

Title Reduction of the incidence of postharvest quality losses, and future prospects
Author Dov Prusky
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Abstract

Both quantitative and qualitative food losses of extremely variable magnitude occur during all harvest and postharvest stages, from harvesting, through handling, storage, processing and marketing, to final delivery to the consumer. The latest values published indicated that industrialized and developing countries dispose of roughly similar quantities of food. Whereas in developed countries the losses occur at the retailer and consumer stages, in the developing countries the losses occur during the production, harvest, postharvest and processing phases, because of poor infrastructure, low levels of technology, and low investment in food production systems. Quality cannot be improved after harvest, only maintained; therefore it is important to harvest fruits, vegetables and flowers at the proper stage and size and at peak quality. Preharvest production practices and factors such as cultivation practices, water supply, type of soil, environmental temperature and mechanical damage may seriously affect postharvest quality and result in the rejection or downgrading of produce at the point of sale. In addition, after harvest, improper temperature and humidity management as well as packaging and handling may have adverse effects on storage life and quality. Thus, integration of treatment methods calls for specific differential combinations of treatments for each product in each country.

<http://www.springerlink.com/content/vp7p83jpu8n46201/fulltext.pdf>