

## ***CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION***

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Tripe is the stomach tissue of ruminants, mainly cattle, sheep and goats (Giaccone, Civera and Parisi, 1994), used for human consumption. Tripe is a common and inexpensive source of food that is rich in protein and calcium (Zarkadas, Karatzas and Zardakas, 1996; Anderson, 1989).

Tripe originated as the poor man's dish in many indigenous cultures since it came from the cheapest cuts of meat. Over the years, it has evolved into a well known delicacy in South Africa among all age groups across the socioeconomic ladder.

In South Africa, fresh tripe can be obtained at abattoirs. Tripe is also distributed frozen to selected retail shops. Prior to packaging, tripe is roughly washed in 21°C water and may be kept at ambient temperatures for 4 h before cold storage (National Department Agriculture, 2000; Erasmus, 1997). This allows for proliferation of contaminating bacteria. Bleaching, scalding and scraping of tripe are rare as it removes the original flavour of tripe, which is a preference characteristic especially for the traditional consumers (van den Heever, 1977).

### **1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Bovine tripe is not optimally utilized in South Africa for a number of different reasons: It is not easily accessible to consumers since it is only available at abattoirs and selected retailers; it requires long cooking times (Flynn and Fox, 1981) to tenderize the collagen and elastin fibres; and raw tripe is highly perishable due to the presence of gut microflora and autolytic enzymes (van den Heever, 1977), therefore causing economic losses to suppliers when demand is low. Since tripe is still enjoyed by all age groups especially among the African populations in South Africa, it is anticipated that if made available as a chilled Ready-To-Eat (RTE) product, it will be well patronized.