

POST HARVEST LOSSES IN UP COUNTRY VEGETABLES

R.A.N.T. Ranatunga¹, K.S. Karunagoda² and A.P.S. Fernando¹

¹Department of Agricultural Systems, Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka.

²Socio Economic and Planning Centre, Department of Agriculture, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

Due to perishable nature of vegetables, post harvest losses are considered to be very high. Post harvest losses (PHL) may occur at any point in the market process, from the initial harvest through assembly and distribution up to the consumer. This study evaluates post harvest losses in up country vegetables in the urban supply chain and relationship of post harvest losses and the market margins. A sample of randomly selected producers, wholesalers, retailers and consumers were interviewed using a structured questionnaire.

PHL in the up country vegetables at producer level is 9.29%. At the producer level, the PHL is highest in beetroot (20%). Mainly these losses were due to fungal attacks, pest attacks including rats. At retailer level the PHL is 12% and the highest loss is recorded from cabbage (16%) followed by leeks (12%) and the minimum is recorded from beans (8%). The PHL of cabbage and leeks is mainly due to the removing of outer leaves to keep freshness. At consumer level the loss is about 8%. At the consumer level, the highest loss is recorded from beet root (13%) and the lowest from beans (5%). Total economic loss of the vegetables at consumer and retailer level for the two months period is Rs 508 and 64,457 respectively.

The marketing margins ranges from 31 to 19 percent and it is particularly high for cabbage (31%), tomato (26%) and beet root (20%). A clear relationship of PHL and marketing margin could be observed. PHL of vegetables show a reduction but still remain at a higher level. Prices of consumer level could effectively be reduced by further reduction of post harvest losses.

Key words: Marketing margins, Post harvest losses, Vegetables