



Tropentag, September 17-19, 2013, Stuttgart-Hohenheim  
“Agricultural development within the rural-urban continuum”

## Youths Awareness and Consumption of Functional Foods in Nigeria: The Case of Plantain Flour

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### Abstract

The rural-urban interface is creating life style changes such as the awareness and consumption of functional foods. This has the potential of generating sustainable income and reducing post-harvest losses for producers and processors but consumer attitude and response to such foods, hence the sustainability of the markets, needs to be examined. This study examined consumers' awareness and knowledge of plantain flour among youths in Ibadan. It also examined the factors which drive their decision to choose it as a main staple. A random sample of 150 consumers ranging between the ages of 18-31 was chosen and data collected with the aid of a structured questionnaire. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics and binary logistic regression. The results showed that young female adults were more inclined to try the product, but were not aware of its alternative uses. It also revealed that though plantain was regularly consumed in its fried form, the knowledge of its health benefits as flour was quite poor. The most prominent knowledge about it is its usefulness in controlling diabetes (by over 60 %). Logistic regression shows that the probability of consuming plantain flour is affected by the availability of other acceptable staples (cassava) and their relatively cheap prices. Young people consider it to be expensive and useful only for older and sick people. The results indicate that positive life style changes may not be occurring among young educated people, but more importantly the gap in knowledge implies that a large market for plantain flour is yet untapped. The gap can be filled by a broad based, consumer oriented marketing policy.

**Keywords:** Awareness, consumption, functional foods, youths