

Juraporn Srimuangmai 2008: Potential of Fried Rice Cracker Product Development in Central Region. Master of Home Economics, Major Field: Home Economics, Department of Home Economics. Thesis Advisor: Associate Professor Tasanee Limsuwan, Ph.D. 185 pages.

The objectives of this research were to study the characteristics of fried rice crackers produced in the central region, as well as the production process, nutritional value and development potential, with emphasis on raw materials, production, product quality, marketing and personnel. The research was undertaken by the survey method, using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. The samples were chosen by multi-stage sampling composed of 4 local production groups ranking 3-5 stars from 3 provinces; Nakhon Prathom, Lop Buri and Ratchaburi. The data were collected by interviewing 4 producer group heads and 79 production and marketing personnel. Statistical analysis methods consisted of frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean and standard deviation for the quantitative data and content analysis was used for quantitative data.

The fried rice crackers mostly had a round shape with various kinds of topping. Dry shredded pork topping, sunflower seed topping and assorted cereal cereal topping were the three most popular toppings. The production processes were similes among the 4 production groups with some slight differences based on their folk wisdom to create uniqueness for their products. The nutritional content of the rice crackers were as follows; energy content 494.56 - 593.35 kcal per 100 grams, fat 23.00 - 42.79 grams, protein 4.75 - 10.20 grams, total carbohydrate 42.36 - 64.25 grams, sugar 11.23 - 26.67 grams, sodium 234.20 - 645.90 grams, ash 0.99 - 2.12 grams and moisture 2.60 - 2.53 grams per 100 grams of rice cracker. The fried rice cracker with dry shredded pork topping from Nakhon Prathom province had higher sugar and sodium than rice crackers from other areas.

The reasons the producer groups chose to produce rice cracker products were 1) raw materials were readily available in the local area; 2) its known popularity as a folk Thai food product; and 3) its low production cost. The development potential was considered at a high level overall based on raw materials, production process, product quality obtained, and its existing market. However the minor potential based on raw material suitability, product shelf life number of sale, and labor turnover rate was at a moderate level and based on the knowledge of personnel was at a low level.

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Thesis Advisor's signature

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