

Production and Marketing of African Indigenous Vegetables in Arumeru District of Tanzania: Estimation of Potential Postharvest Loss and Preliminary Evaluation of Potential for Processing

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Abstract

African Indigenous Vegetables (AIVs) are increasingly consumed among African urban population, and sometimes require intensive processing before cooking. A collaborative pilot study was conducted in the urban and peri-urban setting of Arusha, (Arumeru district of Tanzania) in order to better understand the value chain for African eggplant (*Solanum aethiopicum*), amaranth (*Amaranthus spp.*), Ethiopian mustard (*Brassica carinata*) and nightshade (*Solanum villosum*), the extend of postharvest loss and the potential for processing these crops for local market. A livelihood analysis was conducted to determine growers' constraints, opportunities as well as differences in perception of same species. A market supply chain analysis was carried out to establish a preliminary estimate of potential postharvest loss. The results show that less than half of the growers rely on AIVs as primary source of income, even though virtually all owned their own farmland. The main constraints to AIVs activities as indicated by actors were price fluctuations, weak bargaining power and tacit contractual arrangements constituting barrier to market entry. In general, loss after harvest was quite high along the chain, with farmers experiencing a higher loss on average than other actors. Although most actors were aware of a variety of processing techniques, these techniques were not widely utilized because the high and constant availability of fresh produced reduced the demand for processed ones. Processing AIVs for local market potential would then be limited to washing, cutting/slicing and bagging AIVs to reduce processing time before cooking.