

Rural Community Knowledge, Attitude and Perceptions of Consuming Dried Vegetables in Central Region of Tanzania

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Abstract : Vegetables are excellent sources of dietary fiber, vitamins, and minerals which constitute an indispensable constituent of diets, but in Tanzania and other Sub-Saharan African countries, they are not readily available all year round due to seasonal variations in the production cycle. Drying of vegetables is one of the traditional methods for food preservation known to man. The Dodoma and Singida regions of Tanzania are characterized by semi-arid agro-climate, thereby experiencing short seasonal supply of fresh vegetables followed by long drought in which dried vegetables become an alternative to meet high household demands. A primary survey of 244 of rural consumers was carried out to understand how knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of rural consumers affect consumption of dried vegetables. The sample respondents were all found to be aware of open sun drying of vegetables while less than 50% of them were aware of solar-dried vegetables. Consumers were highly concerned with the hygiene, nutritional values, taste, drying method, freshness, color of dried vegetables, timely availability and easiness of cooking as important factors they consider before they purchase dried vegetables. Logit model results show that gender, income, years of consuming dried vegetables, awareness of the importance of solar dried vegetables vis-à-vis sun-dried alternatives and employment status influenced rural consumer's decision to purchase dried vegetables. Preference on dried vegetables differs across the regions which are also important considerations for any future planned interventions. The findings imply that development partners and policymakers need to design better social marketing and promotion techniques for the enhanced adoption of solar drying technology, which will greatly improve the quality and utilization of dried vegetables by target households.

Keywords : dried vegetables, postharvest management, sun drying, solar drying

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