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BOLIVIA: CRAZY FOR QUINOA

VIDEO

SACKS OF QUINOA

PREPARED IN KITCHEN

BOLIVIA STREET SHOTS

PAMY QUEZADA ON CAMERA

PAMY IN KITCHEN

AUDIO

NARRATION:

Quinoa – cultivated for centuries in the Andean Region – has become one of the world’s most popular new foods. (6.5)

With more protein and fewer carbohydrates than equal amounts of corn or rice, this member of the spinach family is now regularly sold in restaurants and health-food stores in many countries. (11.5)

Yet here in Bolivia, the world’s largest grower and exporter, quinoa had been looked down on, says La Paz businesswoman Pamy Quezada: (7.5)

PAMY QUEZADA: (In Spanish) F

“At first the mentality was that it was food for the poor people. But in reality, I believe with time we are beginning to understand that quinoa has many positive benefits.” (12)

NARRATION:

PREPARING DISHES

Four years ago, Pamy began serving quinoa at her chain of restaurants as part of a campaign to promote quinoa in Bolivia. Supported by the UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development, IFAD, the scheme not only involved local businesses but policy makers, marketing experts, farmers...and research institute Bioersity International. (23.5)

PAMY ON CAMERA

PAMY QUEZADA: (In Spanish) F

"It was hard at first, but now many people are opening up to quinoa and we're doing well, we're doing very well because of quinoa." (9)

BAKING COOKIES

NARRATION:

One of her best sellers is this quinoa chocolate chip cookie. Her company bakes more than one thousand a day. (6.5)

Each one looks and tastes the same...and while that might not seem extraordinary, one of the challenges for those working to promote quinoa has been to understand how to create products reliably. IFAD Coordinator, Wilfredo Rojas. (15)

WILFREDO ROJAS ON CAMERA

WILFREDO ROJAS: (In Spanish) M

"It is impossible to create the same product over and over again if you don't start from the same raw ingredients. That is why it is crucial to understand each variety of quinoa and then link the business that needs that variety with the farmer who can produce it in small amounts." (18.5)

NARRATION:

WIDE SHOTS OF LAKE

But with much of Bolivia's quinoa already destined for foreign markets, finding farmers who could produce specific varieties of quinoa for local businesses was a challenge...which is why project staff came here to Lake Titicaca, 3,800 metres above sea level. (17)

FARMERS IN QUINOA FIELDS

Small farmers like Elias Vargas and Viviana Herrera have traditionally grown quinoa but were cut out of the international export market because the volumes they produced were too small. (11.5)

STAFF WITH FARMERS

Now project staff are helping them identify specific quinoa varieties as well as forge links with local food stores, bakeries and restaurants who want to buy it. (10)

ELIAS VARGAS ON CAMERA

ELIAS VARGAS: (In Spanish) M
"Now people everywhere are buying quinoa. In La Paz they are selling it in the markets. For that reason we are able to sell our small quantities. And with that money we can support ourselves." (14.5)

NARRATION:

Ironically, with more money to spend, families here are also beginning to eat more imported foods...just like their city cousins. (8)

FAMILY

But here too...helping them understand the nutritional benefits of eating quinoa, as well as different ways to prepare it, seems to be paying off. (8.5)

ELIAS ON CAMERA

ELIAS VARGAS: (In Spanish) M

“Before when we didn’t know that quinoa was so healthy we sold it and bought noodles. Now that we know that quinoa is so good we don’t buy other foods. Now we clean the quinoa and make soup out of it, we make juice, cakes, everything out of quinoa.” (18.5)

NARRATION:

There are more than 3,000 varieties of quinoa found in the Andes, many capable of surviving extreme temperatures as well as high altitudes. (8.5)

Understanding the differences in these varieties will undoubtedly lead to increased consumption and a brighter future for these Andean farmers. (8.5)

This report was produced by James Heer for the United Nations. (4.5)