Gender and sweetpotato production in Nigeria

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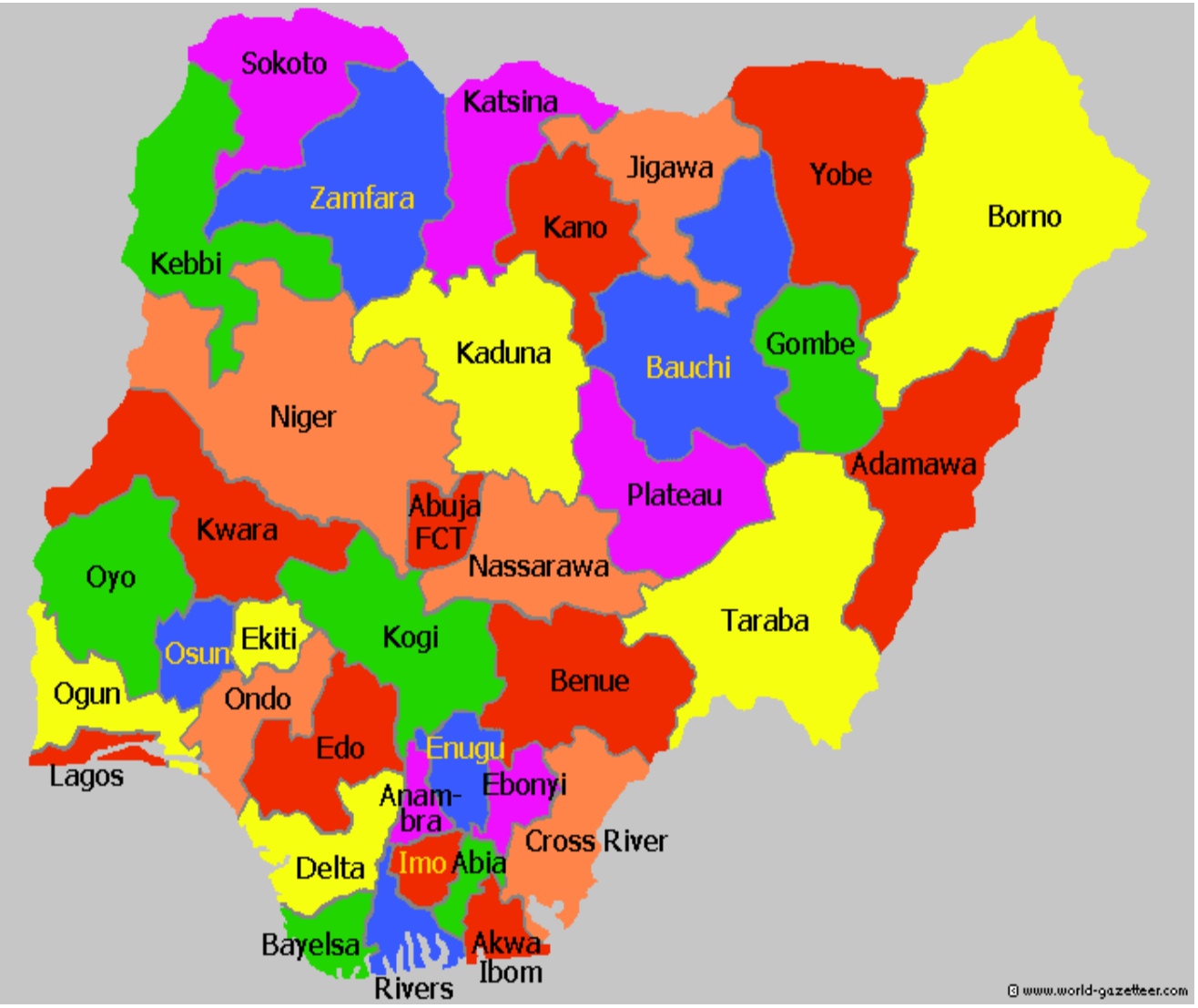
A member of the CGIAR Consortium

Facts about Nigeria



Population : 170,123,740 (2012)

Ethnic groups: 250+

SP production: 3.9 million metric tons per year, 2nd largest producer in Africa

29.5% of under fives suffer from VAD

Renewed interest in sweetpotato research and development with focus on OFSP

Why the need for a gender situation analysis?

- To ensure wider impact of SP on household food security and poverty reduction, we need to understand the social systems supporting sweetpotato production
- Little is known about gender roles and responsibilities
- Strong assumption that men predominate in production and women engage in sale and processing

Objectives of gender situation analysis

Collect information on:

- ❑ Gender roles and responsibilities and household decision-making
- ❑ Varietal preferences
- ❑ Production practices and constraints
- ❑ Vine sources

Research questions

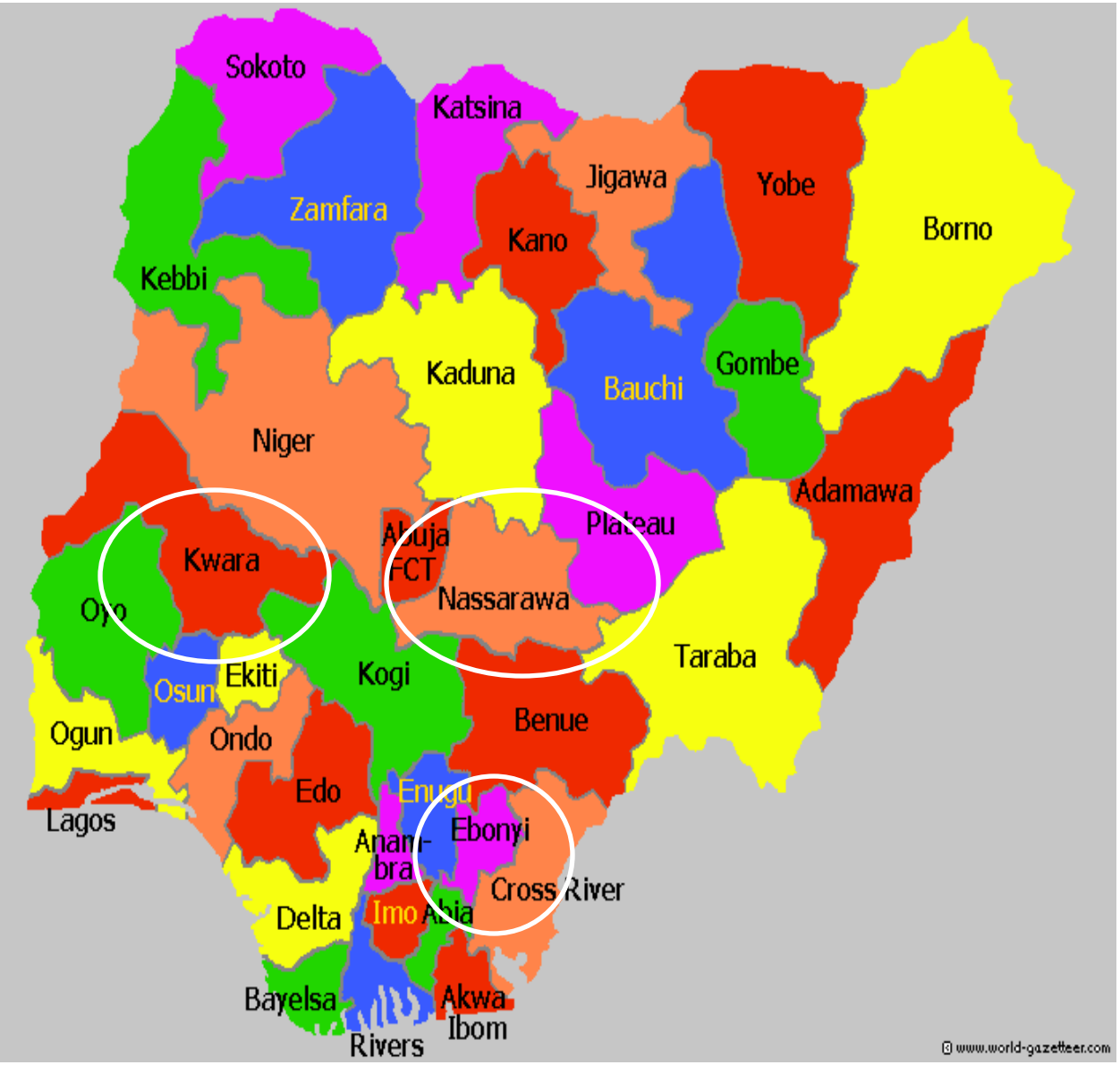
Are there differences between men and women in terms of:

- **Market orientation? Varietal preferences?**
- **What are the gender-based production constraints?**
- **What are the gender-based constraints to accessing vines?**

Methodology

- Locations in 3 key SP producing states (Nasarawa, Kwara, Ebonyi) identified to capture diversity of gender roles and responsibilities
- 9 locations, 3 per state
- Fieldwork carried out May 2012-May 2013
- Group interviews conducted with 402 farmers (209 women; 193 men)
- Key informant interviews with 18 women and 18 men

Study locations



Nasarawa

- Predominantly Muslim
- Savannah agro-ecology
- 3rd largest producer of SP

Kwara

- Muslim and Christian
- Forest agro-ecology
- 4th largest producer of SP

Ebonyi

- Christian
- Forest agro-ecology
- 5th largest producer of SP

Who grows sweetpotato? Changing gender trends

	Nasarawa	Kwara	Ebonyi
Who grew SP traditionally?	Men	Mainly men	Women
% female farmers, 2012 * Range for LGA	20-40*	30-50*	60-75*

Increased cultivation by both male and female farmers with commercialization from early 2000:

- ✓ Increase in number of women/men growing the crop
- ✓ Larger farms
- ✓ Focus on marketable varieties

Nasarawa: "Men were not releasing enough sweetpotato for household consumption; they were selling most of the sweetpotato they produced"

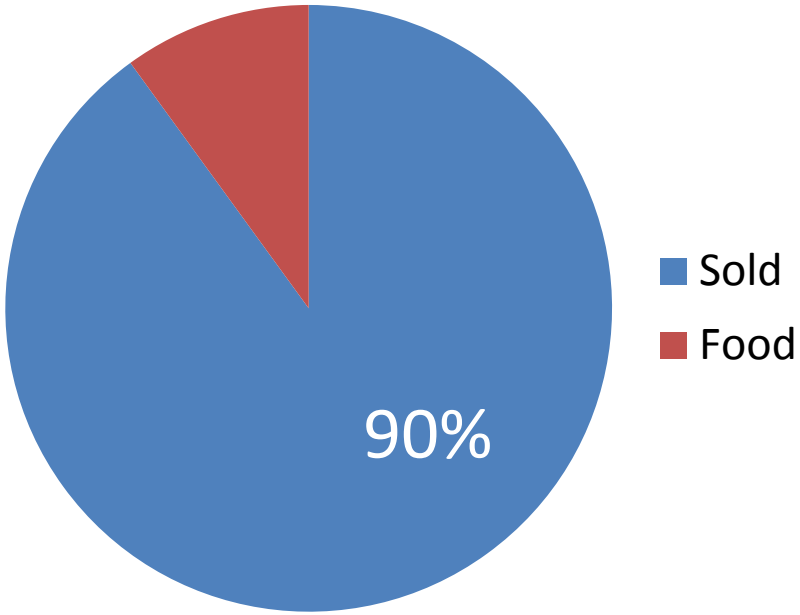
Ebonyi: "We (men) started growing sweetpotato when we realized we could make money from it"

His, hers or theirs?

- Crop grown on individually owned plots by men and women
- SP income controlled by the individual
- Husbands expected to provide bulk of sweetpotato for home consumption; wives “help”
- Nasarawa/Kwara- men provide most SP for home consumption
- Ebonyi– women provide most SP for home consumption

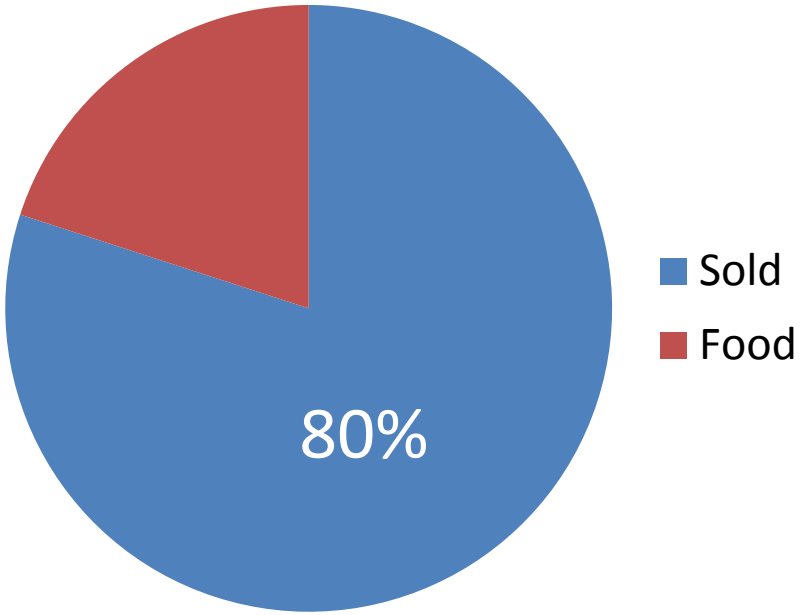
Allocation of sweetpotato roots harvested, first season 2012, Dorowa, Nasarawa

Female informant



Harvested 350 kg

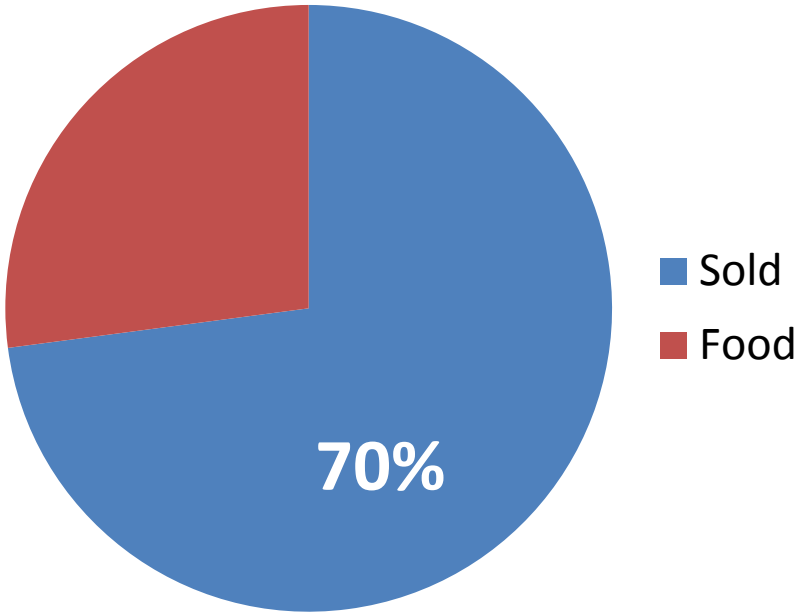
Male informant



Harvested 625 kg

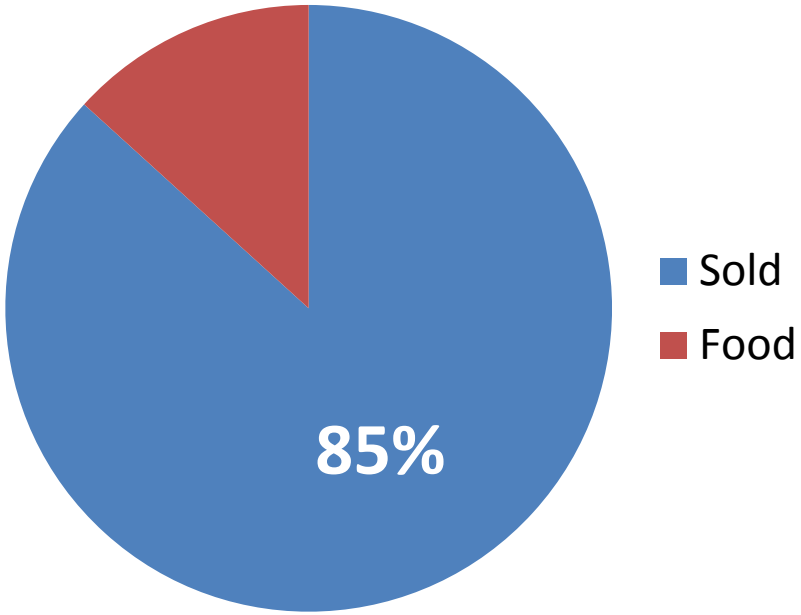
Allocation of sweetpotato roots, first season 2012, Edembia, Ebonyi

Women (n=3)



Average harvest 933 kg

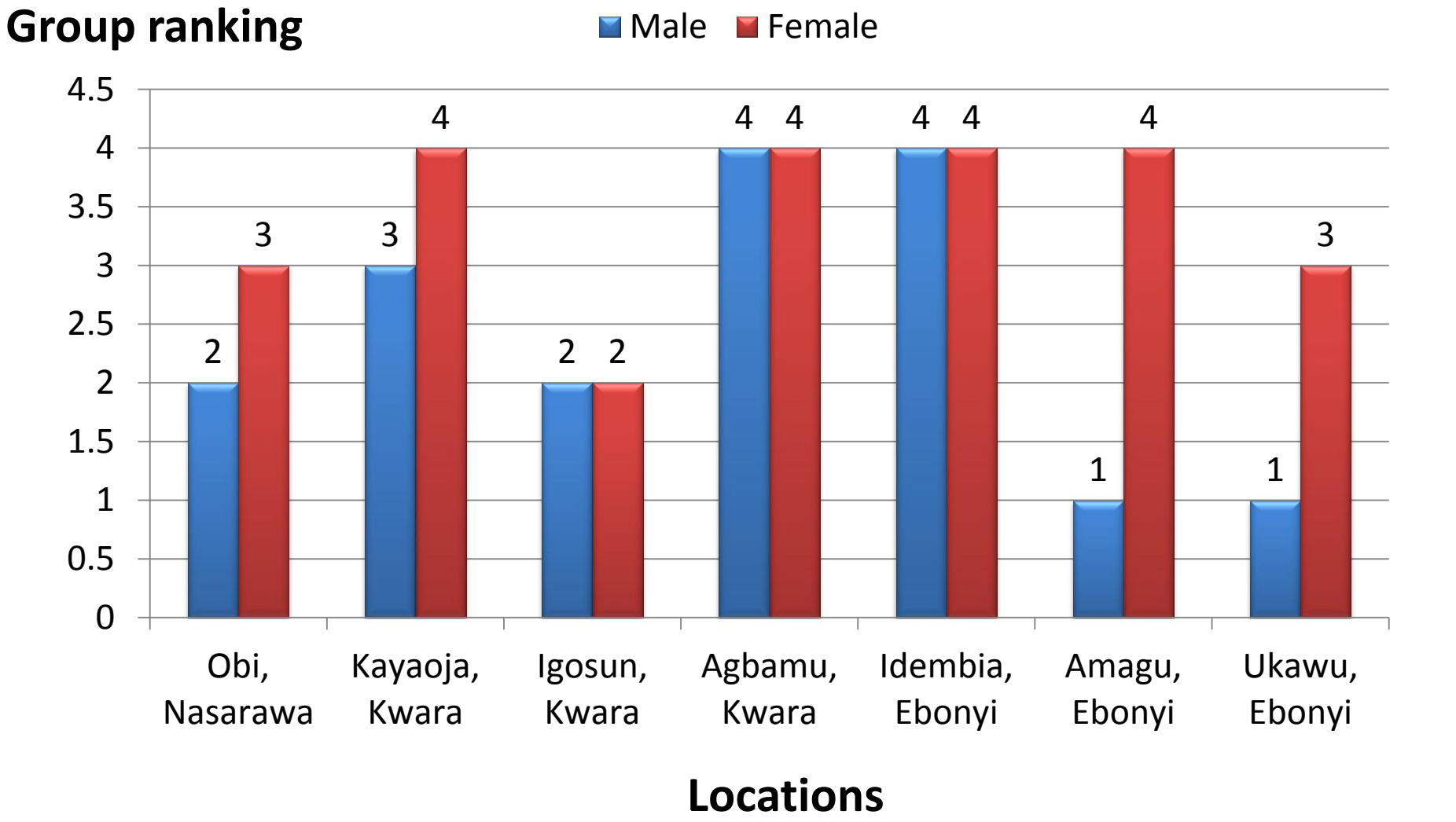
Men (n=2)



Average harvest 2750 kg

Ranking of sweetpotato as source of income

4=most important source of income



Other key sources of income

- Men: yam (all states), cassava (Kwara),maize (Kwara), rice (Ebonyi)

- Women: cassava (all states), melon (Nasarawa*)*, maize (Kwara), rice (Ebonyi)

Who provides labour for sweetpotato activities?

	Nasarawa	Kwara	Ebonyi
Men's farms	Hired male and female labour Wives (planting, weeding, harvesting)	Hired male and female labour Some help from wives (harvesting and transporting)	Hired male and female labour Wives (weeding)
Women's farms	Hired male and female labour	Hired male and female labour Some help from husbands (sourcing vines, harvesting and selling)	Hired male and female labour Some help from husbands (making beds)

Both men and women rely on hired labour for land preparation, planting, harvesting, transporting In an increasingly commercialized system

Preferred varietal characteristics

- High yielding
- Early maturing
- Storability (does not spoil/rot quickly)
- Not easily attacked by insects or rodents
- Large roots
- Not too sweet
- Does not produce gas (Ebonyi)
- Marketable
- White fleshed (Ebonyi)
- Low oil absorption during frying (Nasarawa)
- Sticky when pounded
- Smooth skin, easy to peel
- Cooks quickly

- Little difference in characteristics mentioned by men and women
- Women more likely to mention cooking qualities in addition to agronomic and market qualities
- No difference in number of varieties planted by gender (2-4)
- All varieties grown for both consumption and sale by both men and women

Vine sources

On-farm sources:

- Leave some roots in field to sprout at start of rains
- Plant vines in wetlands

  (Kwara, Ebonyi)
- Plant vines near water source close to house (Ebonyi, Nasarawa)

Most farmers regularly source vines from off-farm sources due to:

- Drought
- Cattle grazing

Village based commercial production

Vines sold from home and markets

River banks commercial production

Requires transport by motorbike or small pick-up

Gender related production constraints

Constraint	Gender aspect	Consequence
Lack of funds for hiring labour, inputs	Women have fewer income earning opportunities	Smaller farm size Low yields due to low input use
Accessing household labour	Women have little control over husbands' labour for land preparation, harvesting etc	Smaller farm size Need to hire male labour
Accessing vines from river bank sources and markets	Limited mobility, fear of being cheated by male vine multipliers, cost of transportation	Ask husbands to buy vines, delayed planting
Access to suitable farm land (Nasarawa)	Women have no control over land; less integrated into male social networks	Have to lease land, smaller farm size, lower production

Recommendations for designing gender equitable SP programs in Nigeria

- Investigate gender roles and responsibilities in project locations, avoid generalizations
- Focus production interventions at individual producer level, taking into account gender related constraints:

❑ Develop credit facilities that meet women's needs

❑ Introduce labour saving technologies e.g. tractors and approaches that allow women to access them

❑ Strengthen local level vine multiplication to improve women's access to quality vines

- Provide training for husbands and wives on joint resource management for improved livelihoods, food security and child nutrition and nutrition education

Gender in SPHI–food for thought

- How can we integrate gender more seriously and resource gender related research and interventions?
- Do all initiatives in SPHI carry out a gender situation analysis and use the results in project design?
- Do SPHI projects incorporate interventions that seek to promote gender equity (e.g. credit, labour saving technologies etc)?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION