

MARKETING AND POST-HARVEST MANAGEMENT OF FRUITS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

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Abstract

India is the second largest producer of fresh Fruits in the world accounting for about 9 % of world's production. The present paper attempts to study marketing channels and also attempts to estimate the extent of post harvest losses at various levels of marketing for selected fruits (peach, pear and plum). The study is based on primary data collected from farmers, pre-harvest contractors, commission agents, wholesalers and retailers using personal interview technique. The post harvest losses accounted for 19.32, 14.48 and 26 percent of the total production in peach, pear and plum, respectively. The study shows that cost incurred on various marketing operations is more than the producers' realization price. The price spread indicates that the producers' share in consumers' price is low as compared to marketing cost and intermediaries' margin. Pear markets were found to be more efficient than peach and plum because of higher marketing efficiency ratio of 1.31 owing to its lower marketing cost. This clearly indicates that post harvest management of fruits needs a lot of improvement for reducing these costs, minimizing losses and improvement in various forms including grading, packing, storage, transportation and marketing of fruits. Therefore, it can be concluded that if we develop the necessary infrastructure such as packing houses, pre-cooling units and cold storage facilities in production areas and near the market place we can reduce the losses of these products and improve financial status of growers.