



# HORTICULTURE MAGAZINE

## COMMUNIQUE OF THE 12<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE GHANA INSTITUTE OF HORTICULTURISTS (GhIH)

Theme: Enhancing the Productivity and Profitability of the Horticultural Industry in the Face of Global Climate Change

### Special News:

- COMMUNIQUE OF THE 12<sup>TH</sup> AGM OF GHIH
- GHIH HONOURS MEMBERS AND PARTNERS
- UPDATE ON THE 12 AGM
- KEY NOTE ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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Members of the Ghana Institute of Horticulturists (GhIH) at the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting held at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research – Crops Research Institute (CSIR-CRI) Conference Room, Fumesua in the Ashanti Region from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> September 2011, do hereby resolve that :  
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### HONOURS

At its Annual Meeting (AGM) held on 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2011 at Crops Research Institute, Kumasi, four members were Story continues on page 16

### UPDATE ON 12<sup>TH</sup> AGM

The program started at 8:30 am with registration of members by the Secretariat. An estimated number of 60 members were registered as at 8:50am. By 9:00

am most invited guests had arrived. Opening prayer and introduction of Chairman, who also happens to be the Vice President of GhIH, was done by Mrs H-V Adzraku. The Chairman then made his opening remarks followed by a welcome address and fraternity messages from other chairpersons and members present. Delegates sent by the Ashanti Regional Minister and Minister of Food and

Agriculture read their special addresses respectively . See page 2 for full story

## Short Refereed Articles

*Horticulture Magazine, Volume 2, pages 31-33*

### Safety Measures for Handling Fresh cut-fruits by Street Vendors

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#### Introduction

Fruit is the ripened ovary or ovaries of a seed-bearing plant with accessory parts that contain the seeds. Fruits come in different shapes and forms and are usually edible, fleshy and sweet. Some fruits however, taste sour or bitter. Technically, cereals and some grains are also fruits but are not the target of study in this context. Fruits are mostly consumed when ripe in the fresh state, although this state is not available all year round. Other people however, prefer processed fruits into juice or other suitable forms.

Fruits are served as deserts or as main meals especially for persons on diet to supplement their vitamins and minerals intake. Fruits are a great source of antioxidants and nutrients which fight some diseases and repair cells, as well as dietary fibre to prevent constipation. The selection of fruits by consumers is often dependant on the taste, cost and availability. Quality parameters consumers look out for include appearance, flavour, texture and nutritive value.

Fruits often lose their quality due to moisture loss, senescence, microbial growth and deterioration. In cut-fruits however, these processes are accelerated because of the exposure of cellular materials that lack protective skins.

Over the years, there has been an increasing demand for the consumption of fresh fruits and this has led to the processing of fresh cut-fruits for sale. In Ghana, most cut-fruits are sold by vendors who are often located along main roads for easy accessibility. There are also packaged fresh cut-fruits in most super markets but they tend to be more expensive than the ones by the road side. The reason is obvious, the **cost of refrigeration, packaging and convenience offered consumers.**

The most common cut-fruits in Ghana are watermelon, pineapple, papaya, orange, mango and coconut. All these contribute immensely to the nutritional status of consumers. The mode of handling of these fruits by vendors however, could make the products enhance the nutritional needs of consumers or pose a health threat.

The following practises can help minimize the risks associated with cut-fruits by processors, vendors and households.

#### Personal health and hygiene:

Authorities should ensure that vendors are medically fit before they are allowed to sell to the public. The public should not patronise fruits from vendors who are suspected to be unhealthy. Personal hygiene must be

observed strictly for fruits vendors. Vendors should wear neat clothes and protect their hands during the handling and sale of fruits.

Manicure is supposed to be the neat and careful trimming of finger nails, but in Ghana manicure is the elongation and painting of nails which eventually find their way into our foods. Vendors must ensure their fingers have no rings and their nails cut short and, kept neat to prevent dirt and germs breeding. Rings contain chemical substances which are harmful to humans and should not be worn during processing and handling of foods that are consumed directly.

**Point of sale environment:**

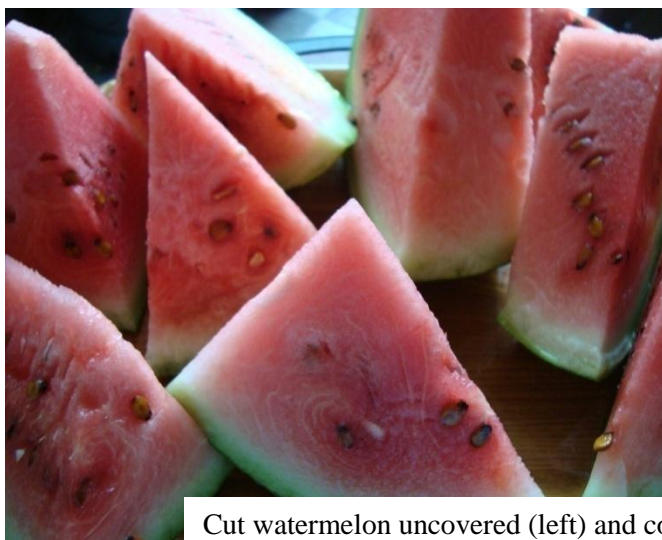
Cut-fruits should be handled in a hygienic environment devoid of pollution and flies. Kitchen net or suitable protective materials should be used at the points of processing and sale to prevent contamination by flies. Drains and gutters located close to points of processing and sale must be kept clean always.

**Source of water and equipment:**

Fruits must be washed using clean water and equipment to help minimise contamination. Disinfectants such as chlorine, hydrochloric acid or salt should be added to washing water to aid in the elimination of germs, followed by rinsing in plenty of clean water to eliminate residues of disinfectants. Knives, chopping boards, trays, washing bowls, etc should be cleaned and possibly sterilised. Equipment can also be sanitised by boiling in clean water to ensure the safety of cut-fruits. In cases where more than one kind of cut-fruit is processed, equipment should be washed after each process to minimise tainting between fruits.

**Use of polyethylene bags and plastic bowls:**

Packaging of cut-fruits into sealable polythene bags and disposable plastic bowls will minimise recontamination and also prevent flies and dirt from settling on the fruits.



Cut watermelon uncovered (left) and covered (right) with plastic sheeting

## Conclusion

To ensure the shelf-life of fresh cut-fruits, an optimum temperature and relative humidity must be maintained from **harvest to consumption**. Hazard analysis critical control point (HACCP) must be established to minimize microbial loads by training personnel in the food industry to ensure safety. Suitable packaging must be used to retard the respiration rate of products, prevent moisture loss and microbial growth. The packaging material should also prevent fermentative metabolism which may result from low oxygen concentration as well as protect its content from contamination. Fresh cut-fruits under anaerobic situations result in the production of off-odours and taste, making it unsuitable for consumption. It is however, recommended that consumers rinse cut-fruits with clean water before consumption.

For consumers to derive the needed nutrition to aid in the reduction or occurrence of diseases, fruits must be consumed in the right proportions and supplemented with balanced diets. If the above precautions are followed consumers will be assured of wholesome cut-fruits as well as the creation of a sustainable market for vendors and traders.