



Tropentag, September 14-16, 2010, Zurich

“World Food System —
A Contribution from Europe”

Lean Meat for 21st Century: A Case Study of Emu *Dromaius Novaehollandiae* [le Souef 1907]

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Abstract

The population of many wildlife species in Nigeria is declining due to unsustainable harvest for meat. There is therefore a high demand and supply from non-conventional sources as the need to increase livestock production to meet food security increases daily. Animals like snails, Antelopes and rodents had been domesticated, long ago, which had improved livestock production in Nigeria. Emu *Dromaius novaehollandiae* the second largest bird in the world started its domestication in United States in early 1980's and the present trend in the production of emu in U.S could be compared with cattle industry. 16 emus at age 20 months were domesticated under semi- intensive system at Ajanla farms, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria for 24 months. 2kg of the chest and drum stick of emu meats were used for the study. The meats were trimmed of bone, nerves, blood vessels, connective tissues and external fat and were kept at 40C for 24 hours. The study assessed the proximate composition of emu meat compared with ostrich meat and conventional meat like beef. Fat content obtained was highest ($p < 0.05$) in beef with a value of 6.34 % as against values of 1.00 %, and 2.10 % for emus and ostrich meat. Protein content was highest in emu meat and ostrich meat with 24.00 % and 22.90 % and 18.95 % of beef. The result also showed that emu meat had the lowest cholesterol level of 54.7mg/100g compared to 63mg/100g, and 86mg/100g for ostrich and beef. The results showed that emu's meat is very low in fat, cholesterol and is very high in protein content.

Keywords: Birds , Domestication, keywords: Emu, Lean meat, Wildlife