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AQUACULTURE & FISHERIES INNOVATION LAB

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**Title:** Consumer Perceptions and Preferences of Wild and Farmed Nile Tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus L.*) and African Catfish (*Clarias gariepinus Burchell 1822*) in Urban Centres in Kenya

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**Abstract:** Past fish production research done in Kenya suggests a strong production focus, leaving many fish consumer and marketing questions unanswered. This study investigated consumer fish preferences and trends in demand for Nile tilapia and African catfish in five urban centres in Kenya. A total of 384 questionnaires were administered to fish consumers and retailers in open markets, supermarkets, hotels and landing beaches. Descriptive and inferential analyses were done using SPSS Version 20.0. Female consumers were significantly higher ( $p > 0.05$ ) in all study areas except Nairobi. There were significant differences in levels of preference for either the wild and farmed Nile tilapia ( $p > 0.05$ ). Main reasons for consuming fish by consumers were health benefits of fish, good taste and ease of cooking. Quantities of fish purchased by consumers was generally small ranging from  $1.68 \pm 0.20$  kgs in Kisumu to as low as  $0.30 \pm 0.04$  kgs in Nyeri. The main factors affecting consumer preference of Nile tilapia

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fish were price, overall fish quality, nutritional value, and healthiness. In order to promote preference and consumption of farmed fish in Kenya, the government should educate consumers about the safety, healthiness and nutritional value of aquaculture products.

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