

Consumer acceptability of Mukene (*Rastrineobola argentea*) value-added products in Uganda

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Abstract

Traditionally, Mukene (*Rastrineobola argentea*) is always sun-dried because of its small size and large volumes caught per unit fishing effort. As such, the manner of handling has rendered it unacceptable to the majority of consumers due to poor quality which has resulted into high-post losses and relegation to animal feed production. This is against a backdrop of declining likeable fish species and national per capita fish consumption. As a strategy to reverse the trend, several products were developed out of Mukene using locally available ingredients and subjected to a market survey involving 300 consumers representing different societal groups and across gender. The results indicated that deep-fried and powdered products were more preferred than sweetened versions. The womenfolk were more discriminative than the men. The educated consumers ranked most new products lowly than semi-illiterates who assumed that products from researchers were good. There were other factors that determined product acceptability apart from gender and educational background. They included, price, market outlet, social status and geographical location among other factors. It was therefore concluded new products developed from Mukene had potential among certain categories of consumers provided they were appropriately packaged, presented and affordable. The increased supply of Mukene for human consumption will undoubtedly reduce the post-harvest losses, increase per capita consumption, food security and incomes for various actors along the value-chain. However, it was recommended that further studies should be undertaken to include different products, increase sample size and consider shelf-life.

Key words: Mukene