



Farmers showcasing traditional food from Central and Eastern Uganda during a food show in Kampala recently.

PHOTO CREDIT LOMINDA AFEDRARU.

Alarm over tons of food thrown away by Ugandan consumers

Lominda Afedraru

Food wastage among consumers is a growing concern in Uganda, with an average of 103 kg of food thrown away per person annually, totalling over 4,500 metric tons in national annual waste.

A survey conducted by BoP Innovation Center (BOPINC), Bio Vision Africa and Participatory Ecological Land Use Management Association (PELUM) found that consumers account for 50 percent of food wastage in Uganda.

In the capital city Kampala, 312,000

to 380,000 metric tons of food waste is generated yearly, with households being the largest contributors due to poor storage and preparation.

The bulk of the food waste is dumped, with limited efforts to convert it into alternative uses like livestock feed, although there is a growing willingness to engage in recycling.

The major causes of food waste include improper food handling, poor storage facilities, limited awareness and cultural practices.

Henry Kimera, an official of Global Consumer Centre, a consumer rights organisation, said there is need to

increase public awareness to reduce to the quantity of food purchased from the markets that ends up in the bin.

Those delivering food in the markets, he said, must ensure high nutrition level is maintained while those processing it must use the right ingredients and formulation to assure consumers of a healthy diet.

The quality must provide sensory characteristics such as taste, aroma, palatability and appearance.

The value must be considered by providing characteristics of consumer utility and economic advantage, involving attributes such as





convenience, packaging and shelf-life.

Mr Kimera advises consumers to know the source of the food whether processed or not. Those purchasing their food in a supermarket should look out for the labels to establish if the food is expired.

Consumers are also advised to avoid misleading adverts, including cases where labels indicate the various nutritional values such as vitamin, iron and zinc content which in actual sense is not embedded in the food.

They should also check out for contamination of food during transportation or at farmer fields to avoid incidences of food poisoning.

The consumer must be aware of food fraud where sellers overcharge for foods which would otherwise be acquired at an affordable price and seek for useful information and knowledge to avoid circumstances which may lead to acquiring unhealthy foods.

In case of fresh food, ensure it is thoroughly cooked to avoid consuming unhealthy food.

It is also important to use safe water during cleaning and cooking of your food and avoid food wastage because there are people who are suffering from hunger who need it.

Global Consumer Centre has established a consumer complaints mechanism, with forms available on their website to enable people to register their grievances.

Complaints such as food poisoning and deliberate contamination may lead to a consumer being helped to seek legal redress.



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+254 711 085 400



info@goodpartnerske.org



www.goodpartnerske.org



3rd floor, Office 312,
Marsabit Plaza,
Ngong Road,
Nairobi, Kenya