VITELLARIA PARADOXA

Farmer preferences

Kristensen & Lykke (2003) interviewed over 200 people in Burkina Faso, and asked them to rank the trees they knew according to uses and conservation value. *Vitellaria paradoxa* was the only tree to score high in all use categories: edible fruits; vegetable sauce; construction; firewood; medicine; commerce; field trees; and conservation priority.

A 1994 study conducted in Mali by Gakou et al. found that vitellaria was highly valued ngftwo species mentioned the most: more than 100 times during the interviews.

Economics of production

Vitellaria trees annually produce 15 to 20 kg of fruits, which when processed can yield 1.5 kg of shea butter (Spore 2002).

In the main producing countries of Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, and Togo, about 650,000 tons of shea nuts are produced annually. Yet only about twenty percent of these nuts are processed and exported (FAOSTAT 2004).

In 2002, the FAO estimated that Ghana exported 4,969 metric tons (MT) of shea nuts at a value of USD1,339,000, Benin 5,560MT for USD1,134,000, Burkina Faso 608MT for USD787,000, Nigeria 880MT for USD170,000, Togo 1,166MT for USD122,000, and Mali 7MT for USD9,000 (FAOSTAT 2004).

Further reading

FAOSTAT (2004) http://faostat.fao.org/default.aspx

Gakou M., Force J.E. & McLaughlin W.J. 1994. Non-timber forest products in rural Mali: a study of villager use. *Agroforestry Systems* 28:213-226.