

Peanut Blog

An ounce of information



Revitalizing groundnut oil production in Gambia: Challenges, opportunities and role of NFPMC

The production of edible groundnut oil, groundnut cake, fertiliser, and related byproducts holds significant potential in The Gambia, given the prominence of groundnuts as a key cash crop.

Historically, The Gambia has relied on groundnut exports, which once contributed significantly to GDP but have faced challenges such as declining yields, limited modernisation, and international competition.

Edible groundnut oil production in The Gambia has its roots in the colonial era when the demand for vegetable oils surged in Europe for industrial and culinary uses. However, local processing was discouraged by colonial policies that favored the export of raw materials. Groundnut cake, a byproduct of oil extraction, has traditionally been used as animal feed and holds potential for both export and domestic use. Groundnut shells, another byproduct, are increasingly being processed into organic fertilizers such as biohumus, which enrich soil quality and reduce reliance on imported chemical fertilisers.

The National Food Security Processing and Marketing Corporation (NFPMC), formerly known as the Gambia Groundnut Corporation (GGC), has faced significant challenges over the years. For the past three decades, its operations were largely limited to purchasing and exporting unprocessed groundnuts. Attempts to produce edible oil were unsuccessful due to mismanagement, outdated infrastructure, and governance issues. The institution also suffered reputational damage after losing a breach of contract lawsuit and undergoing a name change in an effort to rebuild trust.

Revitalising NFPMC's edible oil production therefore requires a comprehensive approach to address its historical shortcomings. An independent agency should conduct a corruption risk assessment to evaluate administrative practices and identify vulnerabilities within the organisation. This would enhance transparency and accountability, ensuring that past governance failures are not repeated. Additionally, modernisation of infrastructure and technology is critical for efficient processing. Diversifying into byproducts such as high-quality fertilisers and animal feed could also help maximise value from groundnut production.

Addressing these issues is essential for reducing reliance on imports, boosting local employment opportunities, and improving food security in The Gambia. With proper reforms and oversight mechanisms in place, NFPMC could play a pivotal role in transforming the country's agricultural sector while contributing to economic growth.

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