vigo

Equipping the Nation's Drink Producers

GUIDELINES FOR USE IN CIDER MAKING - SODIUM METABISULPHITE

Stock Codes: 94320, 94321 & 94351

The manufacturer's Safety Data Sheet must be read in full prior to use.
Sodium metabisulphite is a classified chemical and must be treated with respect.

Many cider makers commonly use sodium metabisulphite as a source of sulphur dioxide (SO2) for use as a preservative in cider. We offer the following guidelines for those who may not be familiar with this product.

Users of sodium metabisulphite must satisfy themselves that they are competent in its use, understand the reasons for its use, and be able to monitor SO2 levels in their product. Vigo Limited cannot recommend the level of SO2 used in cider – users must decide this for themselves. Sulphur dioxide will reduce the risk of spoilage but it is not a substitute for good cider-making practice.

It is essential that cider produced for sale contains no more than the legally permitted level of sulphur dioxide (in October 2004 this was 200 mg/litre of total SO2 in the UK, but please check current legislation). Users of sodium metabisulphite must be able to satisfy themselves that they have not exceeded this limit and should monitor SO2 levels in the cider. We recommend the use of the **Sulfoquick Test kit** (stock code 94100).

The easiest and most accurate way of adding SO2 to cider is to make a standard stock solution by dissolving sodium metabisulphite in cold water. 390g of sodium metabisulphite dissolved in water to give a total volume of 5 litres will give a solution containing approximately 5% sulphur dioxide.

Store this solution in tightly sealed glass bottles in a dark place. One ml of this solution added to one litre of cider will give an initial SO2 level of 50 mg/litre (this is about the same as adding one campden tablet to 4.5 litres of cider). Therefore, if you have 200 litres of cider and you wish to add 50 mg/litre of SO2 you must add 200ml of the 5% solution.

SO2 is lost from the cider during fermentation and storage, and some is bound chemically to compounds in the cider. It is the **free SO2** that remains that is the effective preservative and this free SO2 must be maintained at a suitable level. It is recommended that the free SO2 level is measured before racking or bottling the cider and any necessary adjustments made at that stage. The following is a simple formula that can be used to determine the amount of stock 5% solution needed to raise the SO2 level:

$$\text{Vol of cider (lit)} \times \frac{\text{SO2 increase required (mg/lit)}}{50} = \text{vol of 5\% solution required (ml)}$$

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