

Composite wheat-cassava flour and production of Bread/confectioneries: Challenges, opportunities and realities.

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Challenges:

1. Quality

- i. Quality is a key issue. The Nigerian Standards Organization is the custodian of quality standards and specifications which have been rolled out for all stakeholders to understand and apply. Millers take quality seriously since they are obliged to adhere to standards. Consequently, cassava flour which fails to meet standards will be rejected outright.
- ii. Justification for the action. If quality of cassava flour is not right, bread quality would be adversely affected and bakers would reject and return affected loaves.
- iii. There can be no compromise on quality since it involves food items that affect people's health.
- iv. Mills are presently struggling to secure cassava flour from accredited suppliers for inclusion in bread flour and they buy and make use of every available cassava flour of the right quality.

2. There is a severe shortage of High Quality Cassava Flour [HQCF] resulting from:

- i. Lack of adequate installed capacity for processing cassava tubers. Cassava flour processing factories with capability to guarantee the right qualities and quantities are presently few in number.
The leading producers include:
 - Thai Farm- Faced with difficulties in sourcing tubers coupled with logistics and transportation challenges.
 - Dadtco – Redoing its plant in Benue State and presently engaged in refurbishment of its production facility. Therefore, cannot deliver now.
 - TJ Farm (Kwara State) – Closed down due to various challenges.
- ii. Lack of Raw materials due to non-availability of tubers, high cost and abysmally low yield.
 - Average price is very high – (#18,000 to #20,000) per metric ton. (3 metric tons of cassava tubers are required to produce 1 metric ton of cassava flour). A truck load of cassava tubers therefore costs about #60,000 which is pretty high.

- Competing demand from garri, fufu and other derivatives whose prices have gone up dramatically.
 - ❖ Consumer's preference has switched from rice and bread to garri due to significant increases in tariff on imported rice and wheat that have made the two products more expensive.
 - ❖ Last years' devastating flood across the country which destroyed over half a million hectare of cassava worsened the supply situation.
 - ❖ Increasing demand for cassava products from non- flour millers e.g. biscuit manufacturers, cassava chips exporters, livestock feeds, etc made matters worse.
- iii. Transportation/Logistics
- Average of #3,000 per metric ton of cassava tubers (i.e. #90,000 per truck load).
 - Excessive levies, duties and permits charged by Local Governments all over. The rates are variable, uncertain, excessive and unpublished. These add to increases in production cost and bring considerable delays.
- iv. Financing remains a major challenge to cassava to cassava growers and processors. It is on record that Flour Milling Association of Nigeria [FMAN] placed a sum of #500 million [cassava Empowerment Fund] with the Bank of Agriculture for onward lending to cassava growers, processors etc. this is an emphatic demonstration of FMAN's interest, passion and commitment to Government's Cassava Flour inclusion Policy.
- To date, #100 million had been disbursed to 100,000 farmers at the rate of #100,000 each across all the six geo-political zones in Nigeria.
- Similarly, over #100 million had been disbursed to cassava flour processors and #20 million to a Research institute.

Opportunities:

- ❖ 90% of starch is imported mainly from (China & India) for food industry, pharmaceutical and industrial use.
- ❖ Sugar syrup from cassava roots can be produced for industrial purpose.
- ❖ Cassava flour can also be used for production of ethanol in large quantities so as to reduce or stop importation of ethanol – As Biofuel, - Home cooking.
This can only happen when cassava is in large scale under commercial farming.
- ❖ Cassava flour used in livestock and animal feeds – Cassava pellets can be used for animal feeds and fish pellets.
- ❖ Research has shown that cassava flour could replace 70% of imported barley in beer production.

- ❖ Cassava chips can also be exported for foreign exchange.

Cassava processing in Nigeria

- More than 80% of cassava produced still remain used mainly as “Food Crop” and consumed as traditional foods. Efforts should be made to cultivate cassava in large quantity for industry use.
- Low yields and very erratic market prices.