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Postharvest losses (PHL) destroy 20-60% of the food production in East Africa, exacerbating already severe regional food insecurity. Traditional fermented foods may reduce PHL while providing biological enrichment for vitamins and essential amino acids, thus sustainably increasing available food supply and complimenting traditional socio-economic systems. Uganda’s fermented banana products have been refined and diversified over generations to make the greatest use of available resources. The current study undertook to explore existing causes of PHL in traditional fermented banana products of *Musa* (AAA-EAHB) ‘Mbidde’ and *Sorghum bicolor* in southwestern Uganda. The study gathered traditional knowledge through participatory explorations of processing methods on ***banana juice*** (a lightly fermented beer with less than 1% alcohol content [n=20 brewers]), ***tonto*** (a turbid beer with 4% alcohol [n=20]), and ***amarwa*** (a smoky spirit with around 40% alcohol [n=20])*.* Findings suggest that PHL accounts for major portions of the edible fruit, despite the efficiency of traditional fermentation practices. Collaborative mechanisms for PHL reduction should target major points of loss.

Harvesting bananas requires felling the plant and the tender fruit can easily be damaged (banana juice PHL=6.4%±8.8%; *amarwa* PHL=9.3%±9.5%). The pectinaceous banana fruit makes it difficult to get a transparent or clear juice instead of just pulp. Brewers overcome this by crushing the cellwands, often with stems of *Imperata cylindrica*,which is then discarded or fed to animals together with the fruit pulp (PHL banana juice=50.6%±0.2%; *tonto* PHL=39.2%±21.4%; *amarwa* PHL=47.6%±12.5%). Other causes of PHL are peeling (PHL *tonto*=18.6%±5.8%) and distillation (percent PHL *amarwa*=75.9%±1.3%). Total losses were rare, caused by factors such as: sabotage (mostly by children), mistakes in the brewing process (e.g. addition of too much water), poor ripening (inattention to the narrow threshold of physicochemical characteristics), and equipment failure (e.g. burst or leaking drums in distillation equipment). Other notable challenges include Banana Xanthomonas Wilt (BXW) and bad weather (up to 50% losses in the field). Weather causes other problems since consumption is seasonal (people drink less in the rainy season), and warm dry conditions are needed for fermentation.

Participatory PHL reduction can compliment, both culturally and nutritionally, the role that these products play in Ugandan food systems.