

Title Improving postharvest commodity quality management through training.
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Abstract

Application of computer-assisted learning (CAL) to training of staff involved in postharvest quality management procedures is discussed. The approach is illustrated using 2 examples that seek to achieve improved staff understanding of management options and the consequences of applying them. Grain Storage Tutor, initially developed in a collaborative project between Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam and Australia, is now being used to extend conventional training for people involved in grain and commodity storage. This system covers control of commodity moisture content, moulds and mycotoxins, and pest management, which are the most important issues in quality maintenance during storage in these countries. Several training courses have been conducted in each of the participating countries. This package is aimed at people working at all levels in the postharvest sector, formal educators, private and public research organizations, and private industry. The second system was developed in response to a need to ensure that Australian standards for quarantine fumigation with methyl bromide are met by exporting countries. It has been targeted specifically at fumigators and has been used in several training courses in Indonesia, where it will be incorporated into an accreditation scheme for fumigators and fumigation companies. Adoption and integration of CAL by organizations should lead to more effective training and substantial reductions in costs of training quality management staff, particularly where there are geographically distributed workforces. This will lead to improved decision making and technology transfer and to reductions in overall storage losses. The wider application of this approach to projects dealing with the safe storage of perishable commodities and the training of quarantine inspection staff is discussed.