



Fish for Livelihoods

WorldFish Myanmar

Nutrition Update

September 2020

Commercial production of dried small fish powder for infants and young children in Myanmar

Fish for Livelihoods funded by USAID in partnership with FedWell Foods, a private company based in Myanmar, is testing the viability of producing dried small fish powder as a complementary food for infants and young children.

Earlier reports cited fear of choking on fish bones as main barrier for mothers and caregivers to feed fish among under 5-year-old children which is a missed opportunity as fish is widely available and highly nutritious. Not only does it contain easily absorbable protein, small indigenous fish is rich in essential nutrients that can support child growth and development.

When the child reaches 6 months of age, breastmilk is not sufficient to provide all the nutrient needs of a growing child, hence, additional nutritious food is required in order to prevent undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies. Fish in powdered form will resolve the issue of bones, thereby creating a suitable animal sourced complementary food for infants. Dried small fish powder can be mixed with porridge or soft rice for consumption.

From conception until two years old is a critical period for child growth and development. Nutrient gaps at this stage can cause irreversible damage with serious negative consequences in children such as poor performance at school and higher likelihood of getting sick. Subsequently, in adulthood, economic productivity can be lower and are more likely to develop chronic diseases such as hypertension and diabetes.

To develop dried small fish powder product, small indigenous fish species (e.g. Mola, Burmese loach) are dried using a dehydrator and grinded until it turns into a fine powder. Ingredients such as chickpea powder, sweet potato, palm sugar, onions, garlic, and salt are added to form a dried small fish powder mixture. The mixture can be incorporated to existing FedWell Foods products such as rice porridge, soups and noodles increasing the nutrient value of the dish.

Next steps for FedWell Foods are the following;

- further development of product
- cost analysis
- market analysis
- laboratory analyses (macronutrients, microbiological and heavy metals)
- information dissemination to promote the product

The product will be available soon for testing, watch out for it in your areas!!!

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