

# 1 Identification and quantification of meat product 2 ingredients by whole-genome metagenomics (All-Food- 3 Seq) 4

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23

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27 **Abstract**

28 Complex food matrices bear the risk of intentional or accidental admixture of non-  
29 declared species. Moreover, declared components can be present in false  
30 proportions, since expensive taxa might be exchanged for cheaper ones. We have  
31 previously reported that PCR-free metagenomic sequencing of total DNA extracted  
32 from sausage samples combined with bioinformatic analysis (termed All-Food-Seq,  
33 AFS), can be a valuable screening tool to identify the taxon composition of food  
34 ingredients. Here we illustrate this principle by analysing regional Doner kebab  
35 samples, which revealed unexpected and unlabelled poultry and plant components in  
36 three of five cases. In addition, we systematically apply AFS to a broad set of  
37 reference meat material of known composition (i.e. reference sausages) to evaluate  
38 quantification accuracy and potential limitations. We include a detailed analysis of the  
39 effect of different food matrices and the possibility of false-positive sequence read  
40 assignment to closely related species, and we compare AFS quantification results to  
41 quantitative real-time PCR (qPCR) and droplet digital PCR (ddPCR). AFS emerges  
42 as a potent PCR-free screening tool, which can detect multiple target species of  
43 different kingdoms of life within a single assay. Mathematical calibration accounting  
44 for pronounced matrix effects can significantly improves AFS quantification accuracy.  
45 In comparison, AFS performs better than classical qPCR, and is on par with ddPCR.

## 46 Introduction

47

48 The determination and quantification of food ingredients is an important issue in  
49 official food control. The complexity of foodstuff, difficulties in the traceability of  
50 trading channels and the globalisation of food markets opens doors for fraud and  
51 failures in correct labelling, stocking and processing procedures [1]. Possible  
52 consequences for consumers are manifold beginning with compliance of ethical  
53 aspects like halal, kosher or vegan over health risks caused by pathogenic organisms  
54 to simple deception because of economic reasons. In fact, biological contaminants  
55 made up the vast majority of warning notices released by the German authorities [2]  
56 between 2011 and 2015. The majority of these cases were provoked by  
57 microbiological contaminations or the presence of non-declared allergenic food  
58 components. Therefore, food and drug legislation demands proper declaration of  
59 ingredients and compliance to storage and transport conditions [3, 4]. To ensure  
60 adherence to law and to maintain consumer's safety, there is a growing need for  
61 methods that allow for precise determination of food ingredients, ideally spanning all  
62 kingdoms of life including plants, animals, bacteria, fungi and perhaps also extending  
63 to viruses. A broad palette of analytical methods for analysing foodstuffs has been  
64 developed and is routinely applied at official food control laboratories, but also private  
65 and industrial control labs. Among these, DNA-based methods like PCR are probably  
66 the most widely used technologies, because of their high sensitivity and the  
67 possibility to perform quantitative measurements [5–13]. However, even when  
68 multiplexed or performed in the meta-barcoding format, PCR-based approaches have  
69 the drawback to detect only a limited range of target species and produce assay-  
70 dependent amplification biases [14–17].

71

72 We have previously shown that deep metagenomic DNA sequencing of whole-  
73 genome DNA from foodstuffs, followed by dedicated bioinformatic analysis, is in  
74 principle able to overcome these issues. DNA sequence reads obtained from food  
75 can be bioinformatically assigned to existing reference genomes for species  
76 identification, and the number of reads successfully assigned to a respective genome  
77 can be counted to give a quantitative measure of the species proportions.  
78 Importantly, such whole-genome sequencing of foodstuff DNA (termed All-Food-Seq:  
79 AFS; [18, 19]) does not require any *a priori* definition of possible target species. AFS  
80 can therefore be viewed as a screening method, which theoretically can detect an  
81 infinite spectrum of diverse species, being only limited by our current knowledge of  
82 genomes, as represented in the fast-growing public sequence databases. The  
83 “identification plus quantification” principle based on read-assignment and read-  
84 counting has been successfully demonstrated so far as a proof-of-principle in a  
85 limited number of foodstuff samples, i.e. sausages of pre-defined composition  
86 prepared as reference material [8, 20]. We therefore decided to further investigate  
87 the potential of AFS in a real-life test case, analysing different doner kebab samples  
88 obtained from snack bars. We also saw the necessity to evaluate the quantification  
89 potential of AFS in more detail. Inferring species proportions from DNA read

90 proportions can be difficult because it may substantially depend on the food  
91 composition and processing. As an example, high quality meat may be substituted for  
92 in a product by the addition of rind, lard or skin, which could affect DNA amounts per  
93 gram tissue, and thus the inference of species proportions within the foodstuff. To  
94 study this so-called matrix effect, we have applied the AFS method to an extended  
95 set of reference sausage samples, each containing known admixtures of different  
96 meat sources, but prepared according to different recipes [8, 20]. We compared the  
97 AFS quantification results to those obtained by qPCR and ddPCR on the same  
98 samples and evaluated the effects of matrix composition.

## 99 **Materials and Methods**

### 100 **Food samples and DNA extraction**

101 Doner kebab samples were purchased at five snack bars distributed in the Rhine-  
102 Main area. All meat pieces were identified by eye and selected by sterile forceps for  
103 subsequent homogenization in large volume using a standard kitchen device. About  
104 1 g of the homogenized matrix, which looked surprisingly different (ranging between  
105 an oily and granular texture), was taken for subsequent DNA isolation using the  
106 Wizard Plus Miniprep DNA purification system (Promega, Madison, USA) according  
107 to the manufacturer's protocol. DNA was quantified by Qubit fluorometry  
108 (ThermoFisher Scientific, Schwerte, Germany).

109 Calibration sausage samples containing admixtures of cattle, chicken, pig, sheep and  
110 turkey at defined amounts were produced by a professional butchery and provided by  
111 the Official Food Control Authority of the Canton Zürich, Switzerland [8, 20]. The  
112 samples were prepared for calibration of foodstuff detection methods and reflect  
113 three different recipes of sausage production (Online Tab. S1): AllMeat sausage (Kal  
114 A-E: meat), Lyoner-style sausage (KLyo A-D: matrix of meat, rind and lard) and  
115 Poultry-Lyoner (KGeflLyo A-D: matrix of meat and skin). Total DNA was extracted out  
116 of 200 mg homogenized sausage sample using the Wizard Plus system (Promega,  
117 Madison, USA) according to the manufacturer's protocol.

### 118 **Illumina library preparation and sequencing**

119 Sequencing library preparations and sequencing were performed by a commercial  
120 provider (StarSEQ, Mainz, Germany). The Nextera DNA Library Preparation Kit  
121 (Illumina, San Diego, USA) was applied following the manufacturer's instructions.  
122 Typically, 1 ng of total DNA was used. Sequencing was carried out on an Illumina  
123 MiSeq instrument using reagent kit v.2 in 150 bp paired-end (reference sausages)  
124 and 50 bp single-end (doner kebab samples) mode, respectively. In principle, both  
125 sequencing modes deliver comparably valid results [19]. Between 200 k and 2600 k  
126 reads were generated per sample (Online Tab. S1). Adjustments by downsampling  
127 were omitted, because our previous analysis showed that read numbers > 100 k  
128 produced consistent quantification results independent of dataset size [19]. All  
129 datasets were quality checked, trimmed and filtered by using FASTQC data  
130 evaluation software [21] and trimmomatic v0.33 trimming tool [22]. Datasets have  
131 been submitted to the SRA database under the project names PRJNA271645 and  
132 PRJEB34001.

### 133 **Bioinformatic analysis of main ingredients using AFS**

134 The AFS read-mapping pipeline was executed with 3 rounds of iterative mapping and  
135 step-wise decreased mapping stringency, as described [18, 19]. This strategy allows  
136 for a final number of 2 mismatches after mapping step 3. At each round, reads that  
137 mapped against one of the provided reference genomes were cumulatively counted  
138 and reported on a 1-100% scale to reflect relative species proportions. In the doner

139 kebab screening analysis, sequence reads were mapped against a selection of  
140 reference genomes (accession numbers: cattle: NC\_037328.1, sheep:  
141 NC\_040252.1, goat: NC\_030808.1, pork: NC\_010443.5, horse: NC\_009144.3,  
142 chicken: NC\_006088.5, turkey: NC\_015011.2, maize: NC\_024459.2 and soy:  
143 NC\_016088.3. In the quantification analysis of the calibrator sausages, reference  
144 genome choice was limited to the animal species cattle, chicken, pig, horse, sheep,  
145 goat, water buffalo (accession number: NC\_037545.1) and turkey. Goat and water  
146 buffalo genomes were added to test the robustness of AFS towards false positive  
147 signals to be expected between closely related species. All evaluations were  
148 performed on a standard desktop PC (Intel(R) Core(TM) i7-8700 CPU @ 3.20GHz,  
149 16GB DDR4 2667 MHz RAM, 256GB SATA SSD, CentOS Linux release 7.6.1810).

150 Reads that did not match, very likely originate from species not provided as a  
151 reference during the AFS mapping step. These unmapped reads (around 3 % per  
152 sample), often representing spice plants and microbiota [18], did not undergo further  
153 metagenomic analysis in the present study, since the prime goal was to evaluate the  
154 quantification properties of AFS for the main meat components.

### 155 **Calculation of false-positive read assignments**

156 In order to determine false-positive read assignment rates for the tested species, in  
157 particular the closely related cattle-buffalo, chicken-turkey and goat-sheep, we  
158 created *in silico* datasets of different proportions of reads for each species with the  
159 corresponding related species being absent. To this end, we used whole-genome  
160 shotgun datasets from the SRA (SRR8588004, SRR9663406, SRR8442931,  
161 SRR8560982, SRR6470934) and performed data pre-processing as described for  
162 the reference sausages. For each species, proportions of 1, 5, 10, 25, 50, 75 and  
163 100 % were extracted using the reformat tool from the BMAP suite [23] and  
164 complemented to 1 mio reads with the non-related plant species rice (accession  
165 number: NC\_008394.4). For the cattle-buffalo species pair, we only inspected the  
166 false-positive rate of buffalo assignments given a cattle ingredient, as the opposite  
167 direction is irrelevant to food safety inspections in our opinion. To investigate the  
168 effect of sequence read length on false positive mapping, all generated datasets  
169 were trimmed using the reformat tool to a length of 50, 100 and 150 bp, respectively.  
170 Subsequent AFS analyses were performed as described above with 3 mapping  
171 rounds (accepting max. 2 mismatches) against buffalo, cattle, chicken, goat, horse,  
172 pork, sheep and turkey genomes.

## 173 **Results**

### 174 **AFS screening of species composition in doner kebab samples**

175 Doner kebab samples were obtained from five snack bars in the Rhine-Main area.  
176 Their meat components were sampled, homogenized and the extracted DNA  
177 sequenced. AFS analysis revealed that samples 2 and 3 were prepared from pure  
178 beef, while samples 1, 4 and 5 consisted of beef and turkey, with the latter as the  
179 dominant component (Tab. 1a). Samples 1, 3 and 5 revealed measurable amounts of  
180 soybean DNA (0.5-0.8 %), and sample 1 additionally contained maize DNA (1.8 %).  
181 In samples 2, 3 and 5, we observed that 0.1-0.4 % of sequence reads were assigned  
182 to goat and sheep. Since the latter also belong to the family of Bovidae, one could  
183 interpret the goat/sheep read assignments as candidate false-positives, produced as  
184 a consequence of the phylogenetic relatedness and the presence of conserved  
185 genomic elements. However, our detailed evaluation of possible false-positive values  
186 (see below; Online Fig. S1b, Online Tab. S2) shows that at least for samples 2 and 3  
187 the measured values of goat and sheep are slightly higher than expected for a matrix  
188 consisting almost only of cattle. We therefore cannot rule out that small amounts of  
189 sheep and goat material were indeed present in these doner samples, allegedly  
190 caused by the presence of cheese matrices or due to unknown circumstances during  
191 doner production. In contrast, the 0.2 and 0.3 % of chicken reads in samples 1 and 4,  
192 which are clearly dominated by turkey, may accordingly be considered false-  
193 positives.

### 194 **AFS quantification of meat ingredients in reference sausages**

195 To specifically study the quantification properties of AFS in a broad set of samples, a  
196 total of 13 reference sausage samples (Online Tab. S1), prepared according to three  
197 different standard recipes, were sequenced and analysed. Datasets were then  
198 studied to evaluate quantification accuracy, the impact of different matrices (i.e. meat,  
199 rind, lard and skin), and the probability of false-positive read assignments. AFS  
200 results were then compared to quantification data previously obtained by qPCR [8,  
201 20] and droplet digital (dd) PCR [13] on the very same sausage samples (Tab. 1b-D).

#### 202 • *AFS quantification accuracy*

203 Our sample set covered expected species proportions from 0.5-80 %. Minimal and  
204 maximal expected components varied between the three different sample types  
205 (meat-only samples Kal A-E 1-55%, mixed-matrix samples KLYo A-D and KGeflLYo  
206 A-D 0.5-80%). It turned out that even the low concentrations of ingredients could be  
207 detected by AFS with high accuracy ( $0.5 \pm 0.1$  %;  $1 \pm 0.1$  %;  $2 \pm 0.4$  %;  $4 \pm 0.2$  %;  
208  $5.5 \pm 0.5$  %). As species concentrations increased, absolute deviations of measured  
209 values also increased to a maximum of 20.9 % for the 9-36 % interval and 20.4 % for  
210 the 55-80 % interval, respectively (Tab. 1b-D). To compare the performance of AFS  
211 for the different sausage types, we summed up the individual species deviations for  
212 each sausage individually. Results showed that, omitting any calibration calculations

213 (see below), Kal A-E samples were quantified with overall best results (ranging  
214 between 6.7 and 11.1 % deviation), followed by KLy0 A-D (6.8 to 17.0 %) and  
215 KGeflLy0 A-D (18.4 to 41.9 %).

216 • *Evaluation of false-positive read assignments between related species*

217 The species assignment of sequence reads in AFS is based on classical read-  
218 mapping algorithms involving sequence alignment [18]. This implies the potential  
219 danger of a mis-classification if a read contains highly conserved DNA sequences,  
220 often present in the genomes of phylogenetically closely related taxa. Of course such  
221 false positive assignments could have, if present, an eminent effect on detection  
222 accuracy. To evaluate the potential of such false-positive read assignment within  
223 AFS, we intentionally included in the read-mapping step the reference genomes of  
224 species, which are not present in the sausages, but which are evolutionarily close to  
225 the real food components. Specifically, we added the genome of the water buffalo  
226 (*Bubalus bubalis*), which shared a common ancestor with cattle 13 mio years ago,  
227 and the goat (*Capra hircus*), which diverged from sheep 10 mio years ago ([24];  
228 Online Fig. S1a). False-positive signals of buffalo and goat from sausages containing  
229 cattle or sheep as real ingredients ranged between 0.0-1.7 % and depended on the  
230 amount of the corresponding real ingredient species (Tab. 1b-D). For example, the  
231 maximal value of 1.7 % false goat reads was obtained for the Kal D sausage  
232 containing 55% sheep.

233 To systematically specify the chance of false-positive read assignments between  
234 species pairs in AFS, we simulated read datasets with varying, known amounts of  
235 reads from the species in our study and mapped them to the respective reference  
236 genomes. The amount of false-positive reads in fact scaled linearly with the real  
237 ingredient proportions (Online Fig. S1b, Online Tab S2), allowing us to define  
238 threshold values for the respective species pairs. Interestingly, but not unexpectedly,  
239 the short 50 bp reads produced markedly higher false-positive values than 100 bp  
240 and 150 bp reads. For example, a 100% sheep dataset produced 5.1% false-positive  
241 goat assignments with 50 bp read length, but only 2.7 % with 150 bp reads (Online  
242 Fig. S1b). Some minor 'asymmetric' quantification results (i.e. chicken against turkey  
243 genome versus turkey against chicken genome) could be noted and are probably  
244 caused by different qualities of the respective reference genomes. Notwithstanding,  
245 these calculated values can now be applied by the AFS user to objectively assign  
246 quantification values as potential false-positives, as done above in the case of the  
247 doner kebab samples.

248 • *Matrix effects and their possible correction by linear regression*

249 Different types of food matrices can bias quantification analyses because different  
250 tissues often contain varying concentrations of DNA, and cellular DNA may also be  
251 extracted from them at different efficiencies. To study this effect, we included three  
252 types of sausage matrices: the Kal samples, consisting only of pure meat, the KLy0  
253 samples, in which pork material was represented by three tissues (meat, rind and



254 lard at a ratio of 1:4:15) and the KGeflLyo sausages, containing chicken material as a  
255 1:1 mixture of meat and skin (Online Tab. S1).

256 Specifically for the KGeflLyo sausages with their partial replacement of chicken meat  
257 by skin (Online Fig. S2), the chicken component showed a substantial  
258 overrepresentation on the DNA level, thus severely compromising the quantification  
259 results for this matrix type (independent of whether AFS or PCR methods were  
260 applied; comp. Tab. 1). While samples containing meat-only chicken showed minimal  
261 deviations of 0.1-0.5 % from expected values, the meat/skin matrix led to an almost  
262 proportional overestimation of chicken by 9-20 % (Tab. 1d; Online Fig. S2). A  
263 second, but milder effect was noticed for pork as an ingredient, which was  
264 systematically underestimated by 2.7-7.8 % in the KLyo A-D, 0.1-0.6 % in the  
265 KGeflLyo A-D and 0-5.5 % in the Kal A-E samples, respectively.

266 Assuming that the observed effects represent systematic errors, we decided to  
267 normalize our measurements by applying linear regression. We did this for every  
268 sample type and species separately to consider both matrix-specific and species-  
269 dependent effects (see calibrated AFS values in Tab. 1). In fact, the improvement of  
270 the quantification values turned out to be massive, showing that AFS (very much like  
271 the PCR methods; comp. [8, 13]) will benefit from the establishment of such matrix  
272 calibration factors. Indeed, we were able to correct efficiently for most of the  
273 systematic error over a broad range of expected values. Note however, that in some  
274 cases (e.g. Kal A and E) deviation slightly increased after the normalisation  
275 procedure for the very low expected values of 0.5 and 1 %, respectively (Tab. 1b).

#### 276 • *Limits of detection and precision*

277 Using normalised values gained by linear regression, we calculated the limit of  
278 detection (LoD) of AFS at a confidence level of 95%, applying the procedure  
279 described by [25]. The LoD describes the lowest quantity of an analyte that can be  
280 reliably detected above the observed background noise. In the case of read-mapping  
281 approaches, LoD will depend on genome relatedness and resulting chance for false-  
282 positive read assignment, which in turn partly depends on read length (see above). If  
283 closely related genomes (e.g. sheep vs. goat and cattle vs. buffalo) are included in  
284 an AFS mapping procedure using 150 bp reads, the method produces a LoD of 1.6  
285 %. If only distant species are tested for, the LoD decreases to 1.0 %.

286 To also infer the random error produced by AFS, and thus the precision of the  
287 method, we calculated 95% confidence intervals for every instance of the expected  
288 species proportions between 0.5 and 80% (Online Tab. S3). Proportion components  
289 below 2% are measured with about 50 % uncertainty. Measurement error decreased  
290 to about 10 % for proportions between 2 and 36 % and 4 % for proportions above  
291 36%. Overall, CIs turned out to be close to the expected values and therefore are an  
292 excellent indication of high AFS precision over the entire range of expected values  
293 from 0.5 to 80%.

## 294 Discussion

295

296 Classical DNA-based species identification in food is routinely performed as a  
297 targeted approach using PCR-based methods, which can detect only a certain range  
298 of taxa, for which the PCR primers ideally fit [5–8, 10–13]. AFS in contrast analyses  
299 the complete DNA of a foodstuff without amplification and is therefore a non-targeted,  
300 whole-genome screening approach [18]. To investigate the potential of AFS to detect  
301 unforeseen species components, we chose to study a real-case food control scenario  
302 and sequenced the meat from five doner kebab samples from the Rhine-Main area.  
303 According to German food legislation, snacks sold under the label “doner kebab” are  
304 expected to consist only of sheep and/or beef [26]. However, occasional surveys  
305 conducted by food authorities [27] or even occasioned by broadcasting stations [28]  
306 have already pointed at a considerable heterogeneity of animal species components  
307 in doner kebab samples from Germany, which very often contained unlabelled poultry  
308 (chicken, turkey) and in rare cases even pork. Using AFS, we found that 3 of our 5  
309 samples indeed contained turkey meat, two samples even at a major extent (90 % or  
310 more). None of the samples, however, was openly advertised to the consumer as  
311 “poultry doner”. In addition, AFS detected in four cases soy as an unexpected and  
312 unlabelled ingredient, which may be critical for consumers suffering from allergy  
313 towards soybeans. Soybean DNA may originate from the usage of spice coating  
314 (panada). One sample additionally contained maize DNA, the origin of which is  
315 unclear. AFS thus confirmed the results previously obtained by other labs in doner  
316 kebab species screens and thus should function well as a method in routine food  
317 screening.

318 The performance of AFS for the quantification of species in different types of food  
319 matrices has not yet been investigated systematically. The main focus of the current  
320 study was therefore to explore the quantification potential of AFS to infer species  
321 proportions of reference sausages, which have previously been used in the field to  
322 evaluate PCR-based quantification methods. To directly compare AFS to  
323 quantification results obtained by qPCR [8] and ddPCR [13], we calculated for  
324 simplicity the sum of the % deviation (measured vs. expected) for each sausage  
325 sample (Tab. 1b-d). Results showed that AFS data -very much like the qPCR and  
326 ddPCR data- need to be calibrated for matrix-dependent biases to generate the most  
327 accurate results. Indeed, in 8 of 12 cases “AFS-cal” produced the best results, while  
328 ddPCR turned out to be clearly superior in one case (Kal C) and slightly better in  
329 three cases (KLyo A, C, D). AFS readily identifies and quantifies proportions of  
330 species over a broad % range. Most importantly it works at the 1% level, a value  
331 often approximatively taken by food authorities to distinguish problematic species  
332 amounts from trace amounts, e.g. originating by unavoidable contamination.

333 Very much like for other DNA-based methods, the limitations of AFS are set by  
334 sequence similarities between closely related genomes and by the so-called matrix  
335 effect, which ultimately determines the extent to which species proportions in food

336 can be indirectly inferred from DNA proportions. Our theoretical evaluation of  
337 possible wrong read assignments between closely related taxa provides the applicant  
338 of AFS with a means to readily distinguish between true and false quantification  
339 results. Food consisting of species, which have diverged at minimum 10 mio years  
340 ago (e.g. sheep-goat or cattle-buffalo), may thus be analysed without much  
341 problems. If AFS is performed for other, possibly closer taxa, the limits of false-  
342 positives can easily be determined by the procedure, which we have outlined in the  
343 methods section.

344 As previously noticed for PCR-based quantification methods [8, 13], the AFS requires  
345 mathematical calibration for matrix effects to achieve best results (see above).  
346 Theoretically, for instance, it should be necessary for AFS to take into account that  
347 birds have only 1/3 the genome size of mammals. In practice, this consideration  
348 proved to be not useful at all for quantifying food containing a mixture of bird and  
349 mammalian material by AFS (data not shown). The possible reason is that chicken  
350 meat may contain more DNA per gram tissue than, e.g., pork [29], thus  
351 compensating for the smaller genome size. It will be almost impossible to define the  
352 DNA amounts for all conceivable tissues from food-relevant species. However, the  
353 application of food matrix reference material, as done in the present study, facilitates  
354 a guided calibration of matrix effects and thus efficiently circumvents this problem.

355 In conclusion, we confirm here that AFS is a potent additional screening and  
356 quantification tool in the repertoire of foodstuff analysis. We have calculated that AFS  
357 sequencing reagent costs (50 libraries prepared in parallel, 500 k reads each, all  
358 loaded on 1 Illumina MiSeq flowcell) currently would amount to appr. 90 EUR per  
359 sample (see [19] for high-multiplex estimations). The computer skills required match  
360 those of a typical bioinformatics master student, and routine screening of 1 mio reads  
361 against up to 10 eukaryotic genomes can be performed on a laptop PC requiring a  
362 computation time of appr. 20 min (see Materials and Methods for hardware used).  
363 We like to point out that, in contrast to standard PCR analytics and depending on the  
364 desired depth of analysis, the AFS can go well beyond the mere identification of  
365 animal and plant species into the world of food microbiota, even including viruses  
366 [18]. Ideally, AFS would screen for the ever-growing number of sequenced animal,  
367 plant, fungal and bacterial genomes in one single analysis on standard computers.  
368 However, due to the usage of algorithms involving read mapping and sequence  
369 alignments, the screening power of AFS is currently limited to 20-30 species with  
370 large eukaryotic genomes in one analysis. We therefore investigate the applicability  
371 of novel non-alignment-based, memory-efficient algorithms for AFS. At the same  
372 time, the identification and quantification of microbiota from foodstuff by AFS is a goal  
373 worth of pursuing in future.

374 **Conflict of Interest**

375 The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

376

377 **Compliance with ethics requirements**

378 This article does not contain any studies with human or living animal subjects.

379

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483 **Tab. 1 Quantification results of AFS pipeline.** Raw results obtained by AFS  
 484 analysis as well as calibrated AFS values obtained by linear regression are  
 485 compared to PCR-based quantification for **(a)** Doner Kebab samples, **(b)** Kal A-E, **(c)**  
 486 Klyo A-D and **(d)** KGeflLyo A-D. qPCR data were obtained from [8, 20], ddPCR data  
 487 from [13]. “Sum dev” represents the sum of % deviation from expected proportions.  
 488 Best results for each sausage are shaded grey. (n.a. = not analysed)

489 **(a)**

	beef	turkey	soy	maize	horse	pork	chicken	sheep	goat
<b>Doner Kebab 1</b>	8.6	88.6	0.7	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0
<b>Doner Kebab 2</b>	99.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.3
<b>Doner Kebab 3</b>	98.7	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.4
<b>Doner Kebab 4</b>	5.1	94.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0
<b>Doner Kebab 5</b>	27.7	71.3	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.1

490

491 **(b)**

		beef	pork	sheep	horse	chicken	turkey	goat	buffalo	sum dev
<b>Kal A</b>	expected	1.0	35.0	9.0	55.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
	AFS	1.4	30.9	10.1	57.3	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	8.2
	AFS cal.	0.3	34.9	10.3	54.3	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	3.1
	qPCR	0.4	39.3	8.9	51.5	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	8.6
<b>Kal B</b>	expected	9.0	55.0	1.0	35.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
	AFS	11.2	49.5	1.3	37.8	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	11.0
	AFS cal.	9.6	54.2	1.0	35.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	1.7
	qPCR	23.0	51.0	1.5	24.4	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	29.1
<b>Kal C</b>	expected	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
	AFS	25.8	19.8	28.2	25.1	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.2	10.5
	AFS cal.	23.7	22.4	29.0	23.7	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.2	10.3
	qPCR	34.0	18.8	25.8	21.4	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	19.6
	ddPCR	25.6	25.3	24.6	24.5	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1.8
<b>Kal D</b>	expected	35.0	9.0	55.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
	AFS	38.2	7.7	50.8	1.3	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.3	11.1
	AFS cal.	35.3	9.1	52.1	1.5	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.3	5.8
	qPCR	29.9	7.6	61.7	0.9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	13.3
<b>Kal E</b>	expected	55.0	1.0	35.0	9.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
	AFS	56.9	1.0	32.2	8.5	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.4	6.7
	AFS cal.	54.5	1.9	33.8	8.4	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.4	4.7
	qPCR	51.2	1.0	37.2	10.5	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	7.5

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493



494 **(c)**

		beef	pork	sheep	horse	chicken	turkey	goat	buffalo	sum dev
<b>KLyo A</b>	expected	14.0	80.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	5.5	0.0	0.0	11.2
	AFS	19.3	74.6	0.0	0.0	0.7	5.3	0.0	0.1	
	AFS cal.	13.0	80.8	0.0	0.0	0.3	5.7	0.0	0.1	
	ddPCR	14.2	80.2	n.a.	n.a.	0.4	5.3	n.a.	n.a.	
<b>KLyo B</b>	expected	36.0	58.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	12.5
	AFS	41.8	52.4	0.0	0.0	2.2	3.4	0.0	0.3	
	AFS cal.	35.9	57.9	0.0	0.0	2.1	3.8	0.0	0.3	
	ddPCR	34.9	60.1	n.a.	n.a.	1.4	3.7	n.a.	n.a.	
<b>KLyo C</b>	expected	58.0	36.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	17.0
	AFS	66.0	28.3	0.0	0.0	3.9	1.4	0.0	0.4	
	AFS cal.	60.6	33.1	0.0	0.0	4.1	1.7	0.0	0.4	
	ddPCR	58.4	36.8	n.a.	n.a.	2.9	1.9	n.a.	n.a.	
<b>KLyo D</b>	expected	80.0	14.0	0.0	0.0	5.5	0.5	0.0	0.0	6.8
	AFS	82.8	11.3	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.4	0.0	0.5	
	AFS cal.	77.7	15.7	0.0	0.0	5.3	0.7	0.0	0.5	
	ddPCR	79.2	15.9	n.a.	n.a.	4.3	0.6	n.a.	n.a.	

495

496 **(d)**

		beef	pork	sheep	horse	chicken	turkey	goat	buffalo	sum dev
<b>KGeflLyo A</b>	expected	0.5	5.5	0.0	0.0	14.0	80.0	0.0	0.0	31.9
	AFS	0.6	5.1	0.0	0.0	29.8	64.5	0.0	0.0	
	AFS cal.	0.2	5.6	0.0	0.0	10.0	84.1	0.0	0.0	
	ddPCR	0.8	9.4	n.a.	n.a.	24.6	65.1	n.a.	n.a.	
<b>KGeflLyo B</b>	expected	2.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	36.0	58.0	0.0	0.0	41.9
	AFS	2.0	3.5	0.0	0.0	56.9	37.6	0.0	0.0	
	AFS cal.	2.2	3.9	0.0	0.0	40.3	53.5	0.0	0.0	
	ddPCR	2.1	5.0	n.a.	n.a.	41.7	51.2	n.a.	n.a.	
<b>KGeflLyo C</b>	expected	4.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	58.0	36.0	0.0	0.0	35.4
	AFS	3.4	1.4	0.0	0.0	75.7	19.5	0.0	0.0	
	AFS cal.	4.4	1.8	0.0	0.0	61.2	32.6	0.0	0.0	
	ddPCR	4.2	2.4	n.a.	n.a.	62.6	30.8	n.a.	n.a.	
<b>KGeflLyo D</b>	expected	5.5	0.5	0.0	0.0	80.0	14.0	0.0	0.0	18.4
	AFS	3.9	0.4	0.0	0.0	89.2	6.5	0.0	0.0	
	AFS cal.	5.2	0.7	0.0	0.0	76.4	17.8	0.0	0.0	

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