

Title Do modern post-harvest technologies affect the socio-economic conditions of semi-temperate vegetable producers in northern Philippines? An initial investigation

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Abstract

As the major semi-temperate vegetable producing area in the Philippines, Benguet has been the pilot site for the use of modern production and post-harvest technologies. Several years ago, the Philippine government established cold chain facilities and tramline systems for farmers who expressed the need for such technologies. Modern technologies have impacted both positively and negatively on the socio-economic conditions of farmers. The paper highlights the short-term effects and the possible long-term impacts arising from the introduction and adoption of the cold chain and agricultural tramline systems. The short-term effects of the tramline system on the Western Poblacion Farmers Association include: a) easing the drudgery of manually hauling vegetables to the roadside, b) more time to devote to other farm activities, c) faster delivery of produce to market, d) a more active social organization resulting in greater cohesiveness and camaraderie, and e) a lower hauling cost. A technical and socio-economic evaluation of the mono-cable tramline revealed a host of socio-economic variables were influenced by the use of the tramline including: a reduction in the number of haulers; lower cost of hauling production inputs, and increased use of fertilizer. On the other hand, the cold chain system required farmers to adopt new cropping patterns; more precise and systematic growing of vegetables to meet high-end market requirements; consolidation of produce to meet the quantity requirements of the market; and capacity building to cope with the nuances of using cold chain facilities.