

Rebuttal on Truffle Aroma Analysis by Headspace Solid Phase Microextraction (Wrong Information or Wrong Interpretation?)

Sir: In our paper recently published in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* (2002, 50, 6468–6472) about truffle aroma analysis by SPME, we clearly specify that “no peaks appeared in the blank runs, thus indicating that no compounds due to the fiber or contamination can be expected”. In this paragraph, we referred to contamination produced or due to the analytical method used to perform the analysis.

Once we were sure that no artifacts had been introduced in the system due to the analytical method, we tried to describe the presence of the different volatile compounds in the truffle. We did not intend to demonstrate or even suggest, in our paper, that truffle produces BHT; this is something that some researchers have “extracted” from their own reading of the paper.

Of course, when a research group uses a powerful technique such as GC-MS, they must know the sample they are working with. This is especially difficult when different natural samples are being studied, but our research group has used these premises for more than 15 years. This is why we do not think that our experience should be put under examination when what we do is *describe* the compounds *found* (or detected) in a sample even if no complete explanation for the origin of such a compound can be provided. We believe the information must be given to the scientific community, because science is built on knowledge, even if that knowledge does not correspond to what it is expected.

Again, we do not think that from our comments in the paper, the natural origin of BHT could be inferred. What we think and have shown is that this compound is found in the truffle sample. Its origin in that sample can be, of course, exogenous due to the extensive use of this compound in a wide number of applications but does not come from a misuse of the analytical technique employed.

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