

# Improving the effectiveness of small-holder farm postharvest practices in Fiji

S.J.R. Underhill

Acta Horticulturae 1011: 41-48. 2013.

---

## Abstract

This paper outlines current postharvest handling practices of five vegetables supply chains in Viti Levu, the Fiji Islands. Domestic-orientated chains involved characteristically low-input production systems, had limited postharvest infrastructure (packing sheds, cool rooms and grading equipment) and reflected inadequate grower and trader postharvest handling knowledge and expertise. Domestic supply chains are often short, with poor and asymmetric communications, discontinuous transport logistics and ineffective postharvest disease-management the major contributors to postharvest losses. Paradoxically, while increasing farm size tended to reflect greater professionalism of production practices, this did not translate to concurrent improvements in postharvest handling. Export-orientated chains involve a much more structured approach to postharvest handling, based on trader and exporter-led interventions. Product consignments are sourced from a large number of growers, graded and packed in a central pack-house and held under cool storage prior to transport. Aspects of a quality management system are evident, with some traders also providing a support services to their contracted growers to improve product quality and supply uniformity.