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Abstract

Member states of the United Nations have identified and set targets on eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for a progressive, sustainable and peaceful global society. The first goal calls for the eradication of hunger and food insecurity by 2015. Achievement of this goal will, in the main, depend on the success of agriculture (including horticulture and fisheries) in ensuring the sustainable production of sufficient quantities of good quality, safe and nutritious foods to meet the demands of a growing and more discerning global population. Even food production and supply are abundant, it is now well recognised that food insecurity can occur and persist at both the individual and household levels, especially when people lack adequate income to purchase the food they need. The development and deployment of appropriate postharvest technology at all stages in the supply chain is therefore critical to the overall success of agriculture in meeting the first MDG. Postharvest technologies reduce food losses and maintain product quality thereby contributing to improved supply (quantity) of nutritious (quality) and safe foods. A vibrant postharvest sector also creates employment opportunities through the provision of technical services for product packaging, transportation and logistics, quality management (control and assurance), storage, labelling, etc. In addition to the deployment of relevant postharvest hardware, these operations require both semi- and highly-skilled people who are trained in different aspects of postharvest techniques and procedures. In this paper, we review the different approaches to postharvest technology transfer, and present a competency-based model of capacity building through in-country training of trainers. Case study applications of the model in Africa, Asia and the South Pacific will be presented and discussed.