



Tropentag, September 17-19, 2018, Ghent

“Global food security and food safety:  
The role of universities”

## Food Losses and Innovations for Loss Reduction in Kenya

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### Abstract

Major effort to overcome Post-harvest losses (PHLs) is gaining momentum as this has connection with food security and the fight against poverty in most of the developing countries like Kenya. While research on the improvement of agricultural production has received considerable attention and funding, post-harvest activities have not attracted much attention from governments and international research organisations. One reason of the main reasons for this is lack of adequate understanding of agricultural produce value chains, the diversity and complexity of the activities involved, including product quality, harvest and storage, utilisation and marketing, and policies and institutions. The present study aimed at coming up with factual evidence on current PHLs of various commodities in Kenya at every step in the value chain in order to provoke increased efforts towards reducing post-harvest losses by different stakeholders. Eight common staple commodities were investigated i.e. maize, rice, cassava, beans, groundnuts, cabbage, tomato, and milk. Value chain maps of the respective commodities were identified and the related qualitative and quantitative information collected. Generally the losses were in the range of 25–60 % within the value chain. Post-harvest innovations to mitigate the losses were minimally documented or adopted. Many farmers were also willing to pay for the early warning devices. A lot of useful recommendations have been given including policy directives; however, quantitative evidence on the impact of the interventions and innovations in curbing post-harvest losses remains scanty. There is a strong need to build capacity on mechanisms of responding to post harvest losses including a high investment in research focusing on understanding staple foods and cash crop value chains. Post-harvest loss cause —effect relationships need to be documented at every step of the value chain for targeted responses towards reducing the loss. This will become the basis for highlighting the critical value chain points for every commodity for intelligent control and management of post-harvest losses.

**Keywords:** Innovations, kenya, losses, post-harvest, value-chains