

**TRENDS IN PRODUCTION OF SELECTED SPECIES OF YAM (*DIOSOREA SPP*) IN ENUGU NORTH AGRICULTURAL ZONE, ENUGU STATE NIGERIA
: IMPLICATION FOR FOOD SECURITY AND BIO DIVERSITY
CONSERVATION**

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ABSTRACT

The importance of yam in the diet and socio-cultural life of people especially in growing regions of developing countries is declining and may lead to its extinction hence the need to examine trends in yam production specifically in Enugu North Agricultural zone, Enugu State, Nigeria. One hundred and twenty yam farmers purposively selected from 4 blocks, 8 circles and 24 sub-circles were used for the study. Some of the data were analyzed with frequency and percentage while the remaining were presented in bar charts. Findings of the study revealed that majority (85%) of the respondents were males, married (75.83%), their mean age was about 53 years while their mean household size was seven persons. Greater percentage (45%) of the respondents had primary education only, engaged in farming (74.17%) as primary occupation and earned a mean monthly income of ₦25, 531. The species of yam grown by the respondents were: *D. alata* (95%), *D. rotundata* (85.83%), *D. dumentonum* (59.17%) and *D. Cayenensis* (30%). Some reasons indicated by the respondents for growing yam were to ensure food security (98.33%) and to maintain prestige (85%). The mean size of land allocated to each species of yam was low (less than a hectare), subsequently output and yield were also low. Mean cost of input for growing yam recorded increase in virtually all the species of yam and years considered. The study emphasized on the need to encourage young farmers to grow yam and the entire yam farmers to grow those species of yam that were not grown at all or commonly grown in a sustainable manner so as to avoid their extinction, ensure food security and conservation of natural resources.

KEYWORDS: Yam Cultivation, Food Security, Bio Diversity.