

Bread Baking in Saudi Arabia¹

E. I. Mousa and I. S. Al-Mohizea²

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to shed some light on the baking industry in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The technological aspects and physical characteristics of some types of breads widely consumed in Saudi Arabia were investigated. The milling and baking industries are expanding rapidly as a result of having been assigned top priority by the Saudi government. The baking industry has developed from a traditional and manually operated industry to a highly automated one. Six types of breads—*samouli*, *mafrood*, *tannouri*, *burr*, *tamees*, and *korsan* were thoroughly studied. Information regarding the formula, breadmaking technology, and physical characteristics of each type of bread is presented.

Wheat is the foundation of the diet in the Middle East, where most is consumed in the form of flat bread, with a significant amount of European bread available in the cities (1). In Saudi Arabia, the caloric and protein contributions of cereals to the diet are 25 and 35%, respectively (2). The Kingdom produced 1,300,000 tons of bread wheat in 1985, compared to only 3,000 tons in 1980 (3). The government owns all the flour mills in the country.

The baking industry of Saudi Arabia is expanding to meet the growing demand for bread. By 1985, the numbers of bakeries had reached 100 fully automated, 500 semiautomated, and 4,250 manual, and estimated annual bread production was 6,700, 550, and 125 tons (4). Thus, over 90% of the bread is now produced in large bakeries and distributed to consumers via grocery stores and supermarkets, rather than by the traditional direct sales from small bakeries.

The Ministry of Commerce is respon-

sible for licensing bakeries and for preventing adulteration and consumer fraud. City governments through their public health departments are responsible for regulating sanitary conditions in bakeries. Based on the economic and dietary importance of cereals, the Saudi government has fostered development of the cereal industry, resulting in dramatic changes. As in most developing countries, bread is subsidized and sold to the public at a fixed price.

Although many different kinds of bread—white and dark, pan and hearth—are made in Saudi Arabia, few reports on Saudi bread have appeared in the literature (2,5). Accordingly, the objective of this study was to review the present status of the baking industry and study the technological aspects of some breads widely consumed in the country. The results should help local food legislators and the food regulatory agencies set standards and improve quality control programs for this industry.

¹Paper no. 2 of the scientific research series on bread in Saudi Arabia; supported by the Agricultural Research Center, College of Agriculture, King Saud University, Riyadh 11451, Saudi Arabia.

²Assistant professor and assistant professor and chairman, respectively, Food Science Department, King Saud University.

This article is in the public domain and not copyrightable. It may be freely reprinted with customary crediting of the source. The American Association of Cereal Chemists, Inc. 1987.