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Reducing Post-harvest Losses in Citrus Value Chain in Benue State, Nigeria: Focus on Processing

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Abstract

Agriculture has been considered as one of the major contributing sectors to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) amongst most of African countries, Nigeria inclusive. To enhance agricultural growth and productivity, an in-depth understanding of both pre and post-harvest managements of agricultural produce is of paramount important. This could go a long way in reducing food losses and wastages, which has great impact on all the four facets of food security of any developing nation. Evident from researches have shown that, post-harvest losses are still high in Africa (20–40 % annually) compared with the other regions of the world. In Africa, the most commonly lost agricultural produces, after harvest, are the fruits and vegetables due to their seasonal glut in production and high perishable nature. In 2019, Nigeria produced over 4 million metric tones of Citrus fruits. However, the income of the Citrus farmers tends to be relatively low due to several reason such as; high post-harvest losses, unfavourable weather conditions, inadequate infrastructures, lack of value additions, inadequate knowledge on processing technologies among farmers, and inadequate processing factories in the country. It is against this background that, Alfred, one of the 2020 participants from Nigeria in the postgraduate training course, Food Chains in Agriculture, wishes to present his project idea on the topic: Reducing post harvest losses in Citrus fruit Value chain in Benue State, Nigeria with focused on processing. Specifically, the objectives of the project idea are to: train small-scale Citrus farmers on how to process citrus fruits into juice, animal feeds and organic manure, support trained farmers with equipments needed for citrus fruits products through donor funding, create more jobs opportunities to actors in citrus value chain and market citrus fruit products via out-grower scheme with citrus farmers.

Keywords: Citrus, Farmers, Nigeria, post-harvest losses, Processing