

Title Technical and socio-economic recommendations for the post-harvest system of fruits and vegetables vis-à-vis the market and food security focusing on Latin American and caribbean countries

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Abstract

The world production of fruits and vegetables has increased in the last years, not only because of the population growth but also for reasons related to health. Knowledge about how to handle fruits and vegetables during the post-harvest phase is as important as the production phase. In order to avoid qualitative, quantitative and, consequently, economic losses of fruits and vegetables during the post-harvest phase, it is suitable to identify and establish technologies and procedures that help to prevent losses, preserve quality and maintain the safety of the produce. That way it may access to a more competitive and fair market. This article deals with relevant issues to be considered in a post-harvest system with emphasis on the needs of Latin American and Caribbean countries. It is addressed to small and medium farmers of developing countries, highlighting the concepts of Good Production Practices (GPP), Good Practices on Post-harvest Handling (GPH), also the concepts of quality and safety applied to fruits and vegetables, for achieving not only market, but also food safety. Further, it is mentioned that an adequate post-harvest system management at small and medium levels for fruits and vegetables requires basic knowledge of the biochemical and physiological behaviour of each crop, but also familiarity on infrastructure and technologies along with socio-economic strategies, and the need to integrate stakeholders through alliances of productivity along the food chain. Key issues in post-harvest are highlighted without forgetting the environmental aspect and considering simple alternatives of processing for fruits and vegetables. Finally, some conclusions and recommendations are listed.