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Economic evaluation of post harvest losses in tomato in Latur district of Maharashtra State

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ABSTRACT

Investigation was carried out during the year 2009-10 in Latur district of Maharashtra. In all sixty farmers were selected for the study on tomato production, marketing practices and losses incurred by farmers at the farm level and during transportation to markets. To study the post harvest losses in the marketing channels of tomato, two varieties were selected for the present study. The results revealed that the respondents were in the group of middle age, education level was of Primary level and the majority of respondents were medium farmers. At the farm level, the post harvest losses occurred during collection, sorting, packing and transportation. These losses occurred at farm level due to lack of storage facilities and improper handling. Storage of tomato was practiced neither at farm level nor at the trader level over a period of time. The overall post harvest losses were estimated to 35 kg per quintal of tomato. The post harvest losses in the market network were observed in each and every stage of handling. Plastic crates were used for long distant transportation and the packing losses were found minimum in the packing materials like plastic crates.

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Key words : Tomato, Processor, Post harvest losses, Gross return, Net profit

INTRODUCTION

India being a vast country with varied soil and agro-ecological conditions has grown a wide variety of vegetables. India is the second largest producer of vegetables in the world next to China with an estimated production of about 50.09 million tonnes from an area of 4.50 million hectares. India shares about 12 per cent of the world output of vegetables from about two per cent of the cropped area in the country and contributes about 24 per cent of gross agricultural output. Lack of efficient methods of harvesting and non-availability of adequate facilities like transportation, packaging, storage, processing and market accessibility are the other problems in vegetable cultivation.

Post harvest losses-some key issues:

The post harvest losses of vegetables are a matter of grave concern for India's agricultural sector (Chadha, 1995). The vegetables being highly perishable commodities are lost after harvest due to insufficient methods of harvest,

decay, over-ripening, mechanical injury, weight loss, trimming and sprouting. Therefore, these aspects are to be looked critically to see if any improvement in the present state of vegetable industry, especially in the context of processing and marketing are to be accomplished. Post harvest losses generally lead to social and economic losses to the farmers, wholesalers, retailers and also to the consumers. It is estimated that the post harvest losses of food grains in the developing countries is due to mishandling, lack of storage facilities and pest infestations are put at 35 to 40 per cent. This means that one quarter of what is produced never reaches up to the consumers for whom it was grown, and the efforts and money required to produce it, are lost forever. It is understood that nearly 35 to 40 per cent of agricultural produce are wasted, which amount to a staggering loss of Rs.50000 crores annually. The amount of vegetables wasted in India is sufficient to meet the requirements of United Kingdom. Hence, careful handling of vegetables by selecting appropriate post harvest means will be of paramount importance to reduce the handling losses to a considerable extent.