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Underutilized food and alimentary technology, a synergic interaction as an approach to a hunger free world

Hunger, whose origin is not due to just one reason, may be consider the major health problem in the whole world where the high increase in population is one of the most important reasons of this problem. As a consequence, many studies have been described regarding alimentary techniques to increase food availability, and lots of efforts have been made to search underutilized food from natural sources (animals and plants). However, there is still a gap between the research for new food sources and alimentary techniques that must complement each other to obtain the benefits needed. An example of this is Escamoles (seasonal ant eggs) whose were only consumed by people from rural communities, but due to their high nutritional value, they were promoted as a good source of nutrients. The main problem was that Escamoles were available only for a few months every year (spring season) and for such, it was necessary to apply production techniques to increase the amount of Escamoles, then it was necessary to apply different preservation techniques such as refrigeration or freezing depending on the period of time estimated for their consumption. In addition, adequate preparation techniques were applied in order to keep nutritional value and sensory characteristics that are essential to be accepted by consumers. It is worth mentioning that every procedure employed did not caused important changes in nutritional value but increased their shelf life, so this important source of nutrients can be available all year and help to improve people´s access to valuable sources of nutrients that could not be possible without appropriate production and preservation techniques. In conclusion, studies of underutilized natural sources of food should be support by alimentary techniques to provide enough food and so to approach to a world free of hunger.

Biography

Virginia E Melo Ruiz is professor at Autonomous Metropolitan University, Mexico City, Mexico. Her research is focused in underutilized food and techniques for preservation and production of products from natural sources such as edible insects and plants to reduce alimentary deficiency and to improve health of people in rural and urban areas. She has about 40 years of experience in the field and has published several papers in the topic.

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