

## **FUFU MARKETING SYSTEMS IN SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study presents a characterisation of fufu marketing systems in Southwest Nigeria. It forms part of a wider three-year research project funded by the United Kingdom's DFID Crop Post-Harvest Research Programme, which seeks to identify an approach for the commercialisation of fufu processing in Southwest Nigeria that will contribute to poverty elimination and sustainable rural livelihoods. The marketing outlet approach was the framework employed in this study. The approach relies on the identification of key supply areas and traces outlets up to their respective destination markets. In-depth analysis of five, quite diverse processing locations in Ogun State was undertaken to capture a variety of marketing chains and arrangements at operation in Southwest Nigeria. The principal data and information for the study were gathered through formal questionnaires and informal semi-structured interviews with key informants. Interviewees included processors, primary market assemblers, urban wholesale and retail traders, transporters, food vendors and restaurant owners. Two forms of fufu are traditionally processed on a commercial scale in Ogun State: wet fufu paste and ready-to-eat fufu. Interestingly, market-oriented production of dried fufu (flour) was not found in the study area, as it is not a traditional product. Fufu processing is by and large a small-scale activity, and more so in the case of ready-to-eat product. Several factors interact to prevent significant scaling-up of individual fufu processing and marketing activities. These include financial resource constraints, the difficulties and cost of procuring large amounts of fresh cassava, the lack of mechanised fufu processing technologies, and the impossibility of storing fufu for reasonable periods of time due to product perishability. The latter is an especially important constraint, since it forces processors and traders to be conservative in the quantities produced and purchased for sale. Despite this, aggregate volumes leaving each fufu processing location can be quite significant in view of the large number of people involved in this activity. Market-oriented fufu processing is carried out in both rural and urban contexts. Primary processing, which entails transforming fresh roots into a wet paste, essentially takes place in villages or small towns located within important cassava production areas. Secondary processing on a commercial scale, consisting of cooking the ready-to-eat fufu balls from the wet paste for market sale, gains importance as distances to medium and large consumption centres become shorter. Because the wet paste is easier and less costly to handle and transport than the ready-to-eat product, it is usually processed further away from major consumption centres. Overall, however, neither the wet paste nor the ready-to-eat product can be processed in a cost-effective manner very far fro

### **Keyword**