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Consumer preference, conservation and sustainability

Samuel Udo, Ettah H, Markson A A, Umana E J, Ogban E, Obi-Abang, Markson, A A and Umana
Cross River University of Technology, Nigeria

This research was undertaken to assess the extent of consumers' preference of some commonly consumed but lesser known leafy vegetables and seeds on conservation of food stuff and their sustainability. The interest was borne out of the fact that only preferred vegetables and seeds are consumed as food in Nigeria and most sub-Saharan African countries and they conserved *ex situ* by consumers. The research was carried out across the state (Cross River) in south-south Nigeria where the main occupation is farming. Biochemical analysis of the vegetables and seeds was carried out. Questionnaires were administered in selected villages and cities. Community town hall meetings were held for information gathering. Analysis of responses in the questionnaires showed that most (80%) of the vegetable and seeds cultivated, are those that can be purchased by people in the cities and not handed down preference (20%). Some consumers noted that they eat some of the vegetables because of their medicinal content (32%) while (68%) said it was because they need to eat to survive. However, most of these preferred vegetables are herbs and very few are shrubs. From information gathered, there are many vegetables from trees that are consumed by the locals but not cultivated because of lack of market value. Biochemical analysis of the vegetables showed that most of the less preferred vegetables and seeds have excellent nutrient composition, low toxicants and so, can fringe malnutrition triple burden of obesity, undernutrition and low micronutrients. Their cultivation and sustainability will not only help in food security but also protect the environment. Encouraging farmers to grow more of these lesser-known vegetables and seeds through well-developed interest in consumers, is an excellent way of achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that will reduce hunger and poverty.

Biography

Samuel Udo has completed his PhD in 2010 from the University of Calabar Nigeria. He studied Plant Pathology and Ethnobotany. Presently, he is the National President of Biopesticides Society of Nigeria. He has published more than 40 papers in reputable journals and is an Assistant Editor in some national journals. His main area of research is Conservation and Food Security.

samudomeg@yahoo.com

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