



Estimation of Post Harvest Losses of Selective Market Chains in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

It was estimated that post-harvest losses of fruit and vegetables were 20-40% and it was 10-15% in grains and pulses in Sri Lanka. But there is very little data available in different system along the post harvest chain. Therefore, the present study was undertaken to evaluate the post-harvest losses in some fruits and vegetables in Sri Lanka. A survey of post-harvest losses in some fruits and vegetables was carried out in the different provinces. Post-harvest chains with intermediate subsystems were identified in different types of perishable crops. Primary data were collected by visiting and interviewing farmers and sellers through different sub systems of the chain. After the survey, post-harvest losses were calculated as a percentage and data were analysed, the average loss per item was calculated along the post harvest chain. Data on Post-harvest losses of 15 types of perishable crops namely potato, red onion, okra, dragon fruit, water melon, tomato, leeks, papaya, beans, brinjal, pine apple, snake gourd, banana, capsicum, cabbage were evaluated. Total losses range from 5.6 to 41.2% for most of the crops. Minimum post-harvest loss was shown in less perishable crop like snake gourd and maximum loss was shown in high perishable crop like Papaya. There was positive relationship ($P < 0.05$) between distance from farm gate to consumer and total post-harvest losses of fruits and vegetables. Hence, a considerable proportion of these losses occurred during transport of the product to the market through whole seller while part of these took place during storage on the market shelves. A numerous factors contribute to these losses and mostly due to improper harvesting and transport methods and inadequate storage facilities. The considerable losses occurred during transportation of perishables. Therefore method of transportation should be developed in all post-harvest subsystems to reduce post-harvest losses.

Keywords: *post harvest losses, perishables, market chain, sub systems*