

Our journey towards co-creating our dehydrated jackfruit.

JAKANA FOODS



Meg Hilbert Jaquay
Managing Director



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ABOUT JAKANA

Jakana Foods is a well-known agro-processor specialising in dried fruits, fruit juice, vanilla, banana, fiber, and condiment products in Uganda. They are operating since 1994 and are an experienced exporter of a wide range of products. Jakana also has its own out-grower scheme and a long experience in sourcing products using organic practices and principles, fair wages and fair trade for their farmers.

START OF BLU PARTICIPATION

Jakana has been a participating partner since the start. Their motivation for getting involved in BLU and the jackfruit value chain stemmed from a desire to expand their portfolio, explore new markets, and embrace opportunities for experimentation. Meg Jaquay, director of Jakana, adds: "Anytime when we can be part of a research & development process of a new innovative product, it helps us move forward."

CONTRIBUTION

Throughout supply and processing, the recurring theme of Jakana's contribution seems to be efficiency. First of all, in the dehydrated jackfruit processing. Jakana took the lead in the development of the perfect slicing patterns, cooking times, pulper machinery, and extraction of water. Besides being efficient, Jakana was creative and created delicious jackfruit meatballs in Uganda. Leveraging their years of expertise in sweet (ripe) jackfruit and easily transitioning to young jackfruit, Jakana has been number 1 in sourcing. They delivered the best fresh jackfruit quality, the highest quantities most efficiently. The head of fruit supply Andrew Sseweke was an essential component in this success. Meg: "He understands logistics and how to work with farmers. He has been there since 2014 and has a good relationship with the community. People are able to trust him."



In addition, Andrew provides advice to other suppliers regularly and also presented about efficient harvesting during the Extension Worker Meet Up in February 2023.

Without Jakana, the traceability of jackfruit would not have been what it looks like today. Meg, having experience in data management, provided technological advice during the development. Andrew reported honest feedback during the implementation in the field.

Meg also mentored and supported one of her own best employees to joining the Fiber Foods team. "In the beginning, it potentially was a loss for us. But in the long run, he provided the leadership that helped other businesses, including us. I was happy to mentor him so he could step up, grow and help out in bigger ways, because I definitely saw an opportunity for growth in the jackfruit business."



SUMMARY

Because of Jakana's double role (supplier and processor), they made contributions in both field and production:

- Development of the perfect slicing patterns, cooking times, pulper machinery, and extraction of water.
- Production dehydrated jackfruit: 4,610 kgs
- Excellent supplier and leading example for other suppliers, including traceability
- Sourcing fresh jackfruit: ~ 200,000 kgs
- Farmer engagement: 274 farmers (27% women)
- Community engagement: 2 extension workers and ~50 collectors
- Processing facility employment: 6 full-time staff, 6 supporting staff.

Our - young -jackfruit is peeled, cut, and dehydrated directly after harvesting in Africa.