

Little used and neglected species from American tropics: value chains alternatives

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Abstract

Our tropics are diverse in vegetal origin species. Some of them, neglected as a result of the conquest history, others little known so far in this XXIst century. Some neotropical cereals, seeds, tubers and roots that were the food base of indigenous communities before the European conquest, were abandoned as a result of conquerors' dispositions and religious issues, and not before the end of the XXth century, they were re-discovered. Quinoa, amaranth, cassava or yams were totally useless during a long time and their potential benefits wasted. Similarly, forest tropical species remained unknown for a long time. New tendencies in health care and environmental sensibility changed this situation and promote little known and/or neglected species to be re used for food and many others industries that are flourishing now. Today, it is possible to find in menu restaurants, as well as in specialized magazines, a great offer of derivate from the tropical diversity and demand for them increases in a fast way. More and more, people are interested in new products which improve life quality, and lead also to environmental sustainability maintenance. As consequence, strategies to improve neglected and little used species involve the creation of a technological platform which combined with innovation can support development and improvement of value chains in tropical regions. Although these little used species represent many challenges for the tropical people, value chains examples increase every day and some advances are remarkable. The tropical region and its diversity is undoubtedly a source of well-being not only for growers but also for consumers.