

Relative humidity

Relative humidity is extremely important to all dried meat processing because of its impact on the quality of the product. Relative humidity expresses the degree of saturation of the air by vapor, expressed as a percentage. Relative humidity describes the relation of the existing vapor pressure at a given temperature to the maximum vapor pressure at that temperature. Air at a given temperature can absorb water (vapor) until its saturation (100%). Although now we have humidity monitoring devices that give a direct readout of relative humidity, historically processors used dry and wet bulb devices. The dry bulb temperature is the direct temperature readout, while wet bulb is a dry bulb surrounded by a wet sock, providing a lower temperature. The difference between the two readings is the relative humidity at that temperature.

(See <http://members.nuvox.net/~on.jwclymer/wet.html> for a JavaScript routine that calculates the relative humidity given the wet and dry bulb temperatures.)