



Investigating the effect of pulsed electric field parameters on the quality of processed mango pickling

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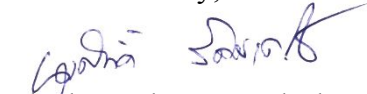
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Investigating the effect of pulsed electric field parameters on the quality of processed mango pickling

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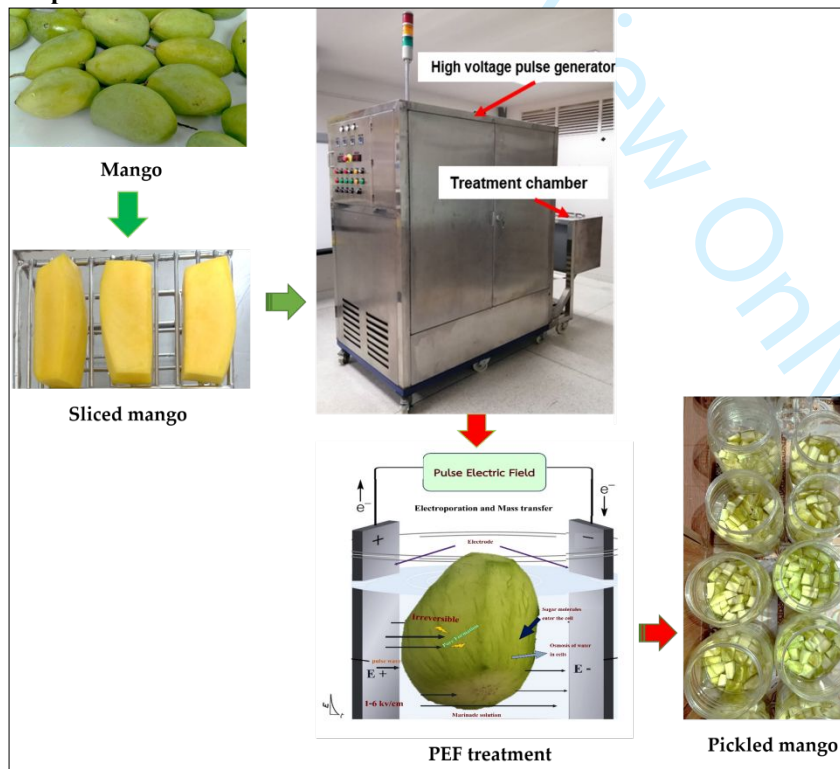
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Graphical abstract



Abstract

Pulsed electric field (PEF) is a non-thermal process which is applied widely in various food processing methods. The aim of this study was to evaluate the synergistic effect of the developed PEF parameters, including pulse strength, pulse frequency, and pulse number, on the changes to sweet pickled Thai mango quality, including changes in moisture content, water activity, color, texture, and mass transfer. A $2 \times 2 \times 5$ factorial experiment in a completely randomized design was used. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that the main effects of the investigated parameters and their interaction were mostly significant. Application of PEF at 3 kV/cm, 1 Hz, and 500 pulses significantly improved water reduction, weight loss, and solid gains by 2 times, as well as the beta-carotene content (52.56 $\mu\text{g}/100\text{g}$) of sweet pickled mango, when compared to fresh and conventionally pickled mangoes. This finding suggests that combining PEF and osmotic dehydration could be an effective process for producing sweet pickled mango. The effect of combining PEF parameters and osmotic dehydration is advantageous for improving osmotic efficiency while retaining the phytochemical compounds of mango.

Keywords: Pulsed electric field; Mango pickles; Quality change; Thai mango; Synergism

1. Introduction

Mango (*Mangifera indica* L.), belonging to the family Anacardiaceae, is a commercially important tropical fruit grown in several parts of the world, especially in the Asian region such as in India, the Philippines, China, Thailand, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.^{1,2} Mango has an attractive flavor, taste, aroma, and texture, and is high in nutrients such as reducing sugars, amino acids, and vitamins, as well as being rich in aromatic compounds, pectin, anthocyanins, and polyphenols.^{1,3} In 2019, the global production of mango was 51 million tons.¹ There are three main parts to a mango: the pulp, the peel, and the kernel, of which the pulp is the most consumed part.^{1,4} Although mango is mainly consumed fresh, it can be processed into many products in order to decrease postharvest losses during the main harvest season.⁵ Currently, there are many processed mango products available in the global market; for example, canned slices in syrup, juice, nectar, jam, chutney, and dehydrated mango.²

During harvesting seasons, the price of mango decreases due to oversupply in the market.⁵ Thus, in order to minimize this situation, sufficient preservation techniques need to be used to preserve the quality and shelf life.⁶ Pickling is a traditional method of food preservation applied to fruits, vegetables, and meats.⁷ This technique is widely used in households and many food industries. Mango pickles are made mostly from green mango and categorized as salty, oily, or sweet.² In Thailand, the sweet pickled mango is called ma-muang chae-im.⁸ Generally, sweet pickled mango is firstly immersed in 30 °brix sugar solution and then 50 °brix of sugar solution.⁹ However, the traditional pickling process is inefficient in terms of mass transfer, is time-consuming, and is difficult to control.¹⁰ Currently, there are several innovative methods which can be used to increase the mass transfer of the solutions into the foods such as pulse pressure,^{11,12} ultrasound¹³

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3 91 and pulsed electric field (PEF).¹³⁻¹⁹ Among these, PEF has been well-explored to pretreat
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5 92 the fruit tissue in order to enhance the mass and heat transfer process.¹⁴
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8 93 PEF is an emerging technology and can improve the functionality, extractability, and
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10 94 nutritional value of several food varieties,²⁰ for example in French fries manufactory.^{21,22} This
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12 95 technology consists of electrical treatment with a pulse strength from 100 V/cm to 80
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14 96 kV/cm.²³ Animal and plant cell electroporation require a lower electric field strength (0.5-2
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16 97 kV/cm), whereas microbial cells require an electric field strength of 10-14 kV/cm.²⁴ For
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18 98 biomacromolecule modification, a larger electric field strength (>15 kV/cm) is applied.²⁵ It
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20 99 causes minimal loss to the color, aroma, flavor, and nutritional value of the fruit products.
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24 100 This process can increase cell permeabilization, resulting in increased heat and mass
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26 101 transfer.^{14,20} Several research studies have successfully used PEF pretreatment for fruit tissues
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28 102 before the osmotic process on fruits such as kiwifruit,¹⁴ strawberries,²⁶ mangoes,²⁷ apples,¹⁵⁻¹⁸
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30 103 and goji berries.¹⁹ To the best of our knowledge, there have been no previous reports into the
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32 104 effects of PEF parameters on mass transfer in the mango pickling process.

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35 105 Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the effect of the Thai developed-PEF machine
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37 106 combined with the pickling process in 30 °brix of sugar solution on Thai mango var. Chok-
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39 107 anan, which is the most frequently used in preserved mango production in Thailand due to its
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41 108 vibrant color, exotic flavor, distinctive taste, and nutritional properties.²⁸ Therefore, this study
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43 109 was to determine how varying levels of pulse strength, pulse frequency, and pulse number
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45 110 effect changes in moisture content, water activity (a_w), color, texture, and mass transfer.
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51 112 2. Experimental section

52 113 2.1 Raw material

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55 114 Mature green mangoes of the variety “Chok-anan” (100-150 g/fruit) were purchased
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57 115 from local farms in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Before processing, the mangoes were washed
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with water, peeled with a knife, and cut into $5 \times 20 \times 40$ mm (height \times width \times length) rectangular-shaped pieces.²⁹ Each piece of mango weighed 10 ± 1 g. The materials used in this study complied with international, national and/or institutional guidelines.

2.2 PEF-assisted pickling process

The PEF system was built by the Research Unit of Applied Electric Field in Engineering (RUEE) Laboratory at Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna, Chiang Mai, Thailand (Figure 1). The system consisted of the control system, treatment chamber and spark gap. The maximum voltage applied was 40 kV and an electrical capacitor of $1 \mu\text{F}$. The chamber dimension was 4 cm in width \times 45 cm in height \times 37.5 cm in length, with a maximum volume of $6,750 \text{ cm}^3$ ($\approx 6.75 \text{ L}$). The chamber was filled to a volume of $2,500 \text{ cm}^3$ (30 °brix sucrose solution + mango pieces).

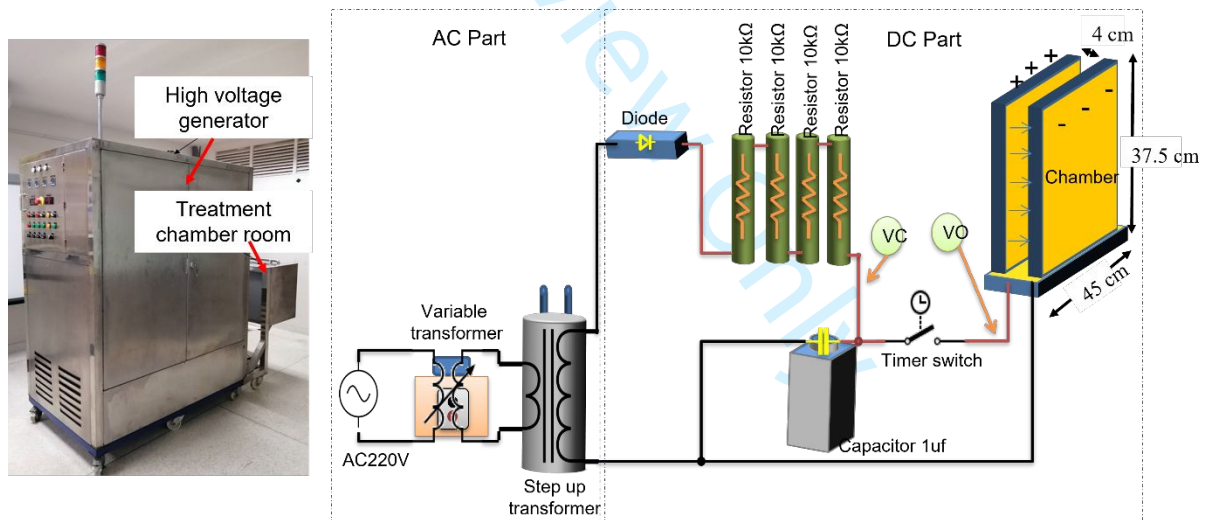


Fig. 1. PEF machine and diagram flow chart adapted from previous work.²⁹

The ratio of mango to sucrose solution was 1:30 (w/v) and the mango was then randomly placed in the treatment chamber. The temperature of the treatment chamber was controlled at $30 \pm 1.0^\circ\text{C}$. The experiments were performed as detailed in Table 1. Each experiment was performed in triplicate. After PEF, the mango was transferred to a

1
2
3 135 3L glass jar and kept at $30 \pm 1.0^\circ\text{C}$ for 24 hours before analysis. The specific energy
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5 136 ranged from 11.50 kJ/kg to 66.30 kJ/kg, which was effective for the decontamination
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7 137 process.³⁰ However, there was no impact on the temperature in the operating process
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9 138 because the process was controlled by cooling water. The pulse strength (E, kV/cm) and
10
11 139 the specific energy input (kJ/kg) were calculated according to Eq. (1) and (2).³¹

14
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$$E \text{ (kV | cm)} = \frac{U}{d} \quad (1)$$

17
18 141
$$\text{Specific energy (kJ/kg)} = \frac{U^2 \times C}{2 \times m} \times n \quad (2)$$

20
21 142 where U is the charging voltage (kV); d is the distance between electrodes (cm); C is the
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23 143 PEF capacity unit (2 μF); m is the mass in the treatment chamber (kg); and n is the pulse
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25 144 number.
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30 146 **Table 1** Overview of the applied PEF-settings in this study¹. The conditions were conducted
31 147 at 30°C .

Treatment	PEF parameters			Specific energy (kJ/kg)
	E (kV/cm)	F (Hz)	N	
1	2	1	500	11.50
2	2	1	700	16.10
3	2	1	900	20.70
4	2	1	1,100	25.30
5	2	1	1,300	29.90
6	3	1	500	25.50
7	3	1	700	35.70
8	3	1	900	45.90
9	3	1	1,100	56.10
10	3	1	1,300	66.30
11	2	3	500	11.50
12	2	3	700	16.10
13	2	3	900	20.70
14	2	3	1,100	25.30
15	2	3	1,300	29.90
16	3	3	500	25.50
17	3	3	700	35.70
18	3	3	900	45.90
19	3	3	1,100	56.10
20	3	3	1,300	66.30

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57 148 ¹ E is electric field strength (kV/cm); F is pulsed frequency (Hz); and N is number of pulses.
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2.3 Conventional pickling process

The conventional mango pickling was performed according to Uthairungsri et al.⁹ and Supasin et al.²⁹ Briefly, the mango cubes were immersed in 1L of 30 °brix sucrose solution in a ratio of 1:30 (w/v). The pickling process was performed in a 3L glass jar at 30±1.0°C for 24 hours before analysis.

2.4 Analysis

2.4.1 Determination of mass transfer

Mass transfer of the sweet pickled mango was evaluated by calculating weight reduction (WR), water loss (WL), and solid gain (SG) using Eq. (3), (4), and (5) respectively.¹⁴ The diffusion efficiency (DE) was evaluated by Eq. (6):

$$WR (g/g) = \frac{W_t - W_0}{W_0} \quad (3)$$

$$WL (g/g) = \frac{(W_0 - M_0) - (W_t - M_t)}{M_0} \quad (4)$$

$$SG (g/g) = \frac{M_t - M_0}{M_0} \quad (5)$$

$$DE = \frac{WL}{SG} \quad (6)$$

where:

W_0 = initial weight of fresh mango (g)

W_t = weight of samples after a time t of preservation (g)

M_0 = dry mass of samples before preservation (g)

M_t = dry mass of samples after a time t of preservation (g)

2.4.2 Moisture content, water activity (a_w), and pH

The moisture content was measured using the method of the AOAC.³² Moisture content was determined by drying samples in an oven (Memmert, Schwabach, Germany) at 105 °C until a constant weight was achieved. The a_w was monitored using an Aqua LAB

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3 176 4TEV (Decagon Devices, Inc., USA). The pH was measured by pH meter (Mettler
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5 177 Toledo, USA). The cube of mango (10g) was ground and mixed with 10mL of distilled
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7 178 water. The mixtures were vigorously shaken for 2 minutes and then centrifuged at 2,000
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9 179 rpm for 5 minutes. The supernatant was corrected and used to measure pH. All
10
11 180 experiments were performed in triplicate.

15 181 **2.4.3 Determination of color**

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17 182 The color of fresh mango, untreated sweet pickled mango, and PEF-treated sweet pickled
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19 183 mango was directly read in terms of CIELab values (L^* , a^* , and b^*) with a HunterLab
20
21 184 chromameter (MiniScan EZ, Virginia, USA).³³ Each treatment was done in triplicate. The
22
23 185 results were recorded, and the total color change (ΔE) calculated using Eq. (7).

$$26 186 \Delta E = \sqrt{(L^* - L_0^*)^2 + (a^* - a_0^*)^2 + (b^* - b_0^*)^2} \quad (7)$$

28
29 187 Where the letters with subscripts 0 are the value of the fresh mango.

31 188 **2.4.4 Texture analysis**

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33 189 The hardness and toughness of the samples were measured with puncture mode of a
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35 190 texture analyzer (TA-XT plus, Stable Micro Systems, UK) equipped with a stainless-steel
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37 191 probe 5 mm in diameter. Pre-test, Test, and Post-test speeds were 1.5, 1.5, and 100 mm/s
38
39 192 respectively. The samples were axial compressed by approximately 30%. Thirty
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41 193 replicates of the sample were tested.

45 194 **2.4.5 Surface morphology**

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47 195 The surface morphology of the fresh mango, conventionally pickled mango, and PEF-
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49 196 assisted pickled mango was examined using a scanning electron microscope (SEM; Prima
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51 197 E, Thermo Scientific, Waltham, MA, USA). The samples were placed on SEM stubs
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53 198 using double-faced tape and a photograph taken at an excitation voltage of 5 kV using an
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55 199 image detector (PentaFET precision, X-act, Oxford Instruments, Abingdon, UK).

59 200 **2.4.6 Electrical conductivity disintegration index (Z)**

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3 201 Mango was mixed with distilled water in a ratio of 1:1 (w/v) and ground into pulp with a
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5 202 multipurpose blender. The mixture was then centrifuged at 2,000 rpm for 5 minutes. The
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7 203 supernatant was corrected and electrical conductivity was measured by conductometer
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9 204 (TDS&EC meter, China). The degree of tissue damage was evaluated from electrical
10
11 205 conductivity disintegration index (Z) as following Eq. (8).³⁴

$$14 \quad Z = \frac{(\sigma - \sigma_i)}{(\sigma_d - \sigma_i)} \quad (8)$$

15 206
16
17 207 where σ is the measured electric conductivity value (S/m), and the subscripts i and d refer
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19 208 to the conductivities of the initial mango (fresh) and completely damaged tissue
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21 209 respectively.

22 210 **2.4.7 Beta-carotene content**

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24 211 Beta-carotene content was measured using high-performance liquid chromatography
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26 212 (HPLC) according to the method of Supasin et al.²⁹ Briefly, the samples (0.1g) were
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28 213 ground by mortar and then 1.5 mL of 95% n-hexane, 0.75 mL of 95% ethanol, and 0.75
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30 214 mL of acetone were added. Afterward, the extracted samples were transferred to a
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32 215 centrifuge tube and 5 mL of water was added. The centrifugation was performed at
33
34 216 3000 rpm and 25 °C for 10 minutes. The supernatant (5 mL) was then transferred into a
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36 217 new tube and the volume adjusted to 10 mL with 95% n-hexane. After being filtered
37
38 218 through a 0.2 μm syringe filter (Labfil, China), the sample (20 μL) was injected into the
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40 219 HPLC (Agilent Technologies, Santa Clara, CA, USA) with a photodiode array detector
41
42 220 and a C₁₈ reverse-phase column (Waters C₁₈, 250 \times 4.6 mm, 5 μm particle size). The
43
44 221 gradient elution used methanol and methyl-tert-butyl ether at a flow rate of 1.0 mL/min
45
46 222 and detection wavelength of 470 nm.

47 223 **2.4.8 Ascorbic acid content**

48 224 The ascorbic content of mango was measured according to the method of Supasin et al.²⁹
49
50 225 The mangoes (2.5g) were ground and mixed with 3% m-phosphoric acid in a 100 mL
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226 volumetric flask. The mixtures were vigorously shaken for 2 minutes and then sonicated
 227 in an ultrasound bath for 5 minutes. An aliquot was then filtered through a 0.2 µm filter
 228 (Labfil, China). The sample (20 µL) was injected into the HPLC system, and the optical
 229 density measured at 248 nm using a UV detector at a flow rate of 0.5 mL/min. The
 230 mobile phase was a mixture of 3 mM potassium dihydrogen phosphate in 0.35% (v/v) o-
 231 phosphoric acid.

232 2.5 Statistical analysis

233 The experimental values were expressed as the average and standard deviation. SPSS
 234 software version 17.0 (IBM, NY, USA) was used to analyze the significance tests. The
 235 univariate general linear model was used to analyze the interaction and significant
 236 differences between treatments. The differences between PEF-pickled mangoes were
 237 analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with Duncan's multiple range
 238 tests for post hoc testing. Correlations between the investigated parameters were
 239 examined using the Pearson correlation. A comparison of the non-PEF and PEF processes
 240 was determined by an independent-sample *t*-test. Results of $p < 0.05$ indicated a
 241 significant difference.

242 3. Results and discussion

243 3.1 Effect of PEF parameters coupled with sweet pickling mango

244 3.1.1 Change in water loss (WL), solid gain (SG), water reduction (WR), and 245 diffusion efficiency (DE)

246 The characterization of fresh mango used in this study is shown in Table 2. The fresh
 247 mango contained high amounts of moisture (88.03±0.04%). The effect of the PEF-
 248 assisted pickling process on mango WL, SG, WR, and DE are presented in Table 3 and
 249 Table 4.

250 **Table 2** Fresh Thai mango var. Chok-anan characterization

Characteristic	Average ± SD
----------------	--------------

Moisture (%)	88.03±0.04
Water activity	0.976±0.002
pH	3.01±0.05
color	
- L*	56.27±0.64
- a*	-3.24±0.30
- b*	28.64±0.86
Hardness (N)	53.35±6.21
Toughness (mJ/m ³)	183.12±54.90

251

Table 3 Analysis of variance (ANOVA) for identified quality changes of sweet pickled mango by PEF-assisted pickling process¹.

Source of variance	<i>p</i> -value											
	WL	SG	WR	DE	MC	<i>a_w</i>	<i>L</i> *	<i>a</i> *	<i>b</i> *	ΔE	H	T
Main effect												
E	0.038	0.039	0.038	0.918	0.038	0.737	0.620	0.000	0.159	0.141	0.148	0.140
F	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.191	0.000	0.015	0.084	0.001	0.054	0.253	0.000	0.000
N	0.028	0.032	0.029	0.968	0.003	0.096	0.209	0.000	0.014	0.040	0.935	0.875
Interactions												
E × F	0.347	0.354	0.350	0.808	0.348	0.027	0.397	0.009	0.598	0.814	0.129	0.139
E × N	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.848	0.012	0.425	0.067	0.000	0.621	0.141	0.185	0.553
F × N	0.004	0.005	0.004	0.751	0.004	0.001	0.098	0.000	0.525	0.336	0.052	0.297
E × F × N	0.077	0.083	0.077	0.695	0.076	0.045	0.316	0.000	0.071	0.003	0.372	0.313

¹ E is electric field strength (kV/cm); F is pulsed frequency (Hz); and N is number of pulses; WR = weight reduction (g/g); WL = water loss (g/g); SG = solid gain (g/g); DE = diffusion efficiency; MC = moisture content (%); H = hardness (N); T = toughness (mJ/m³).

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There was a non-significant ($p > 0.05$) effect of the interaction of pulse strength, frequency, and number on WL, SG, WR, and DE (Table 3). However, WL, SG, and WR, were affected by the interactions of pulse strength × pulse number and frequency × pulse number ($p < 0.05$). Pulse strength controls the efficiency of cellular tissue electroplasmolysis, while pulse frequency is a parameter affecting the electroporation process.³⁵ Meanwhile, an increase in pulse number significantly increased cell perforation, leading to a more efficient electroporation process.³⁶ Asavasanti et al.³⁷ suggested that pulse frequency plays an important role in the PEF-induced permeabilization of cell tissues. In this study, pulse frequency was the most effective parameter in changing the mass transfer of sweet pickled mango, with a p -value less than 0.000 (Table 3). A low pulse frequency (1 Hz) may cause more damage to cell membranes because there is more time for the cell to charge between pulses, thereby

270 enhancing pore formation.³⁵ However, the increase of pulse frequency to 3 Hz decreased
 271 the degree of cell electroporation³⁸ and led to cell membranes resealing (supplementary
 272 Figure 1) and less moisture transport due to less tissue damage.³⁹

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276 **Table 4** Mean comparison of water loss (WL), solid gain (SG), water reduction (WR), and
 277 diffusion efficiency (DE) for the interaction of strength × frequency × pulse number in PEF-
 278 assisted sweet pickled mango¹.

Treatment	Mass transfer			DE (WL/SG) ^{ns**}
	WL (g/g)	SG (g/g)	WR (g/g)	
1	0.98±0.01 ^{abcd*}	0.13±0.00 ^{ab}	0.85±0.01 ^{ab}	7.35±0.01
2	0.99±0.05 ^{bcd}	0.17±0.01 ^{ab}	0.86±0.05 ^{ab}	6.55±1.12
3	1.01±0.10 ^{bcd}	0.14±0.01 ^{ab}	0.88±0.09 ^{ab}	6.27±1.50
4	1.07±0.00 ^{abcd}	0.15±0.00 ^{ab}	0.93±0.00 ^{ab}	6.33±1.43
5	1.02±0.04 ^{abcd}	0.14±0.01 ^{ab}	0.88±0.03 ^{ab}	6.56±1.12
6	1.24±0.02 ^a	0.17±0.00 ^a	1.07±0.02 ^a	6.67±0.95
7	0.91±0.02 ^{bcd}	0.12±0.00 ^{ab}	0.79±0.02 ^{ab}	7.19±0.22
8	1.06±0.05 ^{abc}	0.14±0.01 ^{ab}	0.92±0.05 ^{ab}	7.24±0.15
9	1.14±0.07 ^{ab}	0.16±0.01 ^{ab}	0.99±0.06 ^{ab}	7.00±0.48
10	0.86±0.00 ^{bcd}	0.12±0.00 ^{ab}	0.75±0.00 ^{ab}	7.53±0.26
11	0.80±0.08 ^d	0.11±0.01 ^{ab}	0.69±0.07 ^{ab}	7.11±0.33
12	0.87±0.08 ^{cd}	0.12±0.01 ^{ab}	0.76±0.07 ^{ab}	7.09±0.35
13	0.81±0.10 ^{cd}	0.11±0.01 ^{ab}	0.70±0.09 ^{ab}	7.55±0.29
14	0.89±0.10 ^{bcd}	0.12±0.01 ^{ab}	0.77±0.09 ^{ab}	7.05±0.41
15	0.95±0.03 ^{abcd}	0.13±0.01 ^{ab}	0.82±0.03 ^{ab}	7.36±0.03
16	0.84±0.04 ^{abcd}	0.11±0.01 ^{ab}	0.73±0.03 ^{ab}	7.83±0.69
17	0.86±0.10 ^{bcd}	0.12±0.01 ^{ab}	0.75±0.09 ^{ab}	7.31±0.41
18	0.97±0.08 ^{abcd}	0.13±0.01 ^{ab}	0.84±0.07 ^{ab}	6.95±0.55
19	1.02±0.04 ^{abcd}	0.14±0.01 ^{ab}	0.89±0.04 ^{ab}	7.35±0.01
20	0.96±0.10 ^{abcd}	0.13±0.01 ^{ab}	0.83±0.09 ^{ab}	7.79±0.68

279 ¹ WR = weight reduction (g/g); WL = water loss (g/g); SG = solid gain (g/g); DE = diffusion
 280 efficiency.

281 * a-d represented the significant difference in the columns at $p < 0.05$.

282 ** ns = non significantly different.

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The mean value showed that the sweet pickled mango treated with 3 kV/cm, 1 Hz,
 and 500 pulses (Treatment 6) had the highest values of WL, SG, and WR with an
 average of 1.24, 0.17, and 1.07 g/g, respectively (Table 4). Applying a high number of
 pulses (1300) resulted in decreased WR, WL, and SG. This might be because cell

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3 288 membrane damage is reversible (cells reseal) when increasing the pulse number.⁴⁰ A
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5 289 higher disintegration was obtained when longer pulses were used. The efficiency of the
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8 290 diffusion of this treatment was 6.67, which was not significantly different from other
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10 291 conditions.

12 292 3.1.2 Change in moisture and water activity (a_w)

15 293 The PEF processing, regardless of the interaction of pulse strength \times frequency \times
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17 294 pulse number, did not significantly affect the moisture content in the mango tissue (Table
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19 295 3). However, moisture content was affected by the interactions of pulse strength \times pulse
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21 296 number and frequency \times pulse number, which was consistent with the change in mass
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24 297 transfer. The mean comparison for the interaction of pulse strength \times frequency \times pulse
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26 298 number indicated that the use of PEF significantly decreased the moisture content of
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28 299 sweet pickled mango ($p < 0.05$), as shown in Table 4. The lowest moisture content
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31 300 (71.16%) was obtained when applying 3 kV/cm of pulse strength, 1 Hz of frequency, and
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33 301 500 pulses. The application of pulse strength, frequency, and pulse number creates pores
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35 302 in the cell membrane, which causes irreversible (cells rupture) or reversible (cells reseal)
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37 303 cell membrane damage and may induce cell opening in combination with subsequent
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39 304 moisture release, resulting in reduced moisture content of mango tissue and texture
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42 305 properties.^{26,41} A pulse strength of around 1–10 kV/cm induces an electro-compressive
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44 306 force to break down the membrane and create pores which then work as a conductive
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46 307 channel that increases membrane permeability.^{20,42} PEF treatment ruptures the membrane
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48 308 of the cell, which leads to disturbance of the water migration path and more rapid and
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50 309 extensive shrinkage of the material.⁴³ These phenomena result in decreased moisture
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52 310 content and increased mass transfer of plant tissue.

56 311 Unlike moisture content, water activity was significantly affected by pulse strength \times
57
58 312 frequency \times pulse number ($p=0.045$). The change in water activity was due to osmotic
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dehydration, a water flow from the raw materials to the outer solution (water loss) and a flow of solute from the solution to the mango's tissues (solid gain). **Despite the varied water absorption, PEF-treated mangoes lost soluble solids after water immersion in a comparable fashion⁴⁴. The higher availability of free water after PEF induced cell opening.** The Duncan analysis for the interaction between pulse strength \times frequency \times pulse number showed that the mango treated with three conditions: 2 kV/cm, 1 Hz, 1300 pulses (Treatment 5); 3 kV/cm, 1 Hz, 500 pulses (Treatment 6); and 2 kV/cm, 2 Hz, 1100 pulses (Treatment 14) had the lowest value of a_w , with an average of 0.958 (Table 4). The reduction in a_w may be due to the higher sucrose gain during the pickling process.⁴⁵

Table 5 Mean comparison of moisture content, water activity, color, and texture properties for the interaction of strength \times frequency \times pulse number in PEF-assisted sweet pickled mango¹.

Treatment	Moisture content (%)	Water activity	Color			Texture properties		
			L*	a*	b*	ΔE	Hardness (N)	Toughness (mJ/m ³)
1	74.66±0.11 ^c -g	0.961±0.003 a-f	57.77±6.74 ^a bc	3.83±0.16 ^a	29.59±5.12 ^b cd	9.43±0.437 ^a bc	24.58±22.95 ^f g	37.93±40.97 ^e
2	74.51±0.52 ^c -j	0.966±0.001 a	57.84±1.42 ^a bc	2.88±0.00 ^{bc} d	31.73±1.04 ^a -d	7.12±0.77 ^{bc}	29.07±24.81 efg	38.75±35.93 ^e
3	74.24±0.95 ^d -g	0.959±0.004 b-f	53.45±0.04 bc	3.34±0.29 ^{ab}	31.62±2.34 ^a -d	7.92±0.64 ^{ab} c	24.89±32.35 ^f g	39.28±60.72 ^e
4	73.44±0.01 ^f g	0.965±0.000 a	65.56±1.62 ^a	1.66±0.01 ^{gh}	32.77±1.80 ^a -d	11.32±1.99 ^a	28.22±40.34 efg	41.44±63.99 ^e
5	74.18±0.37 ^d -g	0.958±0.004 ef	53.87±1.85 bc	3.25±0.108 ^a bc	32.31±0.62 ^a -d	7.94±0.75 ^{ab} c	30.50±26.26 efg	40.48±43.20 ^e
6	71.16±0.21 ^h	0.958±0.000 def	58.29±4.23 bc	1.95±0.02 ^{ef} g	28.43±0.93 ^c d	6.29±1.301 bc	22.30±20.61 g	34.61±39.64 ^e
7	75.65±0.25 ^b -e	0.963±0.000 a-e	60.74±1.92 ^a b	1.73±0.04 ^{fg} h	33.58±4.30 ^a -d	8.62±3.44 ^{ab} c	36.59±42.39 d-g	54.83±75.02 ^e
8	73.59±0.53 ^c fg	0.961±0.004 a-f	55.49±0.80 bc	2.93±0.77 ^{bc} d	34.96±2.22 ^a b	8.92±2.04 ^{ab} c	47.32±38.47 c-f	73.22±70.09 ^e e
9	72.50±0.71 ^g h	0.961±0.002 a-f	55.25±7.68 bc	1.70±0.60 ^{gh}	27.64±1.86 ^d	7.51±1.69 ^{ab} c	44.96±34.71 c-g	64.62±64.06 ^{de}
10	76.29±0.01 ^b cd	0.956±0.003 ^f	51.29±0.82 ^c	2.58±0.20 ^{cd} e	29.90±3.34 ^a -d	8.14±0.13 ^{ab} c	44.49±34.27 c-g	64.05±61.73 ^{de}
11	77.09±0.77 ^b	0.965±0.001 ab	56.83±0.84 bc	1.24±0.32 ^{gh}	31.42±2.24 ^a -d	5.54±0.77 ^{bc}	76.02±30.94 a	127.83±69.02 ab
12	76.12±0.82 ^b cd	0.959±0.001 c-f	50.39±0.07 ^c	3.34±0.14 ^{ab}	35.93±1.98 ^a	11.49±1.30 ^a	67.20±27.79 abc	127.18±71.95 ab
13	77.03±0.99 ^b	0.964±0.001 abc	56.23±3.66 bc	3.36±0.27 ^{ab}	35.02±0.89 ^a b	9.55±0.39 ^{ab}	59.25±22.96 a-d	119.59±53.48 ab
14	75.87±0.97 ^b cd	0.958±0.000 def	55.28±1.46 bc	2.47±0.08 ^{de}	34.22±0.67 ^a bc	8.12±0.22 ^{ab} c	55.39±33.53 a-d	111.40±68.88 abc
15	75.12±0.32 ^b -f	0.964±0.001 abc	55.16±1.42 bc	1.03±0.49 ^h	31.20±3.38 ^a -d	5.61±1.63 ^{bc}	73.07±34.18 ab	138.03±80.46 ab
16	76.56±0.35 ^b c	0.965±0.003 b	55.17±4.70 bc	1.21±0.01 ^h	28.06±0.36 ^c d	5.66±0.94 ^{bc}	67.79±30.53 abc	129.28±62.20 ab
17	76.23±1.01 ^b cd	0.966±0.003 a	57.86±1.79 ^a bc	1.00±0.07 ^h	31.07±0.23 ^a -d	5.28±0.49 ^c	73.87±31.87 ab	151.00±82.46 a
18	74.81±0.81 ^c de	0.962±0.003 a-e	53.36±3.89 bc	2.40±0.07 ^{de} f	33.62±0.13 ^a -d	8.47±1.37 ^{ab} c	59.97±38.77 abc	108.01±69.35 abc
19	74.07±0.40 ^d -g	0.962±0.004 b-f	53.82±4.36 bc	2.86±0.68 ^{bc} d	34.76±1.30 ^a b	9.40±2.43 ^{ab} c	66.87±38.49 abc	132.19±68.73 ab

20	74.90±0.98 ^b -f	0.962±0.001 a-f	55.66±4.85 bc	2.86±0.19 ^{bc} d	32.72±3.91 ^a -d	8.41±2.38 ^{ab} c	50.54±23.48 b-e	103.38±52.13 bcd
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¹ Means ± standard deviation followed by different letters in the same column are significantly different based on Duncan's multiple range test ($p < 0.05$).

3.1.3 Change in color

In this study, a^* and ΔE of the pickled mango was strongly affected by the interaction between pulse strength \times frequency \times pulse number, with a p -value of 0.000 and 0.003 respectively, while L^* and b^* values were not affected by the interaction between pulse strength \times frequency \times pulse number. According to Table 5, the application of PEF coupled with the pickling process of the mango at 2 kV/cm, 1 Hz, and 1100 pulses (Treatment 4) had the highest affect (65.56), whereas the highest a^* value (3.83) was found at 2 kV/cm, 1 Hz, 500 pulse (Treatment 6). The increase or decrease in L^* value was associated with the transparency gains due to air loss or air being present in the pore by diffusion solution.⁴⁵ A lower PEF strength (2 kV/cm) caused a greater increase in a^* values, while a higher strength (3 kV/cm) resulted in a decrease in a^* values, which aligns with the results reported for PEF-treated carrot.⁴³ Meanwhile, the highest values of b^* (35.93) and ΔE (11.49) were seen at 2 kV/cm, 2 Hz, and 700 pulses (Treatment 12). The b^* value indicates the yellow color of the products. The increase in b^* value might be due to the application of a higher pulse strength.⁴³

3.1.4 Change in texture properties

As shown in Table 3, there was a non-significant ($p > 0.05$) effect of the interaction between pulse strength, frequency, and number on hardness and toughness of PEF-pickled mango. The mean results from Table 5 show that the interaction between pulse strength \times frequency \times pulse number at 2 kV/cm, 1 Hz, and 900 pulses (Treatment 3) could decrease the hardness and toughness of sweet pickled mango from 38.03 N and 98.67 mJ/m³ for conventionally pickled mango to 21.32 N and 25.77 mJ/m³ respectively. The hardness and toughness of the mango pickled by PEF were reduced by 1.78-2.40 and

3.83-7.34 times from **conventionally pickled** and fresh mango **respectively**. The change in texture properties after PEF treatment was due to perforation of the cell **membranes**, caused by the interaction **between** PEF parameters.¹⁸ The increase in pore formation leads to an increase in the softening of the mango tissue due to the rupture of the internal structure.¹³ Thus, the sugar molecules can diffuse to the mango surface **through** capillary forces.⁴⁴

3.1.5 Pearson's correlation of PEF parameters coupled with sweet pickling mango

The results of Pearson's correlation analysis of investigated variables are presented in Table 6. A significant positive correlation has been found between WL and SG or WR, while a negative correlation exists between WL, SG, WR to DE and texture properties. This negative correlation indicates that there is a higher level of WL, SG, and WR; a lower hardness and toughness were obtained. The WL, SG, and WR were also strongly negatively correlated with moisture content. The increase in cell permeability results in increased WL, SG, and WR values, but decreased water molecules (moisture content) in mango tissue. Meanwhile, a positive correlation between DE and moisture content was observed. The color values, a^* and b^* , presented a positive correlation with ΔE .

Table 6 Pearson's correlation analysis.

	WL	SG	WR	DE	MC	a_w	L^*	a^*	b^*	ΔE	H	T	
WL	1.000	0.894**	0.999**	-0.529*	-	-	0.243	0.081	-	0.090	-	-	
SG		1.000	0.896**	-	1.000**	0.280	0.261	0.101	-	0.278	0.626**	0.616**	
WR			1.000	0.632**	0.896**	0.110	0.238	0.086	-	0.273	0.640**	0.643**	
DE				1.000	-0.531*	-	0.238	0.086	-	0.103	-	-	
MC					1.000**	0.281	0.274	0.626**	0.616**	-	-	-	
a_w						1.000	0.278	-0.242	-0.081	0.277	-0.091	0.622**	0.611**
L^*							1.000	0.535*	-	0.000	-0.257	0.363	0.362
a^*								1.000	0.485*	-	-	-	-
b^*									1.000	0.020	-	-	-
ΔE										1.000	-0.274	-0.237	-
H											1.000	0.977**	-
T												1.000	-

** represented $p < 0.01$ and * represented $p < 0.05$.

WR = weight reduction (g/g); WL = water loss (g/g); SG = solid gain (g/g); DE = diffusion efficiency; MC = moisture content (%); H = hardness (N); T = toughness (mJ/m^3).

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3.2 Comparison of mango pickles from conventional pickling processes and PEF-assisted pickling processes

According to the results above, the highest mass transfer (WR, WL, and SG) was presented at 3 kV/cm, 1 Hz, and 500 pulses (Treatment 6). Therefore, this condition was chosen for comparison with non-PEF pickling processes mango (Table 6).

Table 7. Comparison of physicochemical properties, texture properties, and mass transfer of raw, conventional pickling processes and PEF-assisted pickling processes in 30 °brix syrup¹.

Investigated parameters	Type of mango processes	
	Conventional pickling processes	PEF-assisted pickling processes
MC (%)	80.95±0.49 ^a	71.16±0.22 ^b
a _w	0.964±0.002 ^a	0.958±0.000 ^b
pH	3.00±0.01 ^b	3.16±0.03 ^a
L* ns ²	52.27±1.37	58.29±4.23
a*	-0.77±0.07 ^b	1.96±0.03 ^a
b*ns	33.66±4.52	28.43±0.93
ΔE ^{ns, 3}	7.12±3.93	6.30±1.30
Hardness (N)	37.78±21.37 ^a	23.05±15.07 ^b
Toughness (mJ/m ³)	75.67±46.78 ^a	34.87±26.79 ^b
WR (g/g)	0.45±0.04 ^b	1.07±0.02 ^a
WL (g/g)	0.52±0.05 ^b	1.24±0.02 ^a
SG (g/g)	0.07±0.01 ^b	0.17±0.00 ^a
cell disintegration (Z)	0.05±0.01 ^b	0.64±0.05 ^a
Beta-carotene (μg/100g)	43.87±0.21 ^b	52.56±0.15 ^a
Ascorbic acid (mg/100g)	61.31±0.35 ^a	32.54±0.11 ^b

¹ Means followed by different letters in the same row are significantly differences ($p < 0.05$) between non-PEF and PEF pickled mango (independent-sample t -test).

² ns = non significantly different.

³ The ΔE was calculated based on the raw mango color.

3.2.1 Physicochemical properties

PEF caused both desirable and undesirable changes in the quality properties of mango due to the mechanism of the process.³⁶ The results demonstrated that PEF could decrease

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3 389 the moisture content, a_w , hardness, and toughness ($p < 0.05$), while the color parameters
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5 390 showed no difference in L^* and b^* values ($p > 0.05$), resulting in a non-significant
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7 391 difference in the color change (ΔE) of conventional pickling processes (7.12 ± 3.93) and
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10 392 PEF-assisted pickling processes (6.30 ± 1.30), as presented in Table 7. The decreased
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12 393 moisture content and a_w were due to the prevention of moisture uptake during the PEF
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14 394 process, in which sugar molecules form a film layer on the mango surface.⁴⁴ There were
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16
17 395 no significant differences between the L^* and b^* values; meanwhile, a higher a^* value
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19 396 (1.96 ± 0.03) was obtained in PEF-treated pickled mango. The PEF caused the interaction
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22 397 of different compounds responsible for coloration in foods.⁴⁶ The pH value of the mango
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24 398 pulp of PEF-assisted pickling processes increased from 3.01 to 3.16. This might be due to
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26 399 enzyme activity during the pickling process and the attribution of the native acids
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28 400 lixiviation during the application of PEF.⁴⁷ The reduction in hardness and toughness
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31 401 coupled with the PEF pickling process was likely due to pore creation and the rupture of
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33 402 the internal structure, resulting in increased softening of the plant tissues.¹³

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35 403 According to Table 7, the pickled mango treated with PEF had significantly
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37 404 increased WR, WL, and SG values of 1.07 ± 0.02 , 1.24 ± 0.02 , and 0.17 ± 0.00 g/g
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39 405 ($p < 0.05$), while the WR, WL, and SG values of conventional pickling processes were
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41 406 0.45 ± 0.04 , 0.52 ± 0.05 , and 0.07 ± 0.01 g/g respectively. Therefore, the PEF might
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43 407 reduce the fermentation time by at least 3-5 times compared to the conventional pickling
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45 408 process, which required 5–15 days for fermentation.⁹ Applying pulse strength, pulse
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47 409 frequency, and pulse number not only enhances the degree of membrane rupture but also
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49 410 increases the density of pores in the membrane and cell wall.⁴⁸ A high degree of cell
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51 411 disintegration (Z) was found in PEF-pickled mango, at 0.64 ± 0.05 , while the z value of
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53 412 non-PEF pickled mango was 0.05 ± 0.01 .

54 413 3.2.2 Mango surface structure

Changes in the structure the mango surface after the PEF pickling processes were examined using SEM (Figure 2). Fresh mango (Figure 2a) had larger pores than sweet pickled mango in both untreated (Figure 2b) and PEF-treated forms (Figure 2b). The net-like pattern of mango tissue had collapsed after PEF treatment, as presented in Figure 2c. The cell disintegration (Z) was found in the mango after the PEF pickling process at 30 °brix ($Z = 0.64$), which caused changes in the microstructure of the mango in both surface sides. Meanwhile, the Z value of non-PEF pickled mango was 0.05 ± 0.01 .

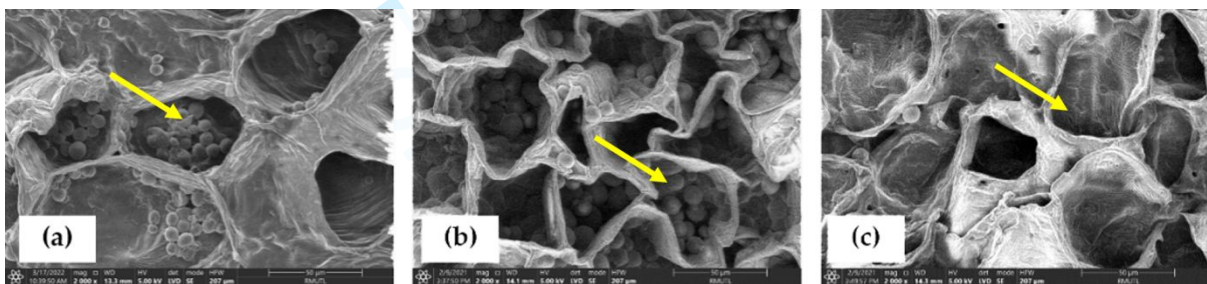


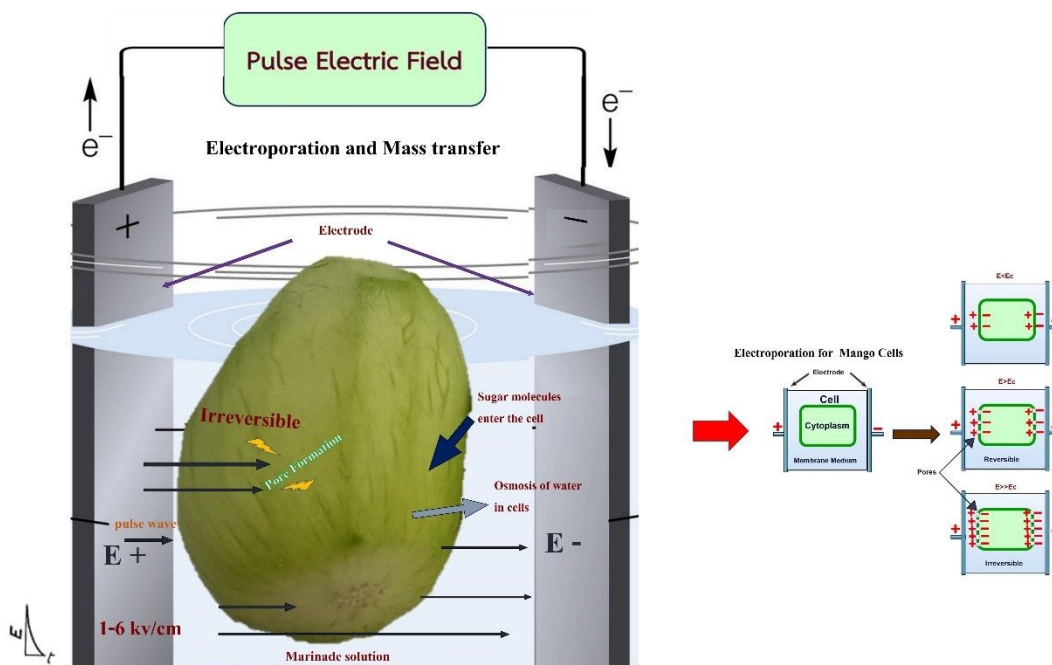
Fig. 2. SEM photomicrographs of surface of mango tissue: (a) fresh mango, (b) Conventional pickled mango, and (c) PEF-assisted pickling process at 2,000 \times . Yellow arrows indicate a change in the of structure surface the mango.

3.2.3 Beta-carotene and ascorbic acid content

The PEF processing significantly affected the content of beta-carotene and ascorbic acid in PEF pickled mango (Table 6). The content of beta-carotene was 52.56 $\mu\text{g}/100\text{g}$, which increased by 20% when compared with conventional mango pickles. Also, the concentration of ascorbic acid (32.54 $\text{mg}/100\text{g}$) was decreased by 47% from conventional mango pickles. The increase of beta-carotene was due to the acceleration of carotenoids during the PEF process.⁴⁹ Bot et al.⁴⁹ suggested that PEF can induce modification of not only cell membranes but also carotenoids-protein conformation. PEF might convert geranyl-geranyl diphosphate into phytoene by phytoene synthase and convert phytoene into phytofluene, beta-carotene, and lycopene by phytoene desaturase.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, the loss of ascorbic acid during PEF of sweet pickled mango was due to faster leaching into the osmotic solution.¹⁴ In addition, PEF also attacked the hydroxyl group of the second

439 carbon atom of ascorbic acid to complete the conversion of the configuration.⁵¹

440 From the results, it was found that PEF could improve the mass transfer of the
 441 osmotic agent into mango tissue. Therefore, the quality and functionality of sweet
 442 pickled mango passed through the PEF process can be improved. The function of PEF on
 443 mango tissue is evaluated and presented in Figure 3. The electroporation of PEF
 444 strengthened the electric field (cat-ions and an-ions) on the surface of the mango and
 445 caused changes to the tissue structure. The destruction of the tissue led to the formation
 446 of pores around the cell membranes.



447 **Fig. 3.** The mechanism of the PEF-assisted pickling process on the mango tissue.
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4. Conclusions

The application of pulse strength, pulse frequency, and pulse number of pulsed electric field was conducted to investigate the effect of PEF on the pickling process of sweet pickled mango. Using pulse strength, frequency, and pulse number of 3 kV/cm, 1 Hz, and 500 pulses respectively increased the release of moisture, WR, WL, and SG. PEF is effective in increasing mass transfer by reducing moisture and water activity, thus reducing the time for the process of pickling mango by 3-5 times. The application of the PEF pulse strength, pulse frequency, and pulse number also significantly affected the color and texture properties of sweet pickled mango. The reduction in hardness and toughness of PEF-pickled mango confirmed their improved permeability properties. PEF-pickled mango loses less ascorbic acid but has increased beta-carotene content. SEM images suggested that PEF effectively reduced the pore shape of mango tissue. Thus, in the food pickling process, the combination of PEF with traditional food pickling processes can be a real alternative to the traditional pickling process alone.

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Supporting information

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Conflict of interest

There are no conflicts to declare.

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For Review Only

20-word Innovative Description

The combination of PEF and pickling process for food pickling processing can be a real alternative to traditional processing.

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