Best-before date mass experiment – food storage temperatures registered by Swedish school pupils

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Significance:
A high proportion of food items were stored at higher temperatures than recommended. The pupils sometimes failed when using the best-before date. However, the mass experiment contributed to an increased interest and knowledge of food hygiene, food storage and resource management among the school pupils.

Introduction :
The fourth Friday in September is Researchers´Night, instituted by the European Commission. In autumn 2011 a mass experiment focusing on refrigeration temperatures was organized through 72 Swedish schools.

The aim
To investigate the food storage temperature in Swedish refrigerators and to use best-before-date labeling to determine whether school children considered the food items eatible. Would such an experience increase interest and knowledge of food storage and resource management among school pupils?

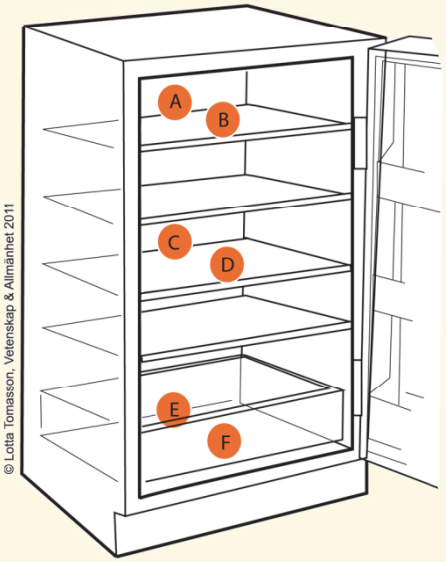
Methods: The experiment was performed by 1.812 school pupils who registered the temperature on different shelves in their own family´s refrigerator.

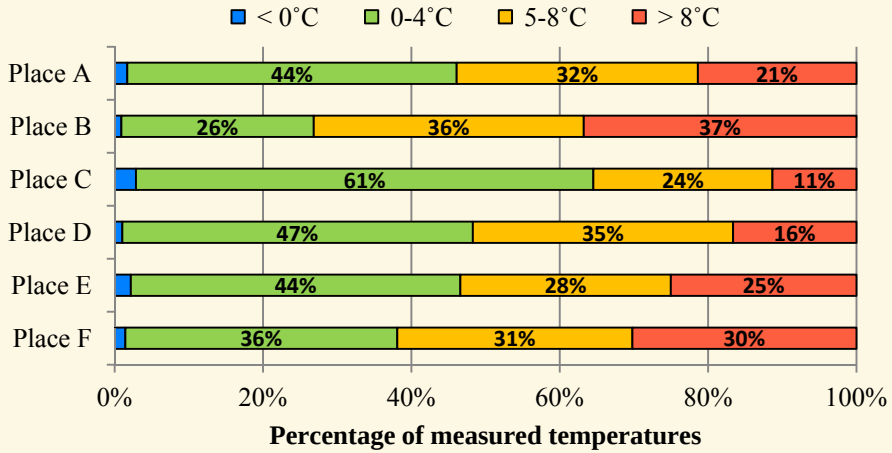
Moller –Therm (+0,5/-0.1 °C)

Average temperatur
A = 6.2 °C
B = 7.5 °C

C = 4.8 °C
D = 5.9 °C

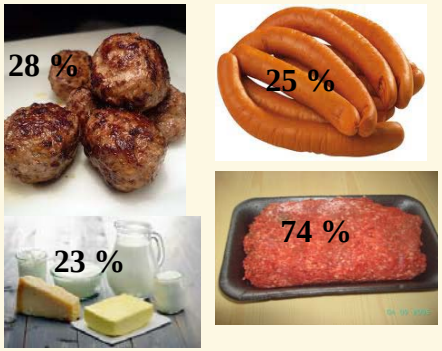
E = 6.1 °C
F = 6.8 °C





Percentage of measured temperatures

Amount of food items stored above recommended temperatures



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