

Introduction of the “Fresh Chain” concept to minimize postharvest losses of fruits and vegetables.

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The postharvest losses of fruits and vegetables have been estimated to be around 30-40%. With the aim of preventing such losses occurring at different stages in the postharvest system, the IPHT launched a program to introduce a “Fresh Produce Chain” from farmer to consumer, where improved postharvest techniques are adopted to eliminate waste and minimize losses. Under this project the IPHT has brought together the personnel involved in the entire chain, namely, farmers, collectors, wholesale & retail traders, and also, public and private organizations engaged in postharvest activities and banks for a collective effort directed towards minimizing such postharvest losses. In this context, the IPHT has already conducted a series of workshops to create awareness among them on the magnitude of postharvest losses in fruit and vegetables and to suggest and support corrective measures to eliminate wastes, thus benefiting all those in the “Fresh Chain”.

In the year 2001, the IPHT has conducted four training workshops for farmers, and collectors in Keppetipola and for wholesalers in the Manning Market in Colombo. These discussions resulted in collective agreements on initiating fresh produce chains, linking the growers, collectors and transporters, in the Keppetipola with wholesalers and retailers in Colombo and other areas of the country.

Further, on the request of the IPHT, the Phoenix Plastic moulding Ltd. has agreed to provide plastic crates at subsidized rate to initiate a demonstration fresh produce chain from Keppetipola to Manning Market.