

Workshop 4.

How to develop the market of dietary supplements and processed food products made of Moringa and other leafy vegetables in ACP countries.

(Anglophone group)

Summary of discussions by A. de Saint Sauveur, Moringanews

Objectives:

Define the conditions for market development of processed food products and dietary supplements made of leafy vegetables in the ACP states

A majority of Ghanaians, and two people from Uganda and Benin attended this workshop. The results below thus reflect the Ghanaian situation.

Activities

- Paul Bordoni, GFU : The European Novel Food Regulation: a barrier to the European markets for non-traditional foods
- Jordi Tio Rotllan: Presentation of the Centre for the Development of Enterprise
- Armelle de Saint Sauveur: Panorama of available Moringa derived products already on the international and African market

Describing present use of leafy vegetables in processed food products in the ACP states

Several participants who attended this workshop sell Moringa leaf powder as a food supplement or as a tea. In both cases the product is the same, only its ingestion is different.

The product can be packaged in (from least to most elaborate):

- ◆ Sealed plastic sachet
- ◆ Recycled plastic bottle
- ◆ Ziplocked plastic sachet
- ◆ Ziplocked plastic sachet in a paper bag
- ◆ Ziplocked plastic sachet in a box

Identifying the main obstacles companies face

- ◆ Packaging

Because of low investment capacity, packaging is often poor.

Because of the small number of units produced (1000 or 2000 for instance), the packaging cost is high (10% of production costs).

Packaging and labelling are sometimes of mediocre quality because they are done in small plants that don't have the best equipment.

- ♦ Processing

The promoters often don't have their own equipment and have to go to processing plants where their product often waits for too long before being processed.

- ♦ Certification of the product

In Ghana, a product needs to be certified by the Food and Drug Board to be authorised on the formal market.

Certification costs around 1.3 million Cedis (about 100 €) and it takes about 3 months to obtain the certification.

At the moment, promoters in Ghana are not certified and cannot sell in shops. One of the promoters has applied for certification.

Products are sold through networks of churches and associations, but not over the counter.

- ♦ Profile of the promoters

Most promoters in Ghana are not companies but associations or churches (Presbyterian, Methodist). They have a good supply network and a good clientele network, but they often don't have the financial and technical capacities to evolve into a business activity. They need some assistance to move from individual production and distribution to a formal processing and commercial activity.

- ♦ Secrecy

As Moringa leaf powder is a new product on the market, promoters sometimes tend to maintain secrecy as to what they are doing, and react like competitors. This does not help either the progress of technical knowledge or overcoming common problems such as certification.

Ways to overcome these obstacles

- ♦ Certification

All promoters are aware that certification is necessary. Once the first promoter obtains certification, it will probably be easier for the others to apply if the products are similar.

Certification involves:

- Chemical analysis of active ingredients
- Toxicology tests
- Inspection of the processing and packaging premises

- ♦ Forming an association of producers and manufacturers

A wide consensus was met during the workshop on the need to unite the small promoters in a larger organisation.

- ♦ Marketing

The market is demand-driven. Demand has been created by NGO activities on Moringa. It has been stressed that before getting into the formal market, promoters need to secure supply. The promoters are very aware of the risk of developing the market too quickly.

Results

- Action plan for product and market development

Forming an association of producers and manufacturers of Moringa products

Applying for certification as a group

Centralizing processing in one processing plant or auditing the processing plants of each member.

- Action plan to set up a quality label

The following factors need to be standardized, and a Good Practices Guide established:

- ♦ Time of harvest
- ♦ Harvest to drying: post-harvest handling
- ♦ Washing the leaves or not
- ♦ Drying technology
- ♦ % of humidity after drying
- ♦ storage method
- ♦ shelf life

It has been noted that good practices in tea production and post-harvesting could be used as an indication of how to handle Moringa leaves.

The promoters suggested having common standards and hiring an auditing unit to control the product's quality. This auditing unit would then accredit the product with a quality label.

- Contacts for technical, financial and marketing assistance

The association would need assistance on:

Business plan

Technical assistance on quality standards

Training of the staff to meet these standards.