

Abstract

Indigenous fruit trees play a vital role as a source of livelihood for majority of inhabitants in East Africa. However, there is inadequate basic data and information on marketing aspects of indigenous fruits in this region. Based on this realization, a collaborative venture was undertaken by three National Agricultural Research Systems in the region to generate baseline information for development and promotion of indigenous fruits. Information was collected from 35 villages in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, selected using multi-stage stratified sampling procedures. Woodlots were the main sources of the three indigenous fruits in Kenya and Uganda while in Tanzania indigenous fruits were mainly collected from natural forests. The three indigenous fruit trees bear fruits once a year making fruit supply seasonal. The *Tamarindus indica* was marketed as first priority fruit and was traded in local, national and export market supply systems while *Vitex doniana* and *Sclerocarya birrea* were marketed as second and third priority fruits respectively and were limited to local supply system. Market preference and pricing for the three fruits are dependent on size, shape, taste and fruiting period. It is therefore, recommended that indigenous fruits production be focused on preferred shapes, tastes, and fruit maturity periods to capture niche markets that exist within the region.

Key words: Indigenous fruit trees, niche markets, preference, price, supply, trade