Understanding Consumer Choice

The Case of Legumes in Zambia

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Food Choices

Food Choices Influenced by **MANY** Factors

- Consumer are complex in their demand systems
- Interactive relationships

Source: Parraga (1990)
Food Attributes

• Consumption of any product—food or non-food—is based on the characteristics of the product (Lancaster, 1966)

• Each product is a bundle of attributes

• Consumer derives satisfaction based on the level of these attributes existing in the product subject to a budget constraint
Food Choices Influenced by **MANY** Factors

- Influenced by multiple factors and product attributes
- Economists, in the past, have failed to take into consideration the complexity of consumer food decisions, but we are getting better.

Adapted from Parraga (1990)
Food Hierarchy

Staple Foods

Secondary

Peripheral

Potential for Innovation

Investment Needed to Increase Consumption

Resistant to Movement

Investment Needed to Increase Consumption
The case of legumes in Zambia
Foods in Zambia

Based on Two Nutritional Components

“*If you have not eaten nshima today, then you have not eaten*”
Legume Attributes

- Cooking Time
- Storability
- "Gravyness"
- Flatulence
- Texture
- Color
- Taste
- Size
- Shape
- Rancid
- Breakability
Legume Attributes

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Convenience Food Market

Who is the target consumer?
Emerging Middle Class

Source: African Development Bank Group
Middle Class & Convenience Food Market

• Emerging Middle Class
  • Disposable Income
    • Income Elasticity >1
  • Class Conscious

• Convenience Food Market
  • Healthy + Convenient Foods
    • Already in the marketplace
    • Changing consumers’ mindset
Legumes – Healthy Convenience Foods

- **Consumer Preferences**
  - Provide consumers with legumes or legume-products with preferred attributes
    - Open markets
    - Grocery stores

- **Wealth Creation**
  - Increase smallholder farmers’ income
  - Increase food choices
    - Consume legumes, other protein sources, or healthy convenience foods
Thank You

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Food Hierarchy in Zambia

Urban Areas – Upper Class
- Maize
- Meat
- Wheat
- Rice
- V & F
- Eggs
- Beans
- Dry Fish
- Groundnuts
- Millet
- Caterpillars
- Okra

Staple Foods

Secondary

Peripheral

Urban Areas – Lower Class
- Maize
- Cassava
- Beans
- Chicken
- Caterpillars
- Vegetables
- Meat
- Sweet Potatoes
- Fruit
- Eggs
- Fresh Fish

Resistant to Change