Information on micro-enterprises involved in cassava and palm oil processing in the Osun and Ondo states of Nigeria

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Abstract

Micro-enterprises involved in post harvest processing play a key role in the economies of less developed countries as a basic source of goods, income and employment especially for women. A study was undertaken to assess the capacity and technology needs of women agro-processors in Osun and Ondo states with a view to better understand their characteristics, problems and needs. This paper reports on some general information about agro-allied micro-enterprises that are useful to project planners and assisting agencies.

The number of micro-enterprises established by individuals in the food processing sector has increased significantly over the last ten years. Group owned enterprises are usually government assisted and these groups need training in the art of business management, Infrastructural facilities at processing centres are inadequate. Inadequate supply of water affects the process and product hygiene and environmental cleanliness especially during the dry season and requires urgent intervention. Half walled structures are recommended for food micro-enterprises for effective ventilation. The sex of the machine operator is dependent on the type of prime mover. Petrol engines are operated by women and diesel engines by men. The study revealed a poor operational and maintenance practices of equipment by operators and this has reduced their functional life span to about five years. With proper training, the functional life of this equipment can be prolonged. Mode of transporting raw materials to the processing centres is grossly inadequate and limits the quantity of materials available for processing resulting in under utilisation of equipment capacity. Recommendations are made that can enhance the programme of donor/government agencies in achieving their objectives taking into consideration the information provided by the study. (C) 2000 Published by Elsevier Science Ltd.

Keywords: micro-enterprises; cassava and palm oil processing; capacity needs assessment; infrastructural facilities

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