

Title Postharvest research, education and training in the Philippines: The role of PHTRC from the past to the future

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Abstract

A training institution on postharvest handling of perishable crops for ASEAN, the Postharvest Horticulture Training and Research Center (PHTRC), was established amidst global concern on huge losses of such crops and lack of attention to it. In eight years, it successfully provided the initial training to mid-level faculty members, researchers and extension workers to hasten the implementation of research programs in their own countries. Henceforth, it played the central role in research, education and training of the needed manpower to carry on programs on postharvest in the Philippine. It does most of the basic research on fruits, vegetables and cut flowers in the field of physiology, biochemistry, morpho-anatomy, engineering, entomology and pathology. It also spearheads the development of technologies to reduce handling losses and establishment of quality assurance systems of intact produce and fresh cuts. In education, its primary role is in the development of instructional materials such as books and other publications, modules for instruction and visual aids. Its extensive collection of publications and other information materials on postharvest is also a great help to teachers and students as well as researchers.

The teaching function of its staff is done as members of the instructional units of the university. Through its training programs, it has trained staff from 22 countries in postharvest handling of fresh produce, aside from establishing a nucleus of researchers from ASEAN. It is envisioned that PHTRC will establish better linkages with other postharvest institutions in the ASEAN region and those doing work on tropical fresh produce outside ASEAN. A network of such laboratories will hasten the development of research and education in our respective countries. Research and extension programs on horticultural produce chain management will focus on quality assurance systems.