Innovative postharvest management for reducing food losses

Asian producers lose up to 40% of their fresh fruit and vegetables (FFV) due to inadequate postharvest management. This is a huge loss of food and waste of resources (land, water, energy, labor, and money) utilized in production, postharvest handling, storage, transportation, and marketing. Customers are increasingly concerned about FFV quality and safety, and international markets reject FFV containing unauthorized pesticides and chemical residues exceeding limits and/or with inadequate labeling and packaging. Innovative tools and technologies to reduce postharvest losses in quantity and quality while assuring food safety throughout the supply chain are needed. Postharvest management in most developing Asian countries, however, needs improvement.

The APO in collaboration with the Council of Agriculture (COA)-Executive Yuan, China Productivity Center, and National Chung Hsing University organized a workshop on Innovative Postharvest Management Tools and Technologies for Fruit and Vegetable Products, 3–7 November 2014, in Taichung. Twenty-two participants from 12 APO member countries and 36 local observers attended. Ten resource persons from the USA, Singapore, Malaysia, and the ROC shared their knowledge.

After presentations, participants observed efficient operations of FFV supply chains at Hankuan Fruit and Vegetable Production Cooperative and JIA-SIAN Fruit and Vegetable Marketing Cooperative. They then grouped in breakout sessions to devise action plans to promote the adoption of similar FFV tools and technologies in their countries.

Participants observing fruit packaging for the export market at Chiayi County Chiaxian fruit and vegetable distribution cooperative.

In his closing message, COA Deputy Minister Wen-deh Chen remarked, "I am pleased to learn the workshop has come up with many practical solutions, tangible outputs, and concrete action plans on innovative postharvest management tools and technologies for fruit and vegetable products."