

SOLAR DRYING - A GIGANTIC OPPORTUNITY TO COMBAT HUNGER AND POVERTY

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Abstract: Nearly half of world food production fails to reach consumers. Current food production could easily feed the entire world. Indeed, it could feed up to 14bn humans. So why is there still hunger?

Drying is undoubtedly the most important solar food processing procedure. Numerous methods are already available, to meet all small and large scale requirements. Whenever there is over-production, or the food does not meet existing "standards", it can be dried and sold later, when there is a demand for it. Solar food dryers can also carry out other non-food related tasks, such as drying briquettes, pellets, wood, etc. to obtain a cleaner burn in gasifiers or cookstoves in parts of the world where the inhabitants rely on burning solid fuels.

The author has distributed a large number of solar food dryers in Africa. It became obvious that families, farmers, food syndicates etc. previously knew nothing about the opportunities offered by food drying technology, or had been misinformed. Once the advantages were demonstrated, dryers were adopted enthusiastically, and without any hesitation. This can only mean that the agencies responsible for economic development – various branches of government, and their representatives – have failed to disseminate information about food drying technology, or provide the necessary financial and technical support to enable the spread of these cheap, simple, beneficial practices.

In line with the *Faro Declaration of Intent**, the author strongly recommends an alternative model for promoting food drying technology – empowerment of a network of 'grass roots' educators, supported by NGOs, in developing and developed countries. All of the principles are easy to understand, and easy to apply. Large capital investments are not required, and the author's experience demonstrates that food drying practices spread very rapidly and automatically once adequate advice and support is in place.

Keywords: Solar Drying, Solar Food Processing

*The *Faro Declaration of Intent* was agreed following the CONSOLFOOD conference of January, 2016, which took place in Faro, Portugal.