Categorizing processing via the Meat Science Lexicon

C.C. Carr*a, J.M. Schefflera and D.D. Johnsona
a University of Florida, Department of Animal Sciences

Abstract
Consuming any meat requires some level of processing. The process of opening or “shucking” raw oysters would yield the oyster adductor, a muscle often consumed raw, making it one of most minimally processed muscles available from nature and consumed in the developed world. Yet, this minimal level of processing is required to consume this muscle. This was the concept behind the American Meat Science Association’s Lexicon Committee (AMSA, 2017) developing language to divide meat into two major classifications based upon its level of preparation:

1) minimal processing, and
2) further processing.

These two major classifications and subsequent subdivisions refer to the level of processing applied to meat when merchandized to the end-user. For the oyster example, opening the shell would be likened to the slaughter process in the meat industry. Removing the muscle from the shell prior to consumption would be comparable to the meat industry jargon of fabrication, which is removing meat from the carcass to cut it into smaller, more useful components. The authors of the Lexicon would recognize cutting into smaller pieces as minimal processing. Adding ingredients, smoking, cooking, and/or canning the oyster meat prior to it being offered to the consumer, would all be considered further processing.


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