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In-situ Single Mode Dielectric Measurements of microwaveable snack pellets

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9 **Keywords:** microwave, dielectric properties, starch, expansion

10 Abstract

- 11 The dielectric properties of starch based snack pellets have been measured in situ during
- microwave heating and expansion. The microwave setup consists of a single mode shorted
- waveguide, equipped with a six-port impedance analyser which measures the absorbed power
- and complex reflection coefficient during heating. The pellet is suspended in the electric field
- maximum, with an optic temperature sensor inserted in the centre. The dielectric properties of
- the pellet during heating and after expansion are obtained via an inverse mapping of the
- 17 recorded reflection coefficient to dielectric properties, which are pre-computed via finite
- 18 elements simulations.
- 19 Experiments show that the dielectric properties of the starch pellets change significantly during
- 20 heating, expansion and subsequent drying. The dielectric properties increase with increasing
- 21 temperature up to the moment that the pellet starts expanding. Subsequently, the power
- 22 absorption shows a sudden decline, which is mainly due to the sudden change in porosity.
- Addition of salt (2.5%) to the starch pellet composition results in a slight decrease of the
- 24 dielectric constant and loss factor, as it apparently lowers the effective mobility of the dipoles.
- 25 The dielectric properties as function of temperature and moisture content were fitted with a
- 26 polynomial model. The strong effect of porosity for the dielectric properties of the expanded
- snack is well predicted with the effective medium mixing rule.

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