

East African Standards for cassava flour: Processors Guide

This is a summary of the key requirements of the East African Standards and Codes of practice aimed at guiding cassava processors in selecting quality raw materials, processing, packaging and labelling of quality and safe cassava flour. These guidelines are essential in ensuring the production and handling of safe and quality cassava flour.

1) Raw material

Cassava flour is produced from fresh cassava roots or dried cassava chips.

Fresh cassava roots



Use roots that have been harvested at the right stage of maturity and which are fresh, firm, clean, wholesome and free from pests and diseases.

Dried cassava chips

Use cassava chips that are:

- ▶ free from impurities such as dead insects, animal droppings, soil and any other foreign matter.
- ▶ not mouldy and the colour should be characteristic of the cassava variety - either white, creamy or yellow.
- ▶ have recommended moisture content of 12% and below.



2) Processing premises & structures

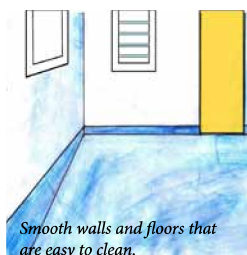


Surrounding environment

- ▶ Should be kept clean at all times free off litter and garbage, dust, and debris. The grass should be kept short to prevent it from harboring pests such as rats.
- ▶ Stagnant water in gutters, open drains, potholes and pools should be eliminated.

Structures

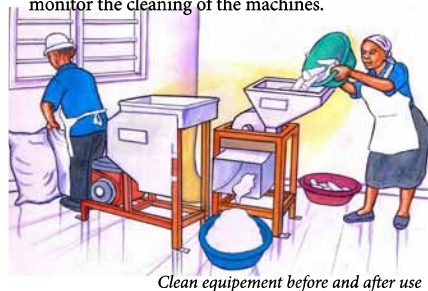
- ▶ Buildings should be designed and constructed in a way to facilitate easy cleaning and maintenance - smooth walls, windows, floor and ceiling.



- ▶ Floor, roof, wall, windows and screens should be well maintained and kept clean.
- ▶ Doors should be tight fitting to keep off rodents, insects and dust into the processing area.

3) Processing equipment

- ▶ All machines should be kept clean and free from dust and dirt. A cleaning and maintenance program should be established. The best recommended practice is to clean them before and after use.
- ▶ It is recommended to have a quality controller to monitor the cleaning of the machines.



4) Storage

This applies to the storage of raw material, (fresh cassava and dried chips) and finished product (cassava flour), packaging material and machine spare parts.

- ▶ Stores should be kept clean and free of vermin.
- ▶ Adequate lighting and ventilation is required.
- ▶ Finished products, raw materials and spare parts should be stored separately.
- ▶ Cassava flour and dry chips should be stored in plastics containers, clean polypropylene bags or aluminum containers that are covered and are of food grade.

5) Facilities

Facilities such as water, lighting, toilets, changing rooms and dining room are a prerequisite for any food processing plant

- ▶ Covered toilets, facing away from the processing plant, should be provided and kept clean all the time.
- ▶ Hand washing facilities with soap should be provided at key areas such as the toilets, production and packaging areas.



6) Workers' Hygiene and Health



Basic workers' hygiene is critical as pathogens can be transmitted from people to the products.

- ▶ All workers should be trained in hygiene and sanitation.
- ▶ Employees in direct contact with food should have medical examination against communicable diseases such as Tuberculosis, (TB) typhoid and cholera and records to be kept.
- ▶ Workers with open sores, infected wounds or serious illnesses (vomiting, diarrhea, fever) should not be allowed in the processing room. Records should be kept to track serious illnesses as required
- ▶ Smoking, coffee and lunch breaks should be taken in a separate area away from production and packaging areas to avoid any contamination.

7) Labeling and packaging

It is a legal requirement for consumers including regulatory authorities to know the details of the food they are buying/consuming.

- ▶ The label should include information on the content, weight, name/address of manufacturer and brand name, Country of origin, date of manufacture, best before date, storage instructions, among others.
- ▶ The information should be clear, prominently placed, easy to read and indelible (not easy to remove). Additional information such as trade mark may be included so long as it does not interfere with the mandatory requirements and is not deceptive and misleading
- ▶ Cassava flour should be stored in plastic containers, polypropylene bags, tins, laminated paper bags that are of food grade in dry and cool condition.



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