Quality improvement of peanut products at NARO\(^1\), Uganda

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Groundnuts or peanuts (Arachis hypogaea L.) are grown in most parts of Uganda with annual production of 140,000 metric tonnes, the product utilization base has remained narrow. Despite the enviable potential of two cropping seasons, good soils and border effect, the profitability of groundnut enterprise in the country has persistently remained below expected levels. Farmers, groundnut vendors and local processors have failed to reap tangible economic benefits out of the crop. Lack of cottage technologies for value addition and product development have impacted negatively on the realization of actual economic benefits from groundnut production in the country. As such, the USAID through CRSP project awarded a research grant to a multi-disciplinary research team including private sector to develop commercially viable technologies with the view of broadening the utilization base and profitability of groundnuts enterprises in the country. The purpose of the project was to develop and commercialize a safe highly nutritious groundnut cookie for market enhancement of groundnuts that will nutritionally and economically benefit the consumers and agro-processors respectively. The intended target consumer group includes school children and security forces. The project was designed and implemented using “CRSP” principles. The project implementation started from May 2011 and it will run for the next six months or so.

Project overall objective:

- To develop and commercialize groundnut cookie

Red Beauty is one of the many varieties of groundnuts grown in Uganda. It is red in colour and most preferred by consumers living in the Central Region of Uganda where the Capital city is located.

Fig. 1. Healthy groundnut plant

Traditionally, Red beauty is used singly as stew or added in green vegetables as a sauce. In the absence of other varieties, it may be used as a snack. From the safety view point, it is less susceptible to aflatoxin contamination than other varieties like Sesame 2 and 4 (Candia and Masese, 2000).

The use of Red Beauty as a confectionary is a new innovation in Uganda and as such, relevant processing information is scanty. However, necessary demands full grain seed, clean and free from fungal contamination (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2. Clean and full grain seed

Using basic baking protocols and ingredients, prototype cookies were developed from groundnut meal supplemented by varying amounts of wheat flour. The resultant prototypes (Fig. 3) was golden brown and crunchy. Since seed was sorted to reduce risk of fungal contamination, the product was assumed safe and nutritious. Subsequent, preliminary consumer testing showed high demand from potential customers.

Fig. 3. Crunchy and safe nutritious groundnut cookie

### Table 1. Sensory evaluation mean scores for groundnut cookie

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prototype code</th>
<th>G. nuts input (%)</th>
<th>Taste</th>
<th>Flavour</th>
<th>Appearance</th>
<th>Crunchiness</th>
<th>No of panelists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: 0= very poor; 1= Poor; 2= Fair; 3= Good; 4= Very good; 5= Excellent

From preliminary sensory evaluation results, it appears any sample with groundnut composition between 25-50% would be economically more viable than samples with either less or more groundnuts. Considering that groundnuts currently cost expensively, P4 combination should be recommended for further development and subsequent commercialization.

General remark

The prospects of developing a commercially viable groundnut cookie from Red beauty variety are fairly high.

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