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“Bridging the gap between increasing knowledge and decreasing resources”

Making Optimal Use of Reduced Resources: The Role of Food Losses

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Abstract

Roughly one third of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted globally, which amounts to about 1.3 billion tons per year. This is unacceptable in regard to rising food prices, growing pressure on natural resources and dramatic famine in eastern and western parts of Africa during the last years. To date, it is difficult to evaluate and quantify food losses and waste. GIZ has therefore engaged in a couple of studies on various products in Africa, with the aim to quantify post-harvest losses by value adding actor.

Rice is a major staple food in Nigeria, with increasing rates of local demand. Its large supply-demand gap is bridged by imports. The average losses along the Nigerian rice value chain sum up to more than 20 % of the total production, contributing to around 0.5 million tonnes of CO₂ to the atmosphere.

Potato is the second most important food crop in Kenya, and mostly cultivated by small-holder farmers. Up to 95 % of the damages and losses recorded in the Kenyan potato value chain are attributed to the production level. They are in particular caused by inappropriate harvesting tools and not well-trained labour. The retail level with a market share of up to 90 % is mostly affected since also low quality produce is supplied to the markets. But missing market signals, in the form “better prices for better quality tubers” contribute to the low performance in potato production.

On the basis of the findings of the two surveys, appropriate measures for reducing food losses in the rice and potato value chains are presented.

Keywords: Potato, rice, value chain, waste reduction