



SEAWEED QUALITY MANUAL

SOLOMON ISLANDS



A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR



SEAWEED FARMERS,
BUYING AGENTS,
FISHERIES OFFICERS
AND EXPORTERS



"GOOD-QUALITY SEAWEED CAN FETCH BETTER PRICES"

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Original text: English

Secretariat of the Pacific Community Cataloguing-in-publication data 2007

Tiroba, Gideon.

Seaweed Quality Manual: a practical guide for seaweed farmers, seaweed extension officers, buying agents, fisheries officers and exporters / compiled and designed by Gideon Tiroba.

1. Marine algae culture – Quality control -- Handbooks, manuals, etc. 2. Seaweed – Quality control

I. Tiroba, Gideon II. Title III. Commercialisation of Seaweed Production in Solomon Islands (CoSPSI) IV. Secretariat of the Pacific Community

639.89

AACR2

ISBN 978-982-00-0234-0

Concept by Commercialisation of Seaweed Production in Solomon Islands (CoSPSI)

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The Commercialisation of Seaweed Production in Solomon Islands (CoSPSI) project is funded by the European Union to assist the development of the commercialisation of the seaweed industry in Solomon Islands. The main objective of the project is to improve the socio-economic well-being of isolated rural communities by increasing diversification of the cash economy and the involvement of women in the primary productive sector.

Prepared for publication at
Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Noumea, New Caledonia

BP D5
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Preface

This manual is designed for farmers, buying agents, exporters and fisheries officers who play an important role in achieving the required quality of seaweed for export.

The purpose of the manual is to educate farmers to understand the importance of good-quality seaweed, the role they play and the benefits they can achieve.

The manual also provides guidance for buying agents, exporters and fisheries officers in the roles they perform to improve and maintain the required quality of seaweed.

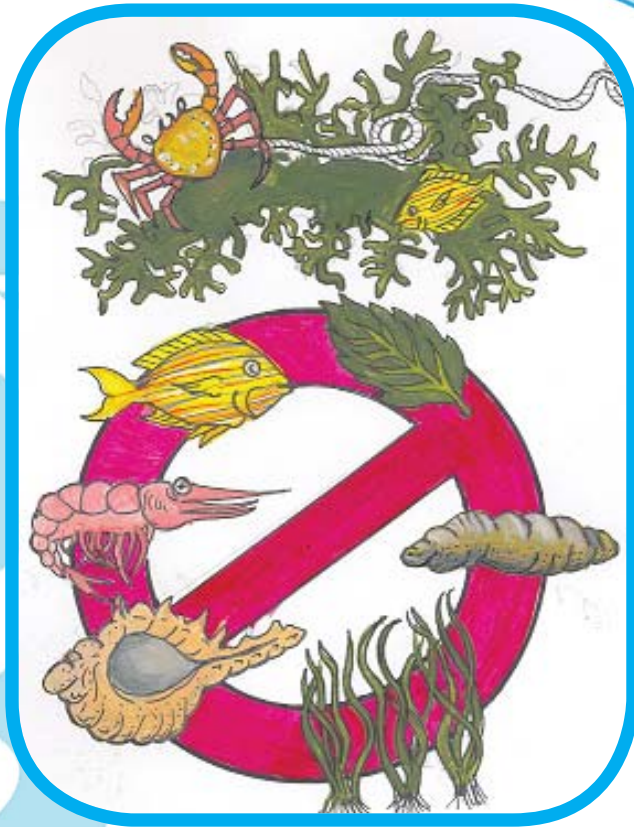
1. What is seaweed quality?



Seaweed of acceptable quality should not contain more than:

- 35% water (H_2O) moisture content
- 28% salt (KCl) - potassium chloride
- 34% salt free dried matter
- Usually purple, green and white with some salt crystals are signs of good quality

2. What affects the quality of seaweed?



Impurities such as sand, raffia, fish, shells and crabs are not acceptable by overseas buyers or processors. These can damage processing equipment and could also affect the price paid for the seaweed.

3. Drying seaweed

The following section shows the drying process and illustrates the requirements that a farmer must undertake when drying seaweed.

These are important areas which contribute to the quality of seaweed. Remember: always strive for the best quality!



3.1. Spread your seaweed!



During the drying process, spread harvested seaweed evenly and thinly so that it can be easily turned. The more you turn it, the quicker it will dry if weather conditions are good.

3.2. Don't heap your seaweed!



During the drying process, seaweed that is heaped will rot and lower the quality. It is also difficult to dry and will take a long time.

3.3. At night?



Raised covers during night time protect seaweed from condensation. They also allow air movement over the seaweed, which helps in speeding up the drying process.

3.4. During rainy days?



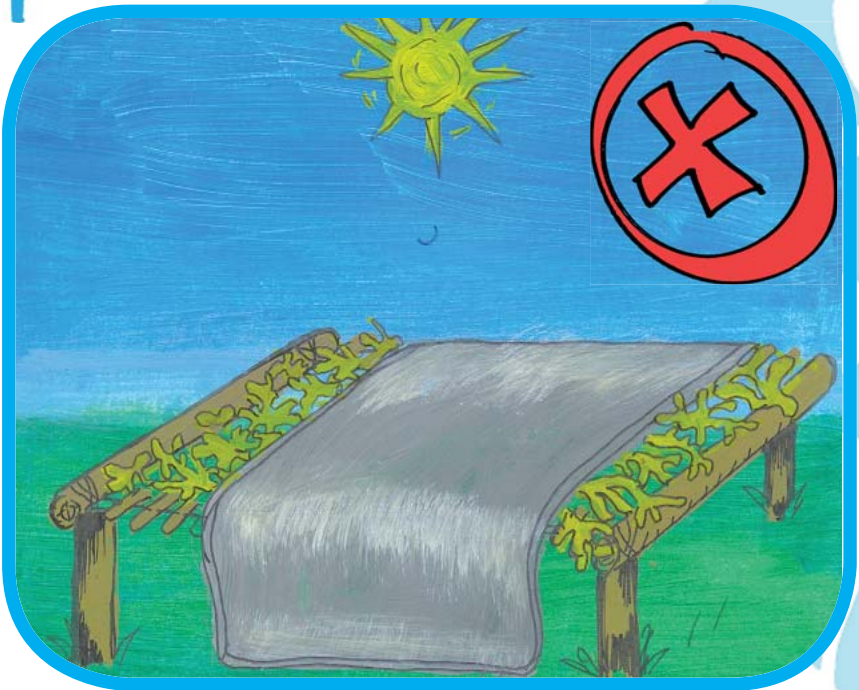
Rain/fresh water is the big enemy of seaweed. Rain on seaweed lowers the quality and reduces the weight. Don't forget to install a raised plastic cover on drying seaweed.

3.5. No cover?



Uncovered seaweed during rain will lower the quality and reduce the weight. Remember: seaweed will dissolve in fresh water (rain).

3.6. Direct cover?



Direct cover on seaweed will cause condensation, which bleaches the seaweed. It will also cause the seaweed to heat up and cook. This seriously lowers the quality of the seaweed.

4. Growing seaweed



- Fresh water slows growth of seaweed and even kills seaweed.
- Plant seaweed away from rivers, streams and areas near the beach where you can see fresh water coming out of the ground.
- Choose areas where there is good current or water movement. These bring food to the plants and help them grow healthy and fast.
- Healthy plants are the start of good-quality seaweed.

5. Role of farmers

1. Plant seaweed in good protected areas.
2. During harvest, ensure that impurities are not present among the seaweed (fish, crabs, tie-tie, shells.)
3. During the drying process, spread seaweed thinly on drying tables.
4. Use raised covers during rain or at night to protect the seaweed.
5. Try to grow several plots so that you will have a harvest every week.
6. Short cuts or lack of care at any stage (planting, growing, harvesting, drying and cleaning) can reduce the quality and reduce the price.
7. Never play “games” (adding water and rocks to gain weight).



6. Role of buying agent

1. Always attend to incoming seaweed and check to ensure that it is properly dried.
2. Reject wet seaweed.
3. Reject seaweed that contains impurities - fish, shells, crabs, sand, etc.
4. Advise farmers about the importance of seaweed quality control measures.
5. Good-quality seaweed can result in better prices being paid by the processors.
6. Good-quality: dry seaweed (not damp), clean seaweed (no sand, crabs, shells, etc.), colour (purple, green, white - not just white), not too much salt.



7. Role of exporter

1. Ensure that incoming seaweed from the Island is well dried.
2. Ensure seaweed does not get wet during transportation.
3. Send small random samples from consignment to overseas buyers.
4. Results of samples must be provided to Fisheries Department.
5. Bale and pack seaweed before export.
6. Provide weight of exported seaweed to the Department of Fisheries.



8. Role of fisheries officer



1. Visit farmers and carry out training.
2. Monitor production and quality.
3. Advise on meteorological conditions.
4. Share new techniques.

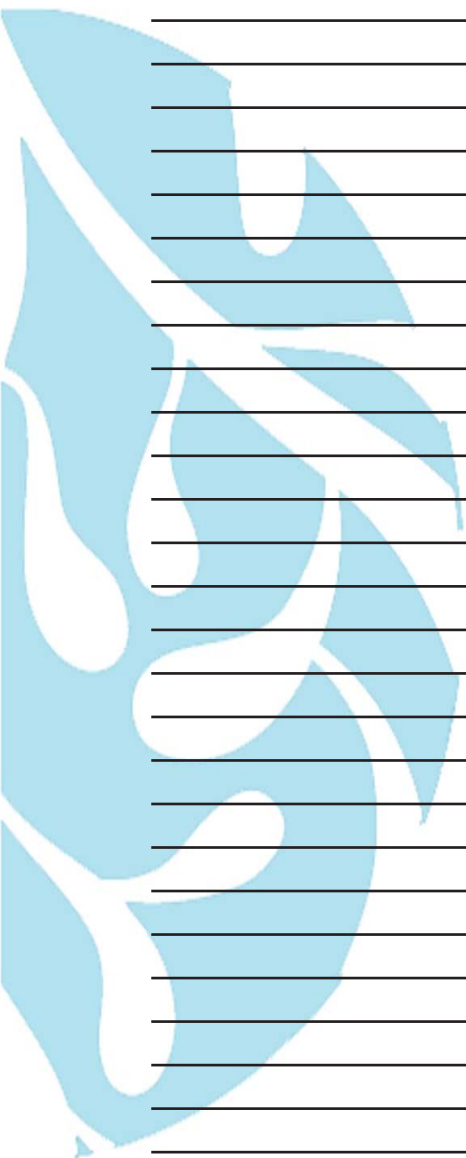
9. Quality determines price

Meet required standard as prescribed by overseas buyer (gel strength test above 1000mg/cubic cm)

High content of carrageenan - 4 kg dry seaweed = 1 kg carrageenan (seaweed – flour powder)

Remember:
Good-quality can fetch good prices.

NOTES



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