

Key insights into global fonio market

The global fonio market showed steady growth, rising from 373K tonnes in 2007, to 673K tonnes in 2016. Annual rates of growth stood at +6.8% in physical terms.

The grain is mainly consumed in West African countries, where it is also cultivated. The growth of fonio consumption during 2007-2016 is due to a significant increase in demand in West African countries against the backdrop of population growth and increased food consumption in general.

From 2007 to 2016, the market value was subject to significant fluctuations against changes in producer prices and crop yield. In 2016, the market value increased by 11% to \$426m.



Photo credit: Health Benefits Times (Image Source: [Face2FaceAfrica](#))

Guinea (526K tonnes) was the country with the highest consumption, accounting for almost 78% of global figures. It was followed by Nigeria (12%), Mali (5%) and Côte d'Ivoire (3%). In terms of the key consumer countries, Guinea (41.7 kg per year in 2016) registered a per capita consumption figure significant higher than the global average consumption figure, at 0.1 kg per year, while outside Guinea, fonio consumption was very small: Nigeria (0.5 kg/year), Mali (1.8 kg/year) and Côte d'Ivoire (0.8 kg/year)

In the medium term, the fonio market is set to continue modest growth

The peculiarity of the world fonio market is that the overwhelming share of the produced volume is consumed within the producing West African countries. Due to the fact that fonio is in demand mainly in these countries, there are no grounds to expect drastic changes in the dynamics of its consumption; that is why medium-term market growth will depend mainly on the growth of the population.

At the same time, outside Guinea, consumption of fonio grows much more slowly than in this country, therefore it is expected that the growth in demand in Guinea will remain the key driver of market growth within the next few years.

The global growth in fonio consumption is expected to increase at an average annual rate of +1.9% in the medium term due western Africa population growth and an increasing demand for food, which is expected to lead the market to a volume of 800K tonnes by the end of 2025.

Production of fonio increased steadily over the last nine years

Production of fonio reached 673K tonnes in 2016, with 4% growth over the last year. There was a steady growth with an annual average growth rate of +6.8% from 2007 to 2016.

Guinea (526K tonnes in 2016) was the key world fonio producing country, accounting for 78% of total global output. The other major producers were Nigeria (12%), Mali (5%) and Côte d'Ivoire (3%). In addition, most of the major producing countries increased their fonio output. In 2007-2016 annual growth rates were especially high in Guinea (+8.9%), Côte d'Ivoire (+3.5%) and Nigeria (+2.0%). Meanwhile Mali fonio production (+0.8%) remained relatively stable throughout the analysed period.

Almost entire global fonio output is consumed domestically

The share of exports in global demand did not exceed 0.03% from 2007 to 2016. This relatively low trade intensity is due to the fact that the major consuming countries – Guinea and other African countries – produce fonio and consume it domestically. This is because, firstly, fonio grows precisely in these geographical regions and, secondly, it plays a key role in ensuring food security for the population during the lean years as it is resistant to drought and is relatively cheap to produce.

Exports of fonio decreased noticeably over the last four years

Export flows of fonio are negligible and uneven, therefore, the report presents estimates based on official statistics, mirror data and production volumes and per capita consumption. In 2016, the volume of global exports totaled 204 tonnes. There was a steady decline, followed by a slight growth in 2016, however, the overall trend was negative.

In 2016, Guinea (35%, based on tonnes), Mali (24%), Burkina Faso (18%), the Netherlands (10%) and Spain (5%) were the main suppliers of fonio with a combined share of 91% of global exports. In 2012, Belgium was the largest exporter of fonio (1,395 tons in 2012), however, it was not included in the list of top seven exporters in 2016, as Belgium exports declined significantly in 2013-2014, and it was not recorded in subsequent years.

Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso and Spain held an insignificant share in total exports in 2012, with the Netherlands being the largest exporter, after Belgium (161 tons in 2012). Taking into account that the fonio does not grow in these European countries, these shipments should be referred to re-export.

Imports of fonio experienced dramatic decline over the last four years

The volume of global imports totaled 338 tonnes, which was equal to \$402k. Imports dynamics was generally in line with exports: these trade flows globally complement each other. They are also negligible and uneven.

In 2016, France (40%, based on tonnes), Cambodia (20%), the Netherlands (13%), Spain (9%) were the leading

destinations of fonio imports, together making up 82% of global imports in physical terms. In 2012, Belgium (1.547 tonnes) was the leading importer, by 2016 imports were down to 5 tonne, therefore, in 2016, the country did not make the top seven largest importers list. By contrast, imports to France, Cambodia, the Netherlands and Spain were negligible in 2012.

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