

Assessment of economic losses of horticultural produce during supply chain activities in Sri Lanka

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A study was conducted with the objectives of assessment of present status of the existing supply chain in Sri Lanka, to identify the causes of postharvest losses at different points of the supply chain from farm gate to consumer and for publishing a book giving recommendations and suggestions for postharvest loss management targeting the future improvement of the system.

The study was conducted including two up country fruit and vegetable supply chains and three low country fruit and vegetable supply chains namely Nuwara Eliya to Narahenpita, Nuwara Eliya to Dambulla, Thambuthegama to Narahenpita, Thambuthegama to Kegalle and Embilipitiya to Manin Market respectively. The crops covered were carrot, leeks, cabbage, beans, tomato, bitter-gourd, okra, brinjal, avocado and banana.

The results revealed that heavy losses occurs due to unawareness about correct harvesting handling, packaging and transportation practices, lack of properly developed roads specifically at rural level, lack of vehicles that are modified suitably for transportation of fresh produce, poor protection of the harvested produce from sun and rain (specially at collection centers and at dedicated economic centers) and poor access to market information. It is also found that losses can be reduced by 10-15% if the fresh produce packed in well ventilated stackable plastic crates during transportation rather than that of the packaging in conventional poly sacks.