

Development of an instant wholesome rice meal

In recent times with changing life styles the demand for convenient food is also increasing. Rice and curries are the components of normal Sri-Lankan diet. These different types of curries are normally prepared as traditional manner so as to prepare a nutritionally balance diet. But this cooking process to prepare a culinary acceptable wholesome rice meal takes total attention time of about two – three hours. Therefore it is important to introduce a quick cooking meal which suit today's busy life style. Hence, the objectives of present study were to develop an instant wholesome vegetarian rice meal which consisted with quick cooking rice and a quick cooking dehydrated vegetable curry mix in traditional forms and to evaluate the shelf-life of the product under different packaging systems.

Preliminary studies were carried out identify best methods to prepare instant rice, and instant dehydrated vegetables, and thereby formulated an organoleptically acceptable wholesome rice meal which consisted with an instant rice, dehydrated vegetables (carrot, potato, green beans, green gram, and TVP), spice mix, and coconut milk powder.

The storability of the product was evaluated up to three months of period under ambient conditions. The instant rice and dehydrated vegetables were separately packed in polypropylene (PP) bags, spice mix and coconut milk powder were separately packed in metalized polyethylene theraphthalate (PET)/linier low density polyethylene (LLDPE) pouches. Then all unit packs were packed together in the outer packs of cardboard boxes, PVC boxes, and PET/LLDPE laminated bags. Physicochemical, microbiological, and sensory qualities of the samples stored under ambient conditions were evaluated initially and monthly more than three months of period. Results revealed that the product could be packed in any of the three types of packaging material up to three months of period. However the samples which packed in the outer pack of PVC showed remarkable results.