

SMALL SCALE AGRO-PROCESSING OF PALM OIL IN NIGERIA- WAY FORWARD

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Abstract: *The primitive extraction procedures of palm oil are still in use in the village today. In order to increase palm oil production, small scale oil production should be encouraged, which has the added benefit of providing an additional source of employment. Modern processing of oil palm fruit bunches into edible oil is practiced using various methods, which may be grouped into four categories according to their degree of complexity. In order to preliminarily find out the acceptability/profitability or dispositions towards the small scale agro processing of palm oil traditionally, questionnaires were designed and administered. The various results and responses obtained are hereby presented in tabular and chart forms. The questionnaire starts with demographic questions, finding age, gender and marital status. The response shows that 35 percent of those who participated were male while 65 percent are female.*

Key Words: *Palm Oil, Processing, Small Scale, Mechanization, Extraction*

Introduction / Background Study

In Nigeria, estimation shows that about 1.34×10^6 metric tons of palm oil were consumed in the physical year 2018. Furthermore, it is a vital raw material for food- producing companies. Before the discovery of crude oil in Nigeria, the economy benefitted mainly from the export of palm oil and was the global leader in export. After the discovery of crude oil in Nigeria, there was a slow decline in palm oil exports. Nigeria lost its sit as the global leader in the product. It acquires a trade deficit in the product where Nigeria now depends on current global leaders. In order to increase palm oil production, small scale oil production should be encouraged, which has the added benefit of providing an additional source of employment. Palm oil is highly rich in carotene and is essential cooking oil in Nigeria. The local techniques of oil palm processing have been proved to be stressful, time consuming and result in low yield due to the massive percentage of wastes during processing. Furthermore, the high cost of palm oil is a big concern to palm oil producers in Nigeria. Presently, the palm oil producing sector in the country is under construction after it failed due to crude oil discovery. The factor responsible for the decline in Nigeria is inadequate knowledge of the processing machine, over-reliance on smallholder processors, the problem of land, lack of basic amenities, and inadequate financial support. The need for palm oil has increased in Africa especially in Nigeria, and that is why the federal and state governments plan targeted towards enhancing agricultural productivity, which has been neglected for many years. In transforming crude palm oil to refined products of hydrolysis and oxidation, color and flavor are removed. Palm oil processor undergoes these units of operation. This paper gives the overview of the plant layout of palm oil processing and the scheduling operation, which include bunch reception, fruit removal. Modern processing of oil palm fruit bunches into edible oil is practiced using various methods, which may be grouped into four categories according to their degree of complexity. It is generally agreed that the Oil Palm originated in the tropical rain forest region of West Africa. The estates are well run and maintained and they employ the best farming techniques and employ highly skilled professionals to work their operations.

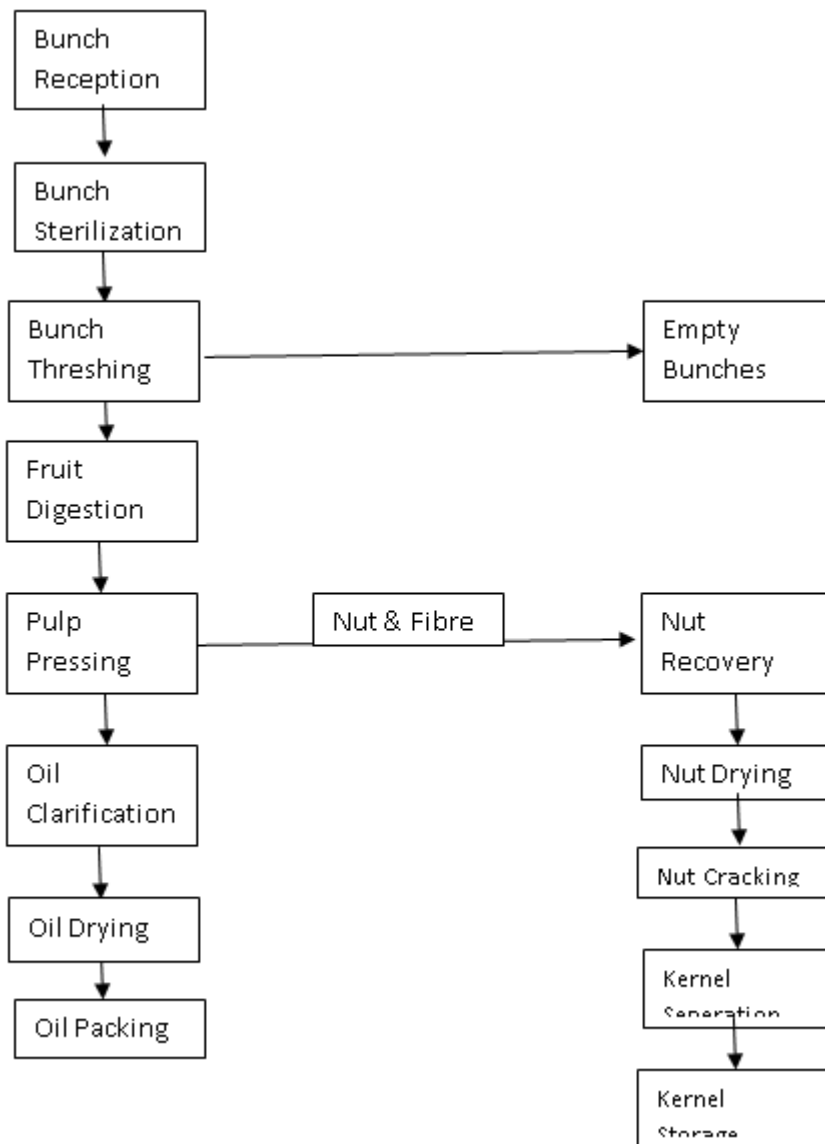


Figure 2: Operations of Palm Oil Processing Units

Analytical Approach

In order to preliminarily find out the acceptability/ profitability or dispositions towards the small scale agro processing of palm oil traditionally, questionnaires were designed and administered. The various results and responses obtained are hereby presented in tabular and chart forms. The questionnaire starts with demographic questions, finding age, gender and marital status. The response shows that 35 percent of those who participated were male while 65 percent are female.

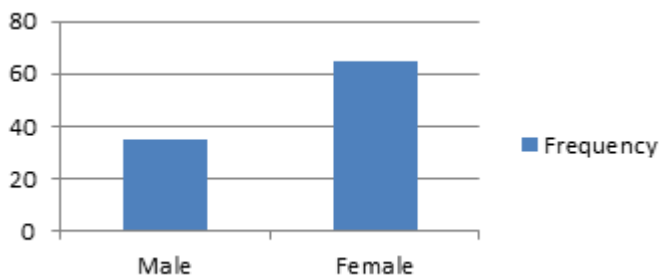


Fig 3: Chart showing Sex of respondent

The response shows that 22% are below 20, 45% are 20-39 years, 22% are 40-49 years, 6% are 50-59 years and 5% is above 60 years of age.

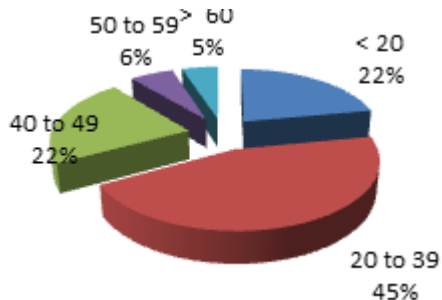


Fig 4: Chart showing age of respondent

The response shows that 16% are single, 56% are married, 20% are divorced and 8% are widow/widower.

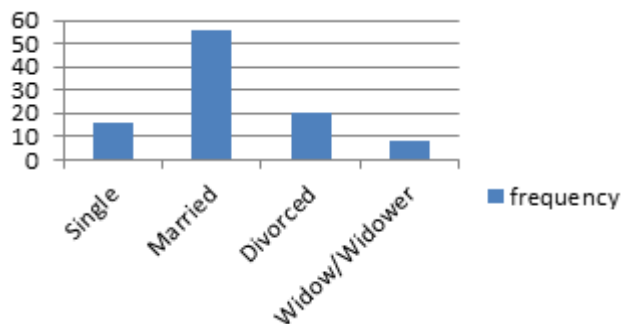


Fig 5: Chart showing marital of respondents

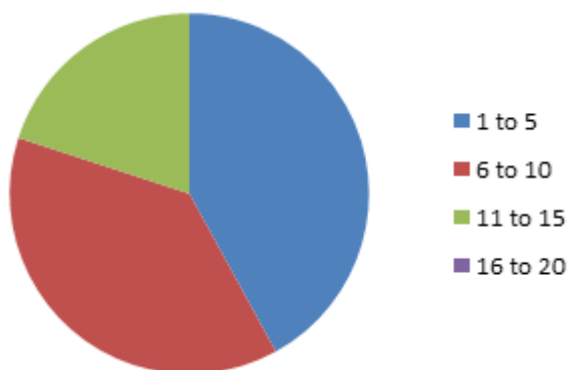


Fig 6: Chart showing household size of respondents

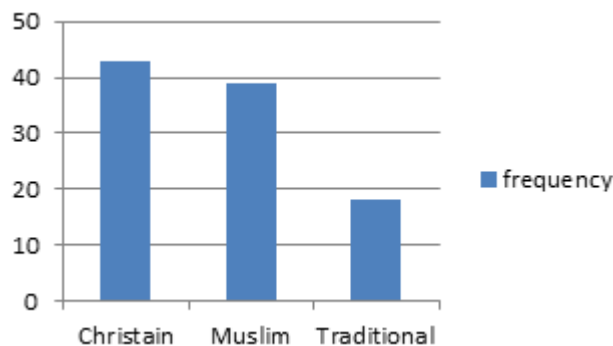


Fig 7: Chart showing religion of respondents

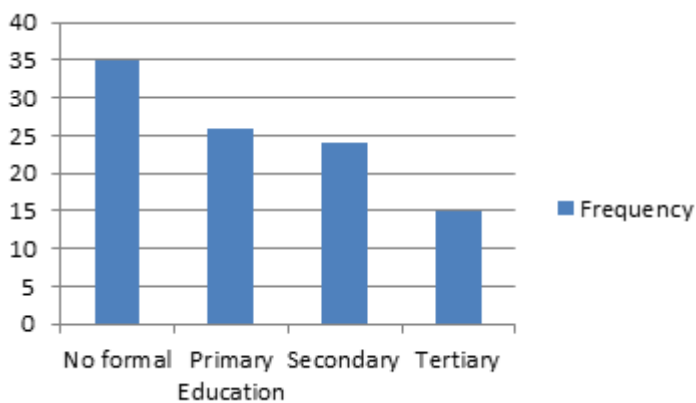


Fig 8: Chart showing educational level of respondents

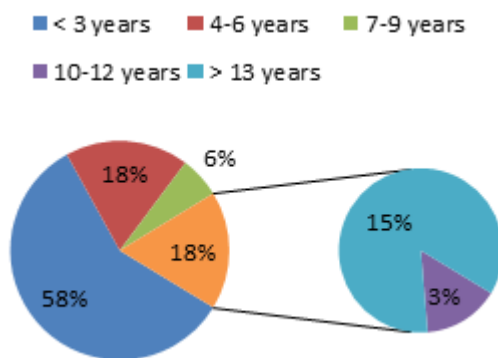


Fig 9: Chart showing years of experience of respondents

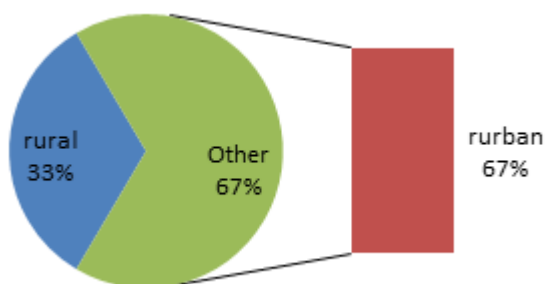


Fig 10: Chart showing method used of respondents

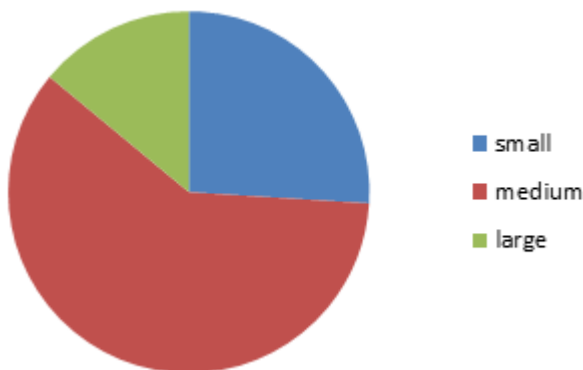


Fig 11: Chart showing monthly production

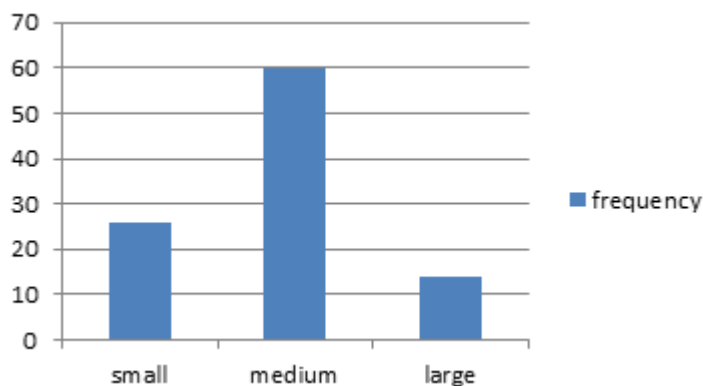


Fig 12: Chart showing scale of production

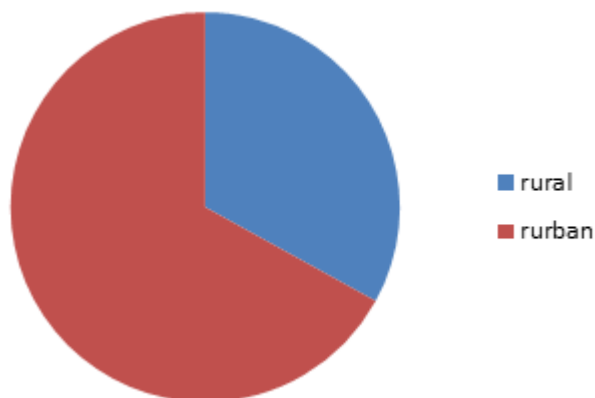


Fig 13: Urbanization

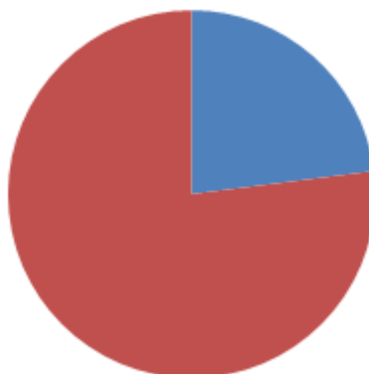


Fig 14: Use of modern equipment

Conclusion

The industry needs to redouble its efforts to engage with global consumers in a constructive dialogue aimed at addressing its image problem and explaining the many benefits of its product. Oil palm crops face many other challenges, including emerging threats from climate change and the likelihood of new pests and diseases that require more effective international collaboration. Influential players in the industry need to interact with the key organizations and countries now fully committed to reducing climate change. Nevertheless, new breeding technologies are providing the promise of improvements in some areas, such as much higher yielding varieties, improved oil profiles, enhanced disease resistance and modified crop architecture to enable mechanization of fruit harvesting.

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