

A review of post-harvest activities for cassava in Tanzania

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Abstract. Post-harvest problems affecting cassava in Tanzania are high losses during marketing of fresh cassava and rudimentary processing technology. A needs assessment study identified reduction in income from post harvest losses as a major problem facing stakeholders involved in production and marketing of fresh cassava roots from rural areas to urban markets. The most suitable intervention identified to address the problem of fresh cassava root storage was adoption of the modified low-cost fresh cassava root storage technology originally developed by the Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical (CIAT) in Columbia and Natural Resources Institute (NRI) of U.K. The technology was tested in several villages in Coast region and two urban markets in Dar es Salaam, after which a flexible dissemination strategy was developed and applied to other villages between 1996 and 1998. Processing of cassava and other root crops into more

storable forms offers an opportunity to overcome perishability of the fresh produce. Processing of cassava also provides a means of adding value to the crop. Cassava processing methods in Tanzania are varied especially in the four main cassava growing zones. The products obtained are always moulded, contaminated with sand and may contain high levels of cyanogens. This is because cassava processing methods are simple and do not result in tissue disintegration but leaves behind high levels of cyanogens in intact peeled whole or split roots. The most suitable processing method adopted in these zones since 1996 is chipping or grating of fresh cassava roots before obtaining flour. The flour is an intermediate product for various bakery, industrial and pharmaceutical products. Efforts to disseminate the technology were initiated and some villages in eastern and lake zones were involved.