

MORINGA CONSUMPTION IN KANO STATE:

Filler, Roughage or Health Hazards?

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VIDEO CD recorded from VHS video cassette

Location	-	Kano Municipal Local Govt, Kano State - Nigeria
Date recorded	-	September 2005 (VHS), towards end of the year's rainfall season
Recorded by	-	Food and Nutrition Vocational Center, FNVC, Kano.
Playback time	-	12 minutes

This is the main section of a popular general goods market (Rimi Market) in Kano Municipal area where boiled Moringa leaf is traded early in the morning for consumption as local salad during lunch time of the day. Moringa leaf supply to this market is unstable due to the fact that there is **no Moringa farmer(s)** per se, that specifically produces to target this market. This makes supply of boiled Moringa leaf to this market rely on rummaging 'old-aged' Moringa trees that are available in many rural households and farm boundaries. Notwithstanding the short production/supply situation, more than 1 million consumers in Kano State alone are served with the boiled Moringa leaf which signifies existence of vast number of Moringa trees growing dotted and unattended in the environment.

There are seven metropolitan local government areas (LGAs) that surround the Kano municipal local government with similar Moringa leaf markets. With approximate population of 5 million; and 44 local government areas (LGAs), Kano State, is the most densely populated among the 19 States that are located in the northern region of Nigeria. All together there are 36 States in the Nigeria Federation. Overall total for the northern region is close to 68 million people. This is the region where Moringa tree is native and equally the most promising Moringa industrial area in the country.

Nutrition - Filler, Roughage or Health Hazards?

Fresh Moringa leaf is picked late evening by rural dwellers closest to Kano metropolitan areas. The leaf is boiled in clean water, **drained** and transported to the market early in the mornings of rainfall season. The solid 'bowl-shape' of the cooked Moringa leaf comes from the container it was drained immediately after boiling, usually a metal, bottom-perforated basin. Teenage girls deliver and sell the cooked Moringa leaf in this market.

On arrival at the market early in the morning, the girls go direct to usual wholesale agents. By 8:00am, these agents have bought-off the boiled Moringa leaf from the girls and pay immediately. The wholesale agents have several customers as

- ✚ Individuals (end-users) that buy small quantity for consumption later in the day;
- ✚ Retail buyers that either retail the leaf as it is to end users or prepare it as salad (with groundnut sauce, tomatoes, onion, green pepper seasoning) for selling in portion to consumers in town around lunch time.

Facts

The off season for cooked Moringa leaf supply to this market is during dry season (November – May), a period when only the Moringa tree that is opportuned to be growing in the Fadama (wetland) area produces normal fresh leaves and is strictly monitored against pilferers by the owner. Hence harvested leaves are not in commercial quantity to meet the demand in the metropolitan markets; it is consumed in the production locality. Consumers had to wait 5-6 months for rain season to commence and flourish new Moringa leaf.

An average mould (10-15Kg) of cooked Moringa leaf sells at range of USD6.15 – USD7.69 wholesale; this comes to about USD615 – USD769 per metric tonne. It is cheaper at beginning and middle of the rain season (June/August) and expensive towards end of the rain season (October).

On average, the retail value per mould regardless of whether it is prepared as salad or not, stands at USD10.38 – USD13.84 which is equal to USD1, 038 – USD1, 384 per metric tonne respectively.

Challenges

- ✚ Loss of Nutrition Value – by draining and throwing away the Moringa Juice after boiling, virtually the nutrition enhancement ability of the leaf is lost. The question is, for what avail the leaf for consumption in this form by this people??
- ✚ Health Implications – handling of the Moringa leaf with bare hands; making it contact with display mats and tables as well as leaving it open and exposed during trading all contribute to health hazards that undermine healthcare programmes that may be. Typhoid and Cholera are the most dangerous occurrences among regular consumers of Moringa leaves handled this way.
- ✚ Environmental Sanitation – unsanitary conditions in the market environment renders the boiled Moringa leaf potential vehicle for transmitting and spreading disease since it will be prepared and consumed directly without further heat treatment. More so that consumption is not immediately in the early morning hours it was purchased. Storage at room temperature before lunch time is another potential danger of bacterial contamination.

Opportunities

✚ NGO/CBO intervention

1. Information for awareness
2. Capacity Building for business development with key role players in the market
3. Partnership with local authorities to introduce health and quality standards.
4. Collaboration and partnership with international community
5. Production strategy for continuous year-round leaf supply.
6. Establish various indicators for assessing utilization of Moringa amended diets among the locals

Business Development

7. Differentiation and diversification of Moringa leaf utilization to expand the market of both production and consumption
8. Set research agenda such as on investment return; Moringa intercropping with local staple food crops; quality control application etc
9. Mobilize unemployed urban youths' to participate actively in the Moringa marketing chain.
10. Further research on the amount of cooking water required for optimum cooking quality with tolerable nutrient loss. This is very important considering key actors of cooking the Moringa are smallholder rural women that do it for income generation.

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