

Title Capacity building in support of post-harvest development in Asia: FAO's initiative and activities

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Citation Book of abstracts, APS2010 & SEAsia2010 & GMS2010, August 2-4, 2010, Radisson Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand

Keyword Fruit; vegetable; quality

Abstract

Fruits and vegetables make a substantial contribution to food and nutrition security, to poverty alleviation and to enhancing farmer income in Asia and the Pacific Region. Fruit and vegetable production continues to show a growth trend across the region. FAO's statistics show an annual growth rate of 3.3 % for fruit over the period 1996 to 2006 while the annual growth rate for vegetable production was 4.9 % during that period. Fruit and vegetable consumption is also increasing across the region and this growth trend is likely to continue with increasing consumer awareness of the health benefit of fruits and vegetables, growing consumer preferences for healthy lifestyles and increasing incomes.

Post harvest losses in fruits and vegetables across the region, however, continue to pose a problem owing to poor post-harvest management and inefficient marketing systems. These constraints adversely affect the quantity and quality of produce available for consumption as well as farmer incomes and consumer prices. The safety of the region's fresh produce outputs is also a major issue of concern for national, regional and international markets.

A number of consultations conducted by FAO across the region during the early part of this decade highlighted the need for capacity development to upgrade fruit and vegetable post-harvest systems to address safety and quality and to reduce losses. FAO has responded to this need by partnering with renowned institutions in the region, to develop and to tailor Training of Trainer Programmes to the needs of the region. These programmes are team taught by specialists from the region and have been implemented across the region in collaboration with Governments and academic institutions.

This paper will describe FAO's activities and initiatives across the region, to help to build a culture of good practice in the region's fruit and vegetable sector.