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## Beyond Subsistence Production of Neglected and Underutilised Crops: Structure and Function of *Xanthosoma Sagittifolium* Market Chain in Ghana

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### Abstract

*Xanthosoma sagittifolium* is beneficial plant species because it contributes to food security and income in many households in Ghana. However, it still remains neglected and underutilised in terms of production and marketing; coupled with scanty information on marketing structure and function. This study provides a detailed description of the structure and function of cocoyam market. Using a mixed method approach, cocoyam market chain was analyzed. A semi-questionnaire was administered 130 chain actors were purposively sampled in Brong Ahafo region of Ghana, consisted of farmers, collectors, wholesalers, and retailers. Box and arrow were used to show the relationship between actors identified. Data were analysed with SPSS. Market margins, descriptive statistics and ANOVA were applied in order to determine marketing margins and the share of economic rent along the market chain. The study revealed that the market chain is relatively short; Vertical coordination between actors of cocoyam market chain was weak because of the lack of any form of contractual agreements. Poor coordination hinders appropriating economic rent as farmers are not able to deliver an adequate volume of cocoyams on time. The non-existence any form of cooperatives or groups among chain actors has led to a dysfunctional horizontal coordination of cocoyam market chain. This lack limits the control and management of the chain. Margins recorded varied significantly, farmers obtained the higher share of economic rent 37.5 % compared to collectors, wholesalers and retailers, who obtained 26.7 %, 21.43 %, 16.07 % per 20 kg cormels sold respectively. ANOVA test results gave F-statistics of 2.6222, which was statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ . The lack of grading system, poor infrastructure and lack of credit facility were some of the marketing challenges. The study recommends building the capacity of chain actors to effectively engage in the vertical and horizontal coordination in order to have a robust market chain structure. Since producers obtain the higher rent, governments and NGOs could help provide a grading system and credit facility to improve the production and marketing of cocoyam in central Ghana.

**Keywords:** Cocoyam, Coordination and Structure, Economic rent, market chain