

Abstract:

Potato and sweetpotato capture between 75 and 85% of assimilated dry matter in their product, as compared to some 55% for cereals. Their high yield potential and nutritional quality make root and tuber crops outstanding candidates for providing future food security in times when cereals have leveled off in their rate of production growth. Yield loss, not yield potential is the challenge in improving roots and tubers. Because of this, more benefits of research may accrue from improved crop management - e.g., disease free seed - than is the case for cereals. This paper reviews the role of root and tubers and the research challenges to be faced, as these crops increase their significance in the global food system and provide for increased income to the world's poor.