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“Solidarity in a competing world —
fair use of resources”

Oil Palm Tree (*Elaeis guineensis*) Value Chain in South-South – Nigeria: Opportunities for Food Security

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Abstract

The Oil palm tree (*Elaeis guineensis*) is a major tree resource in the southern part of Nigeria and has both indigenous and improved varieties; the tree stands out with social, cultural and economic significance on the lives of the people. The palm tree has special adaptation to survive even when the environment is harsh. This paper examined the tree ownership structure, various uses to which the tree is put in the area, compares the returns from each of these uses and the potential of the value chain for increased income and food security. Data was collected from community members on the ownership rights of this tree, the various uses to which it is put, as well as returns from the various uses; this was complemented with data from secondary sources on tree potential, growth rate and processing possibilities. The study used descriptive statistics as well as budgetary analysis to fulfil its objectives. The results show that the oil palm tree has multiple ownership structure that varies from one community to another especially for wild trees. The uses to which the tree products can be put are multiple and sometimes mutually exclusive, the uses have both cultural and or economic significance to the people. The processing into palm oil, palm kernel oil, palm wine, gin, broom, furniture/building, cages, contributed in that order to income and food security in the area. There was high variance between the outputs from the indigenous and improved varieties. The potential of waste recycling needs to be tapped in the area for increased utilisation of the products from the oil palm tree. The oil palm tree still holds the key to not only individual and community cash flow but also national economic development and food security.

Keywords: Cash flow, food security, oil palm tree, value addition, value chain