

Title Systems thinking for food supply chains: fresh produce applications
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Citation ISHS Acta Horticulturae 712: 91-104. 2006
Keyword: Theoretical frameworks; simulations; management science; pedagogy

Abstract

Most current research is on technical issues and does not adequately integrate modern business management principles. Integration is also limited with respect to: the number and types of disciplines; interactions among research, outreach, and instruction personnel; and collaboration of researchers with industrial partners. Efforts should be made to expedite deliveries in addition to research on extending shelf life. Expanded use is needed of theoretical frameworks such as systems thinking and simulation models. Teams should include researchers from business schools who specialize in systems thinking, quality management, and supply chain management. Funding agencies should require a systems specialist on teams rather than require that all projects incorporate detailed systems content. Future improvements in food supply chains will require: creative pedagogical methods for instruction at the undergraduate and graduate levels, expanded integration of business leaders with researchers, and collaborations among business schools with technologists. Expanded interactions are needed with professional societies and associations specializing in systems and supply chains. Projects should be developed with input from business leaders from supply chains. Symposia such as MQIC should devote sessions to developing projects using systems thinking.