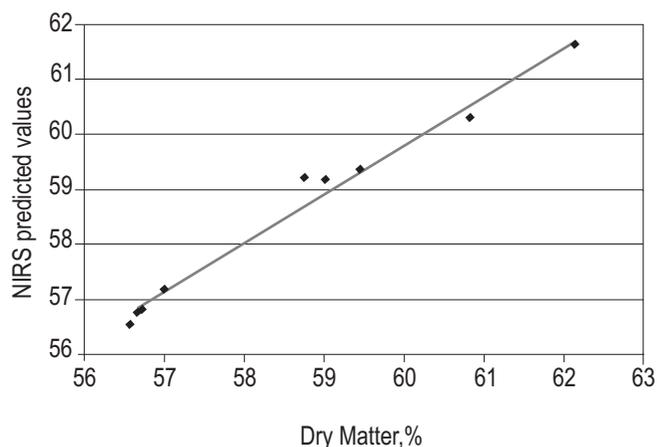


Figure 2. Relation between actual and NIRS predicted values of dry matter content in tested cheese samples.

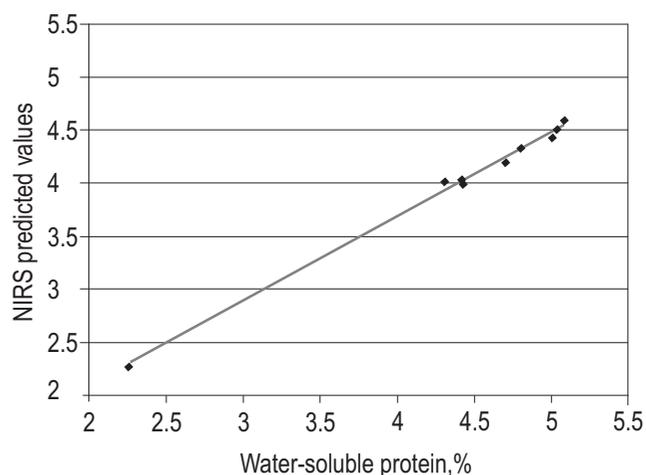


Figure 3. Relation between actual and NIRS predicted values of water-soluble protein in tested cheese samples.

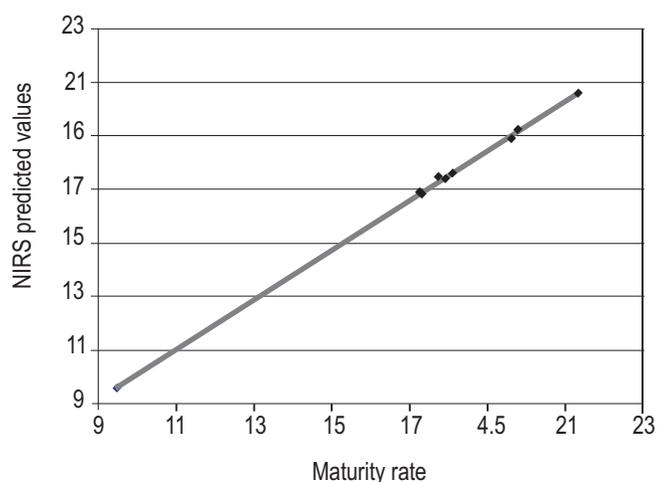


Figure 4. Relation between actual and NIRS predicted values of maturity rate of tested cheese samples.

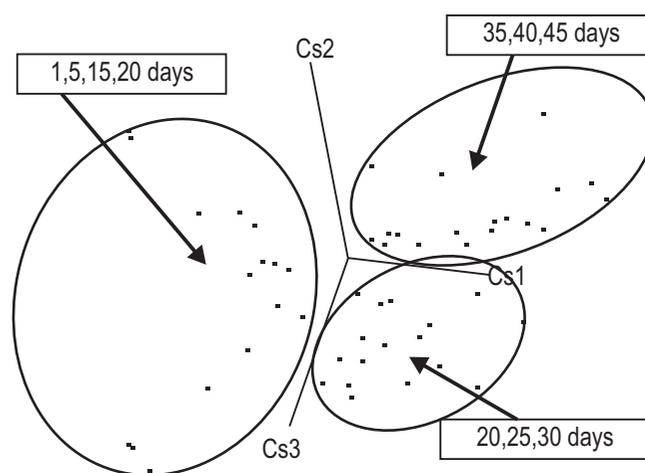


Figure 5. SIMCA classification plot for discrimination of cheese samples according to ripening time.

belonging to those clusters. As a rule of thumb, a distance of over 3 indicates that the samples are well separated. Parameter "Interclass distance" from SIMCA procedure between class 1 and class 2 was 1.49, between class 2 and class 3 was 1.74, and between class 1 and class 3 - 3.47, respectively. The interclass distance bigger than 3 was obtained between models for samples from the beginning and the end of ripening which showed good separated classes.

Conclusion

Differences in near-infrared spectral data of cheese samples during ripening were found. The biggest variation in spectral data were observed at 1215, 1350, 1644nm, region from 1415 to 1470 and 1682-1700nm.

The results of quantitative determination indicated the suitability of near-infrared spectroscopy for the determination of dry matter, total protein and water-soluble protein content, titratable acidity and maturity rate of Bulgarian yellow cheese. SIMCA models for discrimination of cheese samples according to ripening stage were developed. Correct classification of all samples was obtained

with models, based on smoothed raw data. NIR has a potential as a rapid screening tool for assessing cheese ripening related to changes in the cheese matrix during maturity. The method is rapid and non-destructive, no sample preparation is necessary. The application of NIR spectroscopy can improve the dairy production economy through the optimised laboratory efficiency, the increased product quality and the tighter production control.

Acknowledgements

Financial support for the study was provided by the National Scientific Fond of Bulgarian Ministry of Youth, Education and Science, project DO 02-143/2008.

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Mauff G, Pulverer G, Operkuch W, Hummel K and Hidden C, 1995. C3-variants and diverse phenotypes of unconverted and converted C3. In: *Provides of the Biological Fluids* (ed. H. Peters), vol. 22, 143-165, Pergamon Press. Oxford, UK.

Todorov N and Mitev J, 1995. Effect of level of feeding during dry period, and body condition score on reproductive performance in dairy cows, IXth International Conference on Production Diseases in Farm Animals, Sept.11 – 14, Berlin, Germany, p. 302 (Abstr.).

Thesis:

Penkov D, 2008. Estimation of metabolic energy and true digestibility of amino acids of some feeds in experiments with muscovy duck (*Carina moschata*, L). Thesis for DSc. Agrarian University, Plovdiv, 314 pp.

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AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Volume 3, Number 4
December 2011



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