

Title Postharvest quality management of fresh and fresh cut produce in chains of Myanmar

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Abstract

With the ever rising population and changing their life styles, consumption of fruits and vegetables is becoming much more than before. In 2007-2008, 525,327 ha of fruits and 380,862 ha of vegetables were grown in Myanmar. Mango is the most important and popular fruit with a production of 431,442 MT from the growing area of 60,208 ha. 189,390 MT of mangoes were exported to China through border trade last year. Among vegetables, the largest sown area is covered by tomato followed by cabbage and cauliflower. Although fruits and vegetable production are gradually increasing in Myanmar, it remains far left behind comparing with other GMS countries. It is common that markets are oversupplied with low quality fruits in peak season due to the poor post-harvest handling and marketing systems. The low prices of fruits and vegetables at their peak season are major constraint for growers. Day- to day supply volume of fresh produce influences of fresh produce from the main producing areas are supplied to fruit and vegetable wholesale markets of Yangon city (the focal point of lower Myanmar) and Mandalay city (the focal point of upper Myanmar). They are then distributed to retail markets of those cities and other markets of distant cities and towns. For processing and preservation of some fruits and vegetables there is only one state-owned canning factory in Myanmar. For prolonging the shelf life refrigerated storage, controlled atmosphere (CA) storage are not available. Therefore, infrastructure development including transport, storage and processing facilities is the first priority issue to increase the horticulture crop production.

In the globalization age, Myanmar will have more accessibility of international trade with the development of horticulture business in near future. To produce better nutritious and higher quality food is essential to ensure Myanmar fresh produce more competitive in the international market. In this regard, developing appropriate management systems and supply chain management systems are prerequisites before we enter the international fresh produce market. Education and training programs should be implemented at the university and fresh produce. Short term training programs should also be emphasized on individual requirements of producers, wholesalers, retailers and consumers. Marketing channels and general distribution systems of mango, tomato and aster flowers will be discussed in this paper. The survey results on quality awareness and quality management among growers, collectors, brokers, wholesalers and retailers will also be presented. The prospects of developing postharvest quality management systems will be emphasized.