

Post harvest losses of potato (*Solanum tuberosum* L.) in Welimada area of Badulla district in Sri Lanka.

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Abstract

Potato is one of the most popular crops in Sri Lanka. It is used for preparation of delicious food and industrial production. Elimination of post harvest losses is essential to maximize the profit in potato production. This study examined the mode of post harvest losses and percentage loss during each post harvest operations carried out by farmers in Welimada area. The study area comes under the agro ecological region of Intermediate Upcountry (IU_{3a}), receiving annual rainfall of 1200 to 2250 mm and average mean temperature ranges from 15 to 22 °C. This study was conducted by administering and structured questionnaire among randomly selected 28 farmers from different GS divisions in Welimada area.

The study showed that more than 60 % of the farmers having a land extent less than 1 acre came under small scale and medium (1-10 acres) and large scale farmers (> 10 acres) were 30% and 10% respectively. Major cultivating potato varieties were Granola, Desiree, Binella and Raja accounted for 75, 10, 8, 7 percent respectively. They rotationally cultivate beans, cabbage, raddish and beet root in their land. The percentage of farmers cultivating beans, cabbage and raddish were 62, 26 and 12 respectively. Post harvest losses of potato during harvesting accounted for 16 % in which wounding, covering by soil and peel off were 50, 35 and 15 percentage respectively. Peel off was not considered as a severe post harvest loss which happens frequently in hard soil and early harvesting of potato. Harvested tubers were stored on floor, jute bags, wooden and plastic boxes. Both wooden and plastic boxes reduce losses in storage than other methods. During transporting, suppressing effect in jute bag facilitated oozing of sap from tuber and it induced fungal growth and finally increased rotted tubers which accounted for 9 % of losses. Tubers on the top of the jute bags were tied loosely and allowed to vibrate each other and induced peel off. The average potato yield varied from 12.6 to 16 mt/ha.

Keywords: Potato, Post Harvest Losses, Jute Bag and Rotted