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Determinants of Urban Household Demand for Cassava and Cassava Products in Kaduna, Northern Nigeria

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Abstract

Cassava is one of the most important root and tuber crops grown for food in West and Central Africa. It is the chief source of dietary food energy for the majority of the people living in the lowland tropics, and much of the sub-humid tropics of West and Central Africa. The objective of this study is to ascertain the future of cassava in northern Nigeria by estimating and comparing the elasticities (expenditure and price) of demand for cassava with those of the other root and tuber crops.

The analyses were based on data collected by IITA/RCMD in two rounds (stanzas), between October 1999 and January 2000. Kaduna is situated in the north-central Nigeria. Three different levels of stratification were made to select respondent households. The income status (inferred from residential area and type of house) made the first level. The households were stratified into low, medium, and high-income groups. The second level was selecting randomly the enumeration areas (EAs). EAs were already designated by the National Population Commission (NPC). Then a random sample of households was selected. In view of the model, the AIDS methodology was used to estimate the parameters of the regression, as this model has a functional form which is consistent with known household budget data and satisfies the requirements of demand theory.

Results indicate that cassava is a price inelastic food and the expenditure elasticity is positive, though inelastic. This indicates that it is fast changing from an inferior food to a necessity. Gari is the most popular form in which cassava is consumed and it is becoming a highly preferred food among the relatively rich households too. This is because of its storability and ease of processing. Cassava tuber, gari, and yam are found to be strong substitutes. Cassava is often regarded as a poor mans food with low nutritional value that is only consumed by subsistence farmers who have little else to eat. Actually, cassava is an excellent source of dietary energy, and it is shortsighted to consider cassava solely a subsistence crop.

Keywords: Cassava, demand, elasticity