

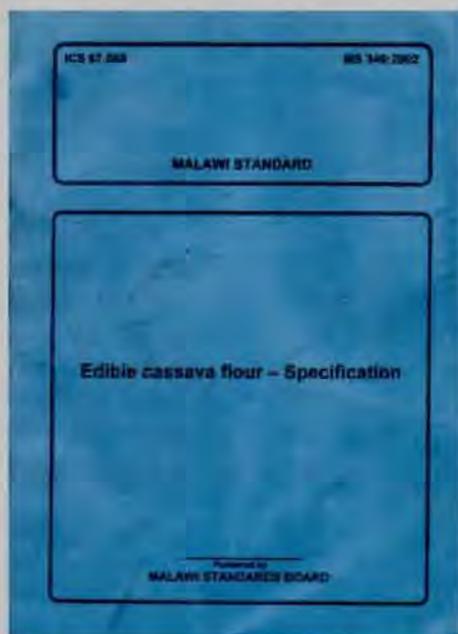


STANDARDS FOR CASSAVA PRODUCTS IN MALAWI

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During the Cassava Commercialization Symposium organized by IITA/SARRNET, APRU and the Ministry of Agriculture in 2001 at Kwacha Conference Center in Blantyre, it was clear that in Malawi we do not have any standards on cassava and its products. Small quantities of cassava flour had started finding their way into the industry. For cassava to become a commercial crop it was felt necessary to formulate standards for cassava and its products going into the industry to regulate quality. Malawi Bureau of Standards was given this task to lead this noble task. In 2002 the Bureau produced standards for edible cassava flour. Copies are available at the Malawi Bureau of Standards offices in Blantyre, Malawi at about US\$5.00.



IITA/SARRNET was co-opted into the Technical Committee on Chemicals and Chemical Laboratories to look into the formulation of Standards for Cassava starch. The following draft standards have been discussed.

- Specifications for Cassava and Maize starch for the cotton textile industry.
- Methods of test for starches and derived products. This included draft test methods for protein, total ash, ash, sulphated ash and moisture content.
- Methods for sampling starches and starch products. This details how many

samples should be taken per known quantity of batch and how the sample should be taken.

- Specifications for caustic soda, pure and technical.

Usually for the formulation of standards the following steps are followed:

1. Expression of interest to the Bureau for standards of a particular commodity/product. This is done by individuals, associations, industry, groups of people or government.
2. The standards officer at the Bureau looks for information from either Bureaus from other countries that already have standards for such products or from individual/institutions quite conversant with or using the product in question and comes up with a draft standards proposal.
3. The proposal is presented before a technical committee to discuss it. This committee also decides whether the standard should be mandatory or voluntary. IITA/SARRNET is in a committee at this level. There are several committees depending on the subject matter.
4. After the technical committee the draft is forwarded to a higher level; the Divisional Committee for further review before it is passed on to a policy body for release.

The Bureau is also working on edible cassava starch. This falls under the Food and Agriculture Technical Committee where IITA/SARRNET is also a member.