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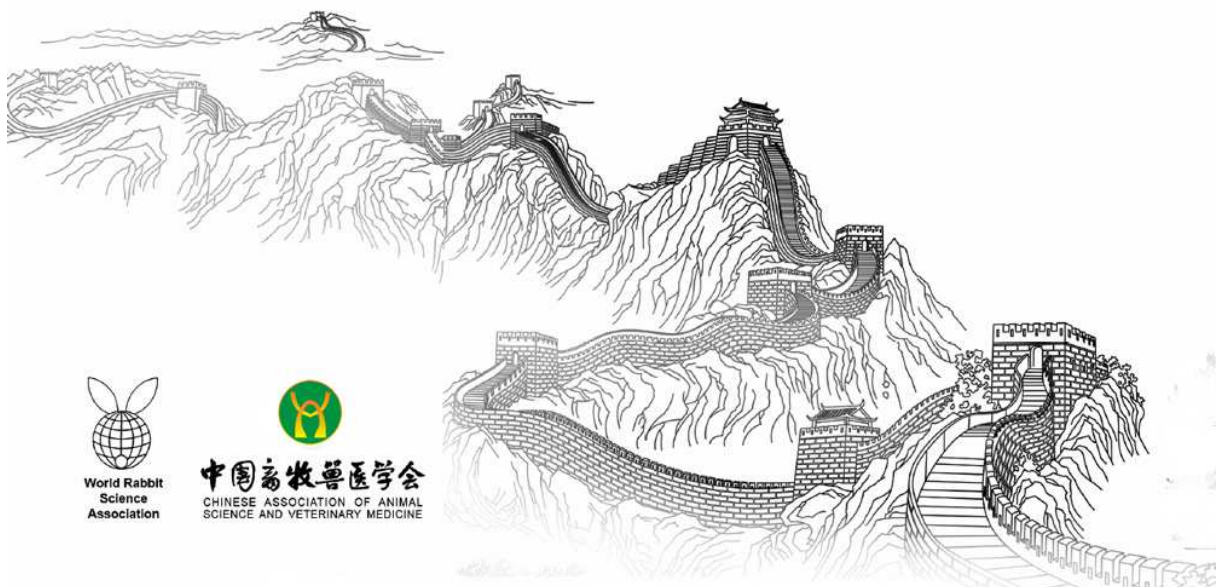
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## THE CURRENT SITUATION AND DEVELOPING PROSPECTS OF PACKAGING OF CHINESE RABBIT MEAT PRODUCTS

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### ABSTRACT

Rabbit meat is a popular kind of meat product that is healthy, has a high protein content and digestion ratio and it is also low in fat and cholesterol content.. This paper aims to present the quality characteristics of rabbit meat and the situation of the rabbit meat processing and packaging. Brand packaging has been proposed for the sake of expressing the clear features and promoting the rabbit meat products market, which can directly show the rabbit meat properties.

**Key words:** Rabbit meat, Low fat, High protein, Design, Brand Packaging

## 1 - THE NUTRITIONAL VALUE AND FUNCTION OF RABBIT MEAT

### 1.1 The nutritional value of rabbit meat

Since ancient times, people have always known about rabbit meat, and have used a couple of phrases to describe it, namely “healthy meat”, “meat or fish like vegetable”, “beauty meat” and so on. Since ancient times, people knew rabbit meat, called “healthy meat”, “meat or fish but like vegetable”, “beauty meat” and so on (Chen et al., 2012), as a kind of healthy and high quality food. Compared with other meat, rabbit meat can be digested easily, and has a tender texture, delicious taste and abundant nutrition. Rabbit meat can provide the necessary nutrients to the human body without contributing to weight gain because of its high protein content and low fat and cholesterol content. The protein content of rabbit meat is almost 2-fold of pork (21.5%), but the fat content of rabbit meat is just 1/16 of pork and 1/5 of beef (3.8%) (Chen et al., 2008). What’s more, there are abundant minerals, inorganic salt, vitamin A and B group in rabbit meat. So rabbit meat is more healthy and popular than other meats (Fan, 2013).

### 1.2 The function of rabbit meat

Rabbit meat is rich in lecithin which is indispensable for the development of the human brain and other organs plus, it is also beneficial to wit. The cholesterol content of rabbit meat (0.05%) is lower than chicken meat (0.09%), beef (0.14%), and pork (0.15%) (Chen, 2005), which can decrease the rate of thrombus. Rabbit meat can be easily absorbed for the fast digestion ratio. The digestion ratio (85%) of rabbit meat is higher than pork (75%), beef (55%), and chicken meat (50%) (McLean-Meyinsse et al, 1994), making it the ideal food for the patients with chronic gastritis, duodenal ulcers, colitis and sickly, especially during the illness and recovery period.

## 2 - PRESENT STATUS OF RABBIT MEAT PROCESSING AND PACKAGING

### 2.1 Present status of rabbit meat industry

To sum up, rabbit meat processing industry in China presents four characteristics as follows:

- ①Low centralization of rabbit meat industry, weak competition, more small workshops, less leading enterprise (Yang and Li, 2010)
- ②More high-temperature rabbit meat products and less low-temperature rabbit meat products.

- ③ More primary products and less high quality products.
- ④ Low efficiency and effectiveness in rabbit meat company (Fan, 2013).

## **2.2 Present status of rabbit meat products packaging**

Due to lower basis and short developing time, the processing technique and packaging of rabbit meat products is relatively low. Most enterprises still hold the opinion that "good wine is not afraid of deep alley", and ignore the important role of packaging, which can be the most direct "promoters". Small enterprises are easier to neglect the importance of packaging. Generally, there are several problems as follows.

- 1) Lack of presentation of nutritional characteristics of rabbit meat. This information is not present on the packaging of rabbit meat from design and description. The packaging of rabbit meat does not represent the meat quality, but just mimics other meat products' packaging styles and designs.
- 2) Low shelf-recognition. Currently, there are various meat products filled in the market. Rabbit meat products are just one little kind of meat product, whose packaging lacks distinctive characteristics and therefore easily disappears in the commodity ocean.
- 3) Lack of humanization design. First, the shape of rabbit meat products is not portable, which brings inconvenience for consumers. Second, the packaging of rabbit meat products does not open easily, which makes consumers feel uncomfortable to eat it in public. Third, the packaging of rabbit meat products does not reseal and store after opening and eating, which increases food waste.
- 4) Vagueness of target consumer. It's the common faults of commodities. The expression of rabbit meat products packaging is feeble for that there is no definite sale target. The design and packaging of rabbit meat products are less foundational, because the target consumers of rabbit meat products are unclear.

## **3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF RABBIT MEAT PRODUCTS PACKAGING - BRAND PACKAGING**

### **3.1 What is packaging?**

Packaging is the science, art and technology of enclosing or protecting products for distribution, storage, sale, and use. Primary function of package is to protect the contents and contain the contents from factory floor to consumer (Rod, 1990). Products can be effectively transported, carried, shipped and distributed with packaging. What's more, the communication role of packages is primordial. How to stand out from the competition, how to communicate an emotional message to the consumer, and how to imprint itself on the individuals conscious, are the important things which need us to consider it seriously.

### **3.2 What is "Brand"?**

According to the American Marketing Association, "a brand is name, term, sign, symbol, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition" (AMAD 2011). Branding can give a specified name to a product or group of products of one seller. It is the process of finding and fixing the means of identification. In other words, naming product, like a naming a baby, is known as branding. Manufacturers are also eager to know the characteristics and the capacity of their products on their birth, but not on their names. Thus branding is management process by which product is named.

### **3.3 The role of brand packaging in rabbit meat market**

Compared with other countries, Chinese meat market structure is not reasonable, the processed meat product accounts for small share. China produced 12 million tons of processed meat products in 2011, it was only 15.1% of the proportion of the total meat output in China. Consumers purchase goods not only for meeting physical needs, but also meeting individual requirements and spiritual happiness. Brand characteristics are the dominant factors to attract consumers. As the retail environment becomes saturated with competitors vying for consumers' attention, packaging has to work harder than ever if the product is to be noticed through the congestion of competitive products.

Alongside this challenge, retailers are faced with the realization that consumers not only differ in how they perceive brands but also in how they relate to these brands (Wells et al., 2007) One of the most important first steps for the branding strategy of rabbit meat products is the packaging of rabbit meat

products. Brand would be an abstract notion without concrete package (Ge et al., 2007).

### **3.4 The function of brand packaging in rabbit meat products market**

#### *3.4.1 To improve the public recognition of rabbit meat nutritional value*

Modern society is the personalized consumption era; consumers go shopping not only caring for the material need but also caring about whether the product can satisfy their individuality needs and mental pleasure. The differences among the brand characteristics make it become the dominant factor to attract consumers. The material benefit and spiritual benefit of the packaging definitely are what the consumers want to buy and to get. If rabbit meat products cannot show its meaning or value through the packaging, consumers may not remember the brand even the product.

#### *3.4.2 To improve the added value of rabbit meat products*

Products transmit their advantages to consumer as much as possible in order to gain more business profits. Product packaging deeply communicate, resonate, and touch the heart with consumers by presenting the graphics, text, color, and the brand culture together. It is difficult to gain consumers' trust with a poor image packaging. In developed countries, the most important thing is more of the brand packaging system than product quality. The product quality is very good, but brand packaging is conscious and surpasses the quality in domestic enterprises.

#### *3.4.3 To improve the identification ability of rabbit meat products and promote the rabbit meat products sales*

Packaging, a service way for products, is not only to protect the product, send the product into consumers' hands safely, let customers use it conveniently and safely, but also accurately reflects the characteristics of the product and improve product recognition by brand packaging. Firstly, brand packaging can highlight the product features, but excessive packaging also fails. Secondly, series packaging can improve the recognition of products on the shelf. Series packaging is a uniform design with special packaging shape characteristics, form, color, design and logo design for an enterprise, a brand or brand of different kinds of products.

Series packaging is not only of the beauty of shape, but also of the unified whole image and shelves effect, which is easy to identify and remember, plus it helps shorten the design cycle. Thirdly, large packaging increases shelf identities. It is very hard to recognize goods that are placed by themselves on the shelf. If some good items are placed together in large packaging forms and packaging sales, not only does this increase the area of the goods on the shelf, but also promote the sales of the product.

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