



MARKETING CHANNELS FOR WILD AND CULTIVATED EDIBLE MUSHROOMS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: THE CASE OF MEXICO

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ABSTRACT

Food products require efficient marketing systems to move from producers to consumers keeping high quality and price. In many developing countries, although mushroom production is well established and increasing, the marketing systems are poorly understood. During 1999-2004, we studied the channels of distribution for wild and cultivated mushrooms in central Mexico following an institutional approach (550 interviews). Most wild and cultivated mushrooms are marketed within this region. Representative places were selected for this study: a large city (Mexico), two medium cities (Puebla, Toluca), and a rural community (Cuetzalan). Several marketing channels were identified and described, involving middlemen, wholesalers, retailers, “tianguis”, public markets, retail food stores, and food services. The grower’s share, the gatherer’s share, and the mushroom marketing margin were also estimated. The present mushroom marketing system evolved from a small centralized process to a combination of centralized and decentralized marketing processes involving limited activities. During this series of changes, large private enterprises took over several marketing functions supporting the decentralization process, but discouraging the development of new firms specialized in mushroom marketing and processing. At the same time, changes also led to the market concentration of open-market sales in large private enterprises and functional wholesalers. Main structure, organization and trends of the Mexican mushroom marketing system are discussed.

Key words: Marketing channels, marketing margins, cultivated mushrooms, wild mushrooms, Mexico, developing countries.
