

Abstract:

The year round supply of fresh produce is influenced not only by the climatic conditions of wet and dry seasons, but also by the lack of understanding and limited skills of postharvest handling systems. Large amounts of horticultural crop are produced in the traditional farming systems during the rainy season or under irrigation in the dry season, but the quality is not so good. Most produce is wasted or lost through bruising, decay, and wilting. Furthermore, the means of transport on poor roads and improper handling at the various stages of marketing, contribute to the rapid deterioration and subsequent losses. These point to the limited or lack of knowledge, skills and resources for proper handling, storage, processing and marketing of produce. Training needs were assessed for appropriate development of modules, by using a participatory approach in northern Ghana and The Gambia. Modules are designed for use by master trainers and trainers but focused on the identified needs of farmers and other groups who handle fresh produce. The module development process involved meetings with farmers in selected communities and workshops for the master trainers and trainers. The modules cover such topics as maturity and harvesting of fresh produce, preparing vegetables for the fresh market, grading and packaging, and transport and handling of produce. The method of delivery and handling activities are explained in the module. Each module has fact sheets that can be used alone, or in combination with other modules, that explain other entrepreneurial issues. The design is flexible for trainers to adapt to various commodities.