

The Lagos State Consumer Protection Agency (LASCOPA) has called the attention of Lagos residents to the increase in sophisticated palmoil adulteration, urging them to be vigilant as the adulterated version, which consists of some carcinogenic ingredients have made their way into the market.

This warning was issued during a technical presentation at the Lagos State Food Safety Conference and Exhibition, where a paper titled “Palm Oil Adulteration: Emerging Risks, Detection Strategies and Regulatory Control” was delivered by the Senior Lecturer, Department of Food Technology, Auchi Polytechnic, Dr. Nurah Oseni.

Dr. Oseni explained that Palm Oil is highly vulnerable to such manipulations because of its common use, the association of deep-red colour with quality, price variations, difficulty in distinguishing original from fake and informal market practices. She highlighted the use of possibly carcinogenic products such as Sudan and Azo dyes to alter colour quality.

Other emerging risks including digital traceability risks, falsified product labels and batch records were addressed by her, while emphasizing the need for proper surveillance and detection methods across the supply chain. She advocated for simple visual checks such as the separation of palmoil into two layers, with the bottom red-yellowish, instead of the typical uniform red.

Nevertheless, she clarified that visual check alone cannot be relied upon. A tiered detection system which includes a risk based screening, rapid physicochemical and spectroscopic tests and lab analysis was encouraged by Dr. Oseni.

Additionally, she recommended a five step frame work: Risk Map, Sample, Screen, Confirmation and Act , backed by an adulteration intelligence database alongside collaborative effort among producers, suppliers, researchers, regulators and consumers.

Meanwhile, the General Manager/ CEO of the agency, Afolabi Solebo Esq. reiterated LASCOPA’s commitment to protecting consumers from substandard products, advising consumers be vigilant.