
Production: PASTA SHAPES

Objective: Comparison of firmness of four pasta types

Type of action: Cutting test

Test mode settings:

Speed	Test mode	Trigger	Target	Hold
2 mm/s	Distance (c)	0 gf	72 mm	0 sec

Accessory:

Kramer shear cell - 5 blades, Platform

Sample Preparation:

Remove each batch in turn from its specified storage temperature and weigh out into 120g portions, just prior to testing.

Test Set-Up:

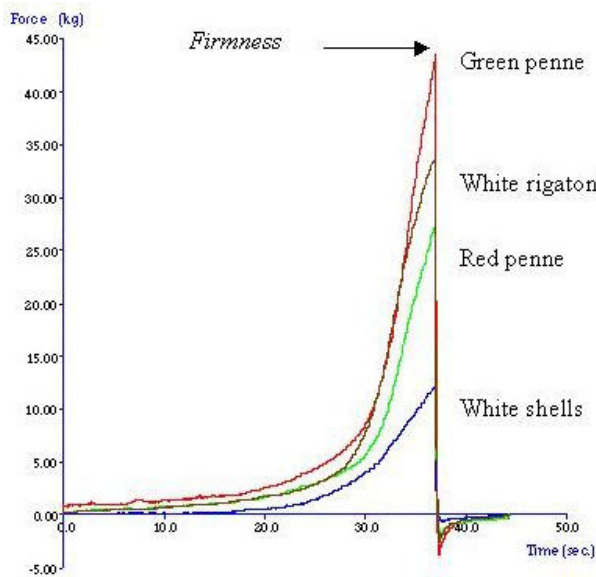
The empty Shear Cell (Perspex front forward) is secured in the Heavy Duty Platform, which is loosely fixed onto the machine base. The blades are attached to the load cell carrier by means of the rapid locating adapter and lowered slowly into the sample cell and through the base slots. The Heavy Duty Platform is then moved until clearance is visible between the blades and their respective slots. The blades are then raised above the cell to allow for placement of the test sample.

Before carrying out the test using a 'zero' trigger one must calibrate the blades to acknowledge the bottom of the cell as a zero position. To do this, lower the blades, so that they close to the bottom of the cell. Click on **CALIBRATE HEIGHT**. Specify the distance that you want the blades to start from for each test - e.g. **70mm** is suggested. (Note: place a piece of thin flat card in the bottom of the cell to calibrate and then remove this before testing.)

The blades will move down and touch the card and then move up to the specified start distance. For the comparison of results it is crucial that the test always begins at the same distance from the bottom of the cell, this distance can be programmed into the **CONTROL PROBE** feature.

Prior to each test ensure that there is good clearance around the blades to avoid frictional effects, i.e. so that the blades are not touching the sides of the cell. The blades are then raised above the cell to allow for placement of the test sample. Running a spatula (or other) horizontally across the outside edges of the blades is recommended to ensure that the blades are hanging freely. Place the sample into the cell and distribute pieces evenly. Move the blades down to the set start position and run the test. In between tests clean the blades and the grooves of the cell to remove any remaining sample, as this will cause variable results.

Typical plots:



The left plots were produced from 4 different types of al dente pasta; green penne, white rigatoni, red penne and white shells

Observations:

After the trigger force is attained on the sample surface the blades then proceed to shear through the samples. As penetration depth increases the force is also seen to increase up to the specified compression distance (i.e. 72mm). At this point the maximum force value is measured and related to the firmness/toughness of the sample. The area under the curves measures the total work/energy required to perform the test. Obviously the greater the area the more energy required. The results above rank the samples in the following order of firmness, green penne, white rigatoni, red penne and white shells.

Data Analysis:

☒ Max Force

Results

Pasta Type	Mean Maximum Force 'Firmness' (+/- S.D.) (kg)	Mean Area 'Total Shearing Force' (+/- S.D.) (kg.s)
Green penne	43.7 +/- 2.5	223.3 +/- 14.1
White shells	12.0 +/- 0.4	66.4 +/- 0.6
Red penne	27.8 +/- 1.4	155.6 +/- 13.1
White rigatoni	35.9 +/- 1.1	195.5 +/- 6.5

Notes:

- The Kramer shear cell is a multi-bladed device. The sample to be sheared is often variable configuration or structure. The result is an average of the forces required to cut through the sample of variable geometry.
- If the sample is more firm/tough or it is preferable to shear to a greater extent, a 100kg load cell would be recommended for a higher force range.
- When attempting to optimize test settings it is suggested that the first tests are performed on the hardest samples to anticipate the maximum testing range required and ensure that the force capacity allows testing of all future samples.