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**Composition and quality of artisanal crude palm oils in Cameroon in link with production factors**

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a : Université de Yaoundé I, Department of Biochemistry Yaoundé, Cameroon ; b : CIRAD, UPR 34, Montpellier, France ; c : CIRAD, UMR IATE, Montpellier, France. d : INRA, UR 1268 Biopolymères Interactions Assemblages, Nantes, France

**Introduction**: Cameroon, amongst African countries of the Guinean gulf, is a traditional producer and eater of both artisanal and industrial crude palm oil (CPO) [1]. Nowadays oils and fats consumption per capita is regularly increasing in these countries. In parallel, health problems associated to obesity, type 2 diabetes and vitamin A deficiency are alarming [2]. The production of oil palm Volatile CPO sold on the informal market out of any quality control, is rising due to the development of small-scale mills in the southern Cameroon. In such a context, it seemed necessary to assess the chemical and physical quality of artisanal CPO and to relate the recorded quality differences to producing conditions.

**Material**

Ripe bunches of oil palms (Elaeis guineensis) 32 artisanal producers from 4 different production regions were interviewed, and 32 samples collected. One oil sample was also collected from a local industrial as a reference.

**Methods**

1. **Survey** in palm oil production areas: Information on the plant material and the detailed process of oil extraction ; June to July 2015.

2. **Physicochemical properties**

- **Nutritional composition** [4]:
  - Carotene content (UV-Vis spectroscopy)
  - Tocopherol and tocotrienol content (HPLC-fluo)
  - Fatty acid composition (GC of FAME)

- **Lipolysis and oxidation levels**:
  - Free fatty acid content (NF T60-204, 1985)
  - Peroxide value (NF T60-220, 1968)
  - Malondialdehyde (MDA : HPLC-DAD of MDA(TBA)_2 adduct) [5]

**Results 1. Identification of CPO samples and processes**

**Table**: planting material and extraction processes.

**Results 2. Effect of production processes on**

- a. Carotene content
- b. Free fatty acid (FFA) content

**Conclusions**: In agreement with previous studies [3, 7] artisanal CPOs produced in Cameroon present FFA contents superior to current edible oil standards. This is related to the time and method of storage of bunches or fruit before oil extraction. These oils are also characterized by high variations in carotene content linked to the type of planting material and length of storage between harvest and oil extraction. The role played by FFA in typicality of artisanal CPOs and functional role in the achievement of local dishes should be explored.

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*Contact: doris.nanda@yahoo.fr

Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Science
University of Yaoundé I BP 412 Yaoundé - Cameroon