

FACTORS CONSTRAINING THE PRODUCTION AND MARKETING OF PAWPAP
(*Carica papaya*) IN EKITI STATE, SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA.

Agbowuro G.O.

Department of Crop Production Technology, Federal College of Agriculture, Akure Ondo State.
E-mail : agbowuro@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The objective of this work is to identify and examine major factors constraining pawpaw production and marketing in Ekiti State, Southwestern Nigeria. Questionnaire schedule and personal interviews were used to collect data from ten Local Government Areas in the state. A total of 76 pawpaw farmers were randomly interviewed for this study. The study identified poor patronage in the market, poor marketing system, inadequate capital, poor price, inadequate extension services, poor transportation, exploitative role of middle men, insufficient marketing information, high cost of labour, high cost of agrochemicals and poor storage facilities as the major constraining factors of pawpaw production and marketing in the area. The study recommended more effective extension services, formation of production and marketing cooperatives among the pawpaw farmers, maintenance of feeder roads, credit from government and financial institutions and organising enlightenment programmes about the nutritional and medicinal value of pawpaw fruit by Non Governmental Organisation, Extension agents and food nutritionist to increase pawpaw production and marketing in the area.

KEYWORDS: pawpaw, marketing, production, constraining.

INTRODUCTION

Pawpaw (*Carica papaya L*) is the most economically fruit in the caricaceae family (Medinal et al., 2010). The fruit is one of the most nutritional and cheapest fruits grown and consumed in Nigeria. It is widely consumed as it is grown all the year round. However in an average, the fruits are increasingly becoming popular in the Nigeria diet, but the production of these crops remains low and inadequate (Baiyewu et al.,2005). Most of the pawpaw fruit consumed in Ekiti State are grown in the wild but little are cultivated. The cultivated pawpaw fruits are produced at the small-scale level under the traditional system in Ekiti State. The production systems comprise intercropping with fruits and vegetables in homestead gardens and mixtures with food and tree crops in the outlying field.

The ripe fruit of papaya is usually eaten raw, without its skin or seeds while the unripe green fruits can be eaten cooked, usually in curries or salads. According to Tietze (2002), mature green papaya contains more vitamin A than carrots, more vitamin C than oranges, abundant vitamin B factors and vitamin E. It also possesses antiseptic qualities and help prevent the abnormal proliferation of undesirable bacteria in the intestines (Ray,1994). In some part of the world, papaya leaves are made into tea as treatment for malaria (Titanji et al.,2008). Both green papaya and the tree's latex are rich in papain, a protease used for tenderizing meat and other proteins. Pawpaw production can provide employment for small and large scale farmers and those who were involves in its marketing and processing. It can serve as raw materials for some industries and foreign exchange earning to the government. Despite the nutritional and medicinal values of pawpaw and its potential contribution to the economy of the country, the problems connected with pawpaw production and marketing still persist. All these problems are hindering the farmers to increase production. The objective of this study is therefore, to identify, examine and proffer solution to the major factors constraining the production and marketing of pawpaw in Ekiti State, Southwestern Nigeria.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Ekiti State located in Southwestern part of Nigeria. The State lies between latitude 7°30' and 8°15' north of the equator and longitude 4°47' and 5°40' of the Greenwich Meridian (Adebayo, 1993). The estimated population figure of Ekiti State released by National Population Commission (NPC) stood at 2,353,082 (NPC,2007). Ekiti State is predominately an agricultural state with about 70% of inhabitants employed by the agricultural sector of the economy (Akinbode,2002).

A simple random sampling method was used to select the respondents for the study. This method of sampling was used to get true representative of the pawpaw farmers in the study area. The eight (8) contacted pawpaw farmers were randomly selected from ten (10) local government areas in Ekiti State which were Ekiti West, Ekiti East, Moba, Ado, Ijero, Gboyin, Ikole, Ido- Osi, Emure and Ifelodun- Irepodun local government respectively with a total number of 80 interviewers.

Questionnaire schedule and personal interviews were used to collect data. The questions were translated into Yoruba Language as most of the respondents could not read English Language. However, 76 respondents were successfully interviewed and reported in this study. The rating scale used for the analysis of the data included: Most Important =5, Very Important = 4, Important = 3, Not Important = 2, Don't Know = 1. Each factor constraining production and marketing was treated and presented in frequency distribution and percentage in tabular form.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Factors Constraining Production of Pawpaw in Ekiti State

Table 1 presents the respondents perceived factors constraining the production of pawpaw in Ekiti State. The table shows that poor marketing was the most important factor constraining pawpaw production as 71.05% of the respondents indicated this while high cost of chemicals was the least of the most important factors constraints at 6.57%.

It was also shown from the table that 57.89% of the respondents indicated that insufficient capital limits the production of pawpaw in the study area while 48.68% of the respondents perceived inadequate extension service as the most important constraining factor in pawpaw production. This study indicated that transportation is another factor constraining pawpaw production, as 53.95% perceived it as the most important constraining factor and 27.63% perceived it as a very important factor. Commercial vehicles in the rural areas are not reliable and sometimes not available to transport the farm product to the market. Commercial motorcycles popularly called 'okada' in the study area are the only readily available commercial transport which are very costly and hence increase their cost of production. This could be a result of the rural feeder roads that are not well maintained and seasonal. As a result of this, the farmers are forced to sell their products to the middle men at the farm gate at a poor prices.

Storage facilities as another important constraining factor, most of the respondents did not see the need for storage facilities as they sold their produce at the farm gate to the middle men, this could be as a result that, most of them are small scale farmers. Only 13.15% perceived storage facilities as the most important constraining factor and 26.31% perceived as a very important constraining factor. Extension service is expected to inform and educate farmers about their farming activities (Adu et al., 2004), but extension service in the study area seemed to have been ineffective or the farmers were yet to be aware of the role of extension service in the area. Most of the respondents don't see high cost of labour as an important constraining factor because they intercrop pawpaw with stable and cash crops.

Moreover, agrochemicals are very costly and most of the small scale farmers lack adequate capital to invest in the procurement of agrochemicals, hence this problem limit pawpaw production in the study area. For them to get agrochemicals, they need credit and subsidy from government, Non Governmental Organisation and financial institutions like commercial banks. Purchasing agrochemicals at high cost could go a long in reducing the profit ability of any investment especially in agricultural business (Anamayi et al., 2005).

Factors Constraining Pawpaw Marketing in Ekiti State.

Table 2 present the main factors constraining pawpaw marketing in Ekiti State .This finding indicates that the majority of the farmers perceived poor price as the most important factor constraining marketing of pawpaw in the study area. Good

price encourage will encourage the farmers to increase production. However, when the price is poor, it can discourage farmers from increasing production as this reduces the returns on investment. The table shows that 85.52% of the respondent perceived poor price as the most important constraining factors of pawpaw marketing in the area.

Findings also indicated that, the respondents perceived the role of middle men, poor patronage in the market, insufficient marketing information as the most important and very important constraining factors of marketing pawpaw as 34.21%, 68.42%, 55.26%, and 28.94%, 17.10% and 30.26% respectively. The middle men seemed to have been the major beneficiaries of pawpaw production and marketing in the study area because they purchased the pawpaw fruits at the farm gate at very low prices and bring it to the urban centres and sell it at high prices, although they are responsible for the transportation and handling of the pawpaw fruits from the farm gate to the retailers and final consumers in urban centres. Marketing information is an essential part of marketing. Marketing information provides details about price at various markets, location of markets, cost of transport and handling. Where there is inadequate market information, the producers may be exploited by middle men. This finding shows that pawpaw farmers lack necessary information about pawpaw marketing.

Poor patronage in the market is another important factor that discourages the farmers from producing and marketing of pawpaw. This could be as a result of unawareness of the nutritional and medicinal value of pawpaw fruit by the majority in the study area, as 68.42% perceived poor patronage of pawpaw in the market as the most important factor.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents according to perceived factors constraining Production of Pawpaw in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Factors constraining pawpaw production	Most Important	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Don't Know
Poor road	41 (53.95%)	21 (27.63%)	8 (10.52%)	5 (6.57%)	1 (1.32%)
Inadequate capital	44 (57.89%)	23 (30.26%)	6 (7.89%)	3 (3.94%)	0
Poor marketing	54 (71.05%)	14 (18.42%)	6 (7.89%)	2 (2.63%)	0
Inadequate storage	10 (13.15%)	20 (26.31%)	28 (36.84%)	8 (10.52%)	10 (13.15%)
High cost of labour	15 (19.73%)	19 (25%)	20 (26.31%)	16 (21.05%)	6 (7.89%)
Inadequate extension services	37 (48.68%)	20 (26.31%)	10 (13.15%)	7 (9.21%)	2 (2.63%)
High cost of chemicals and fertilizers	05 (6.57%)	12 (15.78%)	9 (11.84%)	43 (56.57%)	7 (9.21%)

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents according to perceived factors constraining Marketing of Pawpaw in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Factors Constraining Pawpaw Marketing.	Most Important	very Important	Important	Not Important	Don't know
Poor price	65 (85.52%)	09 (11.84%)	02 (2.63%)	00	00
Poor transportation	34 (44.73%)	22 (28.94%)	13 (17.10%)	07 (9.21%)	00
Role of middle men	26 (34.21%)	22 (28.94%)	11 (14.47%)	10 (13.15%)	07 (9.21%)
Poor patronage in the market	52 (68.42%)	13 (17.10%)	07 (9.21%)	02 (2.63%)	02 (2.63%)
Insufficient marketing information	42 (55.26%)	23 (30.26%)	07 (9.21%)	03 (3.94%)	01 (1.32%)
Poor storage facilities	10 (13.15%)	15 (19.73%)	25 (32.89%)	20 (26.31%)	06 (7.89%)

CONCLUSION

This study indicates that poor price is the most important constraining factor of pawpaw production and marketing in the study area followed by poor marketing. Inadequate capital and other capital related constraining factors include farm input; agro-chemical, fertilizer and high cost of labour is another constraining factor. This work also indicated poor

transportation system in the study area. Most of the feeder roads are seasonal and not well maintained. Commercial vehicles are not always available, it is essential for the state government to repair and maintain the feeder roads. The study also indicates that there are inadequate extension services and insufficient marketing information in the study area. Therefore, there is need for more extension agents to provide extension services and more marketing information to the farmers in the study area. Most of the respondents perceived exploitative role of middle men as a serious factor constraining pawpaw production and marketing in the study area.

Therefore, it is recommended that there is a need for pawpaw farmers to form cooperatives for production and marketing. Some of their farm inputs may be bought from the cooperatives. Co-operatives marketing will also remove the exploitation role of middle men. As a cooperative society, State and local government will be responding to their request to time as a society rather being an individual. There is also a need for pawpaw farmers to have access to farm credit from commercial banks to be able to buy farm inputs and employ labour to increase production. Appropriate government agencies, extension agents, food nutritionist, non governmental organisation should conduct an enlightenment programme in the study area about the nutritional and medicinal value of pawpaw, this will increase pawpaw patronage in the market, hence farmers will be motivated to increase their production.

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