

## Exploration of Sweet Potato Cultivar Markets Availability in North West Province, South Africa

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**Abstract :** Sweet potato products are necessary for the provision of essential nutrients in every household, regardless of their poverty status. Their consumption appears to be highly influenced by socio-economic factors, such as malnutrition, food insecurity and unemployment. Therefore, market availability is crucial for these cultivars to resolve some of the socio-economic factors. The aim of the study was to investigate market availability of sweet potato cultivars in the North West Province. In this study, both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies were used. Qualitative methodology was used to explain the quantitative outcomes of the variables. On the other hand, quantitative results were used to test the hypothesis. The study used SPSS software to analyse the data. Cross-tabulation and Chi-square statistics were used to obtain the descriptive and inferential analyses, respectively. The study found that the Blesbok cultivar is dominating the markets of the North West Province, with the Monate cultivar dominating in the Bojanala Platinum (75 %) and Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati (25 %) districts. It is also found that a unit increase in the supply of sweet potato cultivars in both local and district municipal markets is accompanied by a reduced demand of 28 % and 33 % at district and local markets, respectively. All these results were found to be significant at  $p < 0.05$ . The results further revealed that in four out of nine local municipality markets, the Blesbok cultivar seems to be solely available in those four local municipal markets of North West Province. It can be concluded that Blesbok, relative to other cultivars, is the most commercialised sweet potato variety and that consumers across this Province are highly aware of it. For other cultivars to assume market prominence in this Province, a well-designed marketing campaign for creating awareness may be required. This campaign may be based on nutritional advantages of different cultivars, of which Blesbok is relatively inferior, compared to orange-fleshed sweet potato varieties.

**Keywords :** cultivar, malnutrition, markets, sweet potato

**Conference Title :** ICSAEF 2014 : International Conference on Sustainable Agriculture, Environment and Forestry

**Conference Location :** Paris, France

**Conference Dates :** August 28-29, 2014