



MUSHROOM PRICES AND THEIR EFFECT ON CONSUMPTION: THE CASE OF MEXICO

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Accepted for publication January 27, 2012

ABSTRACT

Edible mushrooms show increasing importance as a food in many regions worldwide. However, their accessibility to different social levels is a matter of major consideration, and mushroom prices are a critical factor. In this study, primary and secondary data on mushroom species, mushroom products, current and inflation-free prices, trade marks, and incomes were analyzed during 2002-2011 in Mexico, particularly in the central region. Interview and observation protocols, as well as national and international databases, were used to record data at diverse points of sale. The Mexican mushroom market expanded recently in terms of species cultivated, as well as the variety of products and presentations available at the point of sale. There were eight mushroom species in the commercial market, including 16 different presentations and 20 trade marks available to the consumer. Inflation-free consumer prices of most mushrooms and presentations in the period 2010-2011 were more expensive than those of the period 2008-2009, ranging from 6.3-114.4%. Current consumer price of edible mushrooms varied from USD \$ 4.00/kg to \$ 59.32/kg. Mushroom prices were more expensive than other foods widely consumed, and were also highly variable between regions. Maximum and minimum mushroom prices showed wider ranges than those from mature markets. The prices of most fresh mushrooms were cheaper in Mexico than in other countries, indicating that production costs and the general purchasing power of Mexican consumers are lesser. Mushroom products require specific regulations to attain

high quality standards. All these circumstances drastically affect the access to mushrooms as a food by different social levels. They are also limiting factors for increasing mushroom consumption, and for further development of this emergent agri-food chain.

Key words: Consumer mushroom prices, developing countries, edible mushrooms, Mexico, mushroom products, wholesale mushroom prices.
