

Quality and safety in agri-food chains in the philippines: the case of mango

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Abstract

The fresh produce industry in the Philippines just like other developing countries is characterized by small scale production and fragmented marketing system that contribute markedly to the problem of quality and safety assurance along the supply chain. Farmers and traders that supply the produce to the “price-driven” markets rarely undertake actions to improve quality and safety due to market-related, socio-economic and awareness-related factors. In production, the lack of quality planting materials and high cost of inputs such as fertilizer and putting up irrigation system impact largely on quality. The high incidence of pests and diseases leads to misuse or overuse of pesticides in an effort to produce fruits and vegetables of good external appearance as demanded by the market. Improper postharvest handling practices such as poor packaging, use of recycled containers and exposure of the produce to the elements while awaiting transport greatly contribute to quality deterioration. Concerted efforts however, are being undertaken by the academe, government agencies and the private sector to address the above concerns. These include capability building through trainings on integrated crop management (ICM) and good agricultural practices (GAP), and increased support for the establishment of packinghouses and cold chain facilities, among others. A farm clustering approach is also being promoted to facilitate technology adoption and enhance awareness of different stakeholders on the changing quality and safety requirements of the market.