

Title Mechanical drying program to reduce rice postharvest losses

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Abstract

Out of 1285 identified and endorsed FIAs [farmers irrigator associations] as recipients based on the prescribed criteria of the program, only 1,096 were approved. As of March 2009, 411 units out of the 722 units of FBD [flatbed dryers] installed to the various intended recipients FIAs were already formally turned-over to the recipients. Almost 30,000 copies of information materials were produced and disseminated to create public awareness and information exchange between the program management and the public, as well as provide technical information on the fabrication, operation, and maintenance of the FBD system. More than 80 trainings, workshops, seminars, meetings, and field caravans were held to support the campaign. Fourteen local manufacturers nationwide signified interest to be accredited manufacturers of the FBD system but only 50% of these manufacturers passed the prescribed accreditation criteria which included legal business status, adequate facilities for manufacturing and servicing, human resources, technical capacity, etc. Almost 80% of the farmer-recipients used the FBD daily with more than 20% using it on a 24-hour operation due to high drying demands. About 40-120 bags were dried in one drying batch with an average drying duration of 7-10 hours depending on the initial moisture content. Economic analysis showed that drying cost using the FBD is less at Php. 18/bag compared with sundrying cost of more than Php. 25/bag, when the produce has high initial MC [moisture content] of 28% at 24% MC, sundrying cost was less than the FBD cost with a difference of less than Php. 2/bag. Investing in the FBD will be profitable if the drying fee is higher than Php. 25/bag with an annual volume of more than 130 bags. As of this date, the impact assessment on the reduction in postharvest losses due to the adoption of the FBD among FIAs is still on-going and will be published soon by DA [Department of Agriculture, Quezon City, Philippines]