



## CASING FAQs (Hog, Sheep, Fibrous, Collagen)

### How do you soak out casings and for how long?

#### **Hog Casings (32-35 mm & 35-38 mm)**

1. Rinse salt from casings in fresh water.
2. Put casings into lukewarm water for 24 hours. Massage casings and separate strands to prevent dry spots.
3. At the stuffing table, place casings into fresh warm water.
4. Run water through the casing as you are putting them on the stuffing horn.
5. For best results soak casings overnight in cool water, then follow steps 3 and 4.

#### **Home Pack Casings**

1. Rinse casings in fresh water.
2. Put casings into a container of lukewarm water for 30 minutes.
3. Run water through the casing as you are putting them on the stuffing horn.

#### **Sheep Casings**

1. Rinse salt from casings with fresh water.
2. Put casings into a container of lukewarm water for 30 minutes.
3. Run water through the casing as you are putting them on the stuffing horn.
4. Ready to stuff.

#### **Fibrous Casings**

*In order to provide adequate flexibility and increased breakage resistance during stuffing, fibrous casings (Regular, Peelable, Barrier and Protein Coated) must be soaked in water prior to use. Minimum recommended soaking time is 30 minutes and maximum 8 hours in water at 80° to 100° F (27° to 38° C).*

#### **Collagen Casings**

*No soaking is necessary for Collagen Casings. When stuffing, do not overfill. Our tight size control will allow you to achieve desired weights. Collagen Casings can be used with any modern filling machine. The condition of the machine and filling horn must be maintained for optimum casing performance.*

### How long do you smoke sausage?

The length of your smoke cycle becomes part of your sausage formulation. Your smoke cycle depends on the type of smokehouse you have and the type of product you are smoking. Contact your smokehouse supplier.

### How do you keep unused casings?

Cover unused casings in salt brine solution or granulated salt and store in cooler at 40° (4.44°C) or less but DO NOT FREEZE!

### **How tight should the sausage be stuffed?**

How tight you stuff sausage casings depends on the type of sausage and how it is to be linked. For natural casings: When making a rope sausage, without linking, stuff to slightly less than the maximum expansion of the casings. If linking by machine, stuff 3-4 mm below the maximum expansion of the casing. Consult the instructions for the linker or your linker supplier because there can be significant differences in equipment. If linking by hand stuff 4-5 mm below the maximum expansion of the casing. Hand linking can put uneven stress on the casing. By under stuffing, you can reduce breakage during linking. Check the firmness of the link and adjust the stuffing pressure.

### **What is the shelf life of natural casings?**

Dry Salt: 5 years  
Preflushed in Net Pack: 4 years  
Preflushed in Vacuum Pack: 4 years  
Preflushed on Plastic Tubes: 4 years  
Colored Casings: 2 years

### **What is the best way to store natural casings?**

Store in the cooler at 40° (4.44°C) or less in brine or well salted. NEVER freeze casings. If storing casings in brine for extended periods of time refresh casings periodically by changing the brine. Keep containers sealed in the cooler.

### **My casings smell bad; are they still good?**

Usually Yes. When your natural casings first arrive there may be some gas build up in the container, especially in hot weather. This can smell pretty strong.

### **What can I do to remove the bad smell in my casings?**

Usually all it needs is airing out. Leave the container open in the cooler for a while. Or, take casings out of the container and air them out. If it is really bad, rinse casings in fresh water, re-soak in brine and the smell will usually dissipate.

### **What can I do to improve the bite on the casings?**

Cooking a sausage can toughen any casing. To maximize the tender bite of a casing, cook with moisture. Prick sausage before grilling. Do not microwave.

Smoke cycles can also affect the bite of a casing. Controlling humidity during the smoke cycle is very important to maximize a tender eating experience. Consult your smoke house supplier about the best smoke cycle for the most tender bite.

### **What is the length of a bundle or hank of casings?**

The traditional hank bundle of hog or sheep casings was 100 yards (91 meters). Today the majority of casings are measured between 95 and 100 yards, or about 88 meters. This is usually known as "full yardage". However individual suppliers often vary casing length in order to discount price. Some hog and sheep casings are not sold as "hanks" but instead are based on stuffing capacity.

### **How many strands should a bundle have?**

The traditional hank of hog or sheep casing has a minimum strand length of 2 meters and a maximum number of strands of 16 to 18 depending on caliber or quality. Today's hanks can have many varied put ups depending on calibration range, type of raw material, hole specification etc.

### **Why are the casings tough after cooking fresh sausage?**

Sausage was cooked in a pan too hot and too quickly  
Casings were not soaked long enough or too long  
Origin of casing  
Sausage was under stuffed  
Sausage was heated in a microwave

**How can I make my casings more tender?**

Soak casings using a tenderizer. This must be carefully monitored to avoid making the casings too weak to stuff. Use proper moisture levels during smoke cycle

**What is the speckled looking spot on my casings?**

This is a patch of peyer. It is where lymph nodes were attached to the casing before cleaning.

**What is the difference between hand pulled and knife cut casings?**

Hand pulled casings do not have threads of connective tissue on the outside (Called whiskers). They are delicate and usually have shorter strands than knife cut. They may have more holes or weak spots. Knife cut casings have the small threads of connective tissue (Whiskers). Their strands are usually longer and have fewer holes. The threads of connective tissue on knife cut casings will melt off on smoked or cooked sausage.