

Engaging bakers to utilize OFSP purée for bakery applications in SSA

In 2017, a major supermarket chain in Kenya expressed a strong interest in the commercialization of OFSP purée bread. In response, a training with 25 bakers from the supermarket chain was conducted followed by a successful two-week promotional launch of OFSP purée bread in ten of its stores in greater Nairobi. OFSP purée bread training workshops have been planned for other countries such as Rwanda, Malawi and Mozambique.



Fig. 1 Baker gets some OFSP buns from the oven during a training session. (credit T. Muzhingi)

► What is the problem?

Orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP) is a proven technology that is effective in addressing vitamin A deficiency sustainably among vulnerable populations in rural sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The Sweetpotato Action for Security and Health in Africa (SASHA), a flagship project at the International Potato Center (CIP), was designed to develop the essential capacities, products, and methods to reposition sweetpotato in food economies of SSA. The goal is to alleviate poverty and undernutrition, particularly among poor women and children. However, the sustainable adoption of OFSP by rural households in SSA depends on income and market opportunities. One of the ways to

improve OFSP adoption is by creating market opportunities for rural OFSP farmers. In Kenya, CIP through the SASHA and SUSTAIN projects worked with rural farmers in western Kenya, an entrepreneur (Organi Limited), Euro-Ingredients Limited and a large supermarket chain (Tuskys supermarkets) to establish an OFSP purée bread value chain. Despite the two-year successful commercialization of OFSP purée bread in Kenya, the production of OFSP purée is still in its infancy and consumer knowledge and access to OFSP fresh roots in urban areas distance from production zones is still low. There is need to increase the awareness of OFSP purée as an ingredient in baked products by engaging more actors in the processing arena (Fig 1).



Partners

- Euro-Ingredients Limited (EIL)
- Food and Nutritional Evaluation Laboratory
- AVCD Feed the Future Project-Kenya
- Naivas Supermarkets



Fig. 2 Initial training of bakers in Nairobi, Kenya on making bread and buns from OFSP purée. (credit T. Muzhingi)



Fig. 3 Training of bakers from Naivas Bakery in Kenya at their Kitengela store

► What do we want to achieve?

The initial agreement to develop and market OFSP purée bread was exclusively with Tuskys Supermarket for a period of two years for Kenya. Tuskys have consistently produced OFSP purée bread and buns but with limited marketing and promotion than hoped for. At the end of exclusivity deal, we need to promote OFSP purée bread innovation to other bakers and bakeries in Nairobi. We hope to make OFSP purée bread as widespread as possible in Kenya, so as to drive root production at household level and consumption of OFSP-based products in urban areas. The more OFSP the farmers produce and sell, the more income they get, thus meeting our motto of sweetpotato for profit and health.

► Where and with whom are we working?

A program was developed to train bakers on using OFSP purée for bakery applications in Nairobi based on previous experiences with such training in Ghana and Mozambique. Euro-ingredients Limited was engaged as a partner to develop the bakers training program. (Fig 1). An advert was placed in the local newspapers inviting interested bakers (home-based and commercial) to attend a free two-day training workshop at a test kitchen facility in Nairobi. Interested parties were further trained at their own facilities to customize the OFSP purée bread experience.

► How are making it happen?

The training program was supported by the sweetpotato value chain component under the Feed the Future Kenya Accelerated Value Chain Development (AVCD) project, funded by USAID, which is aimed at promoting the utilization of OFSP in Kenya.

► What have we achieved so far?

Twelve bakers responded to the advertisement

and were trained in using OFSP purée for bakery applications. Four bakers came from large supermarket chains such as Naivas supermarket and local supermarkets. Naivas supermarkets bakeries expressed a strong interest in the commercialization of OFSP purée bread (Fig 2). A follow up training with 25 bakers from Naivas supermarkets was conducted (Fig. 3) and this was followed with a two-week promotional launch of OFSP purée bread in ten Naivas stores in greater Nairobi. The promotional launch was aimed at assessing consumer acceptance of OFSP purée bread in Naivas, the pricing and demand for the products and also test the OFSP purée supply chain logistics (Fig 4).

► What's next?

The bakers training event resulted in some large commercial players getting interested in OFSP purée bread. Naivas is now in contract negotiations with the OFSP purée supplier so they can fully launch the OFSP purée bread. OFSP purée bread training workshops have been planned for other countries such as Rwanda, Malawi and Mozambique. There is also a strong interest from partners in Nigeria and Ghana.



Fig. 4 Naivas OFSP Plus bread during the promotional week.

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