

Regional Training Course on the Measurement of Post-Harvest Losses in Asia and the Pacific

22 - 24 October 2018

Chiba, Japan

Concept Note

The issue of food losses is of great importance in the efforts to combat hunger, raise incomes and improve food security in the world's poorest countries. Food losses have an impact on food security for poor people, on food quality and safety, on economic development and on the environment. Increasing the availability and quality of the data on food losses is necessary to implement, monitor and evaluate programs for loss reduction and prevention.

Better food loss statistics would also contribute to the accuracy of Supply-Utilization Accounts (SUAs) and Food Balance Sheets (FBSs), which are useful analytical frameworks for the monitoring of food security and nutrition in countries.

Food Losses cover all quantity losses along the supply chain for all utilizations (food, feed, seed, industrial, other), up to but not including the retail/consumption level. Losses of the commodity as a whole (including edible and non-edible parts) and losses, direct or indirect, that occur during storage, transportation and processing, also of relevant imported quantities, are therefore all included.

Historically, loss assessment studies have been associated with loss reduction or prevention programmes. The Seventh Session of the United Nations General Assembly, meeting in 1975, set the goal of reducing Post Harvest Losses (PHL) by 50 percent by 1985. In 1976, FAO formulated a Special Action Programme that identified three major constraints on PHL prevention in developing countries.

More recently, the importance of food losses has been reasserted by African heads of state with a commitment to "halve current levels of post-harvest losses by the year 2025". Beyond the African context, reducing food losses and waste is among the top priorities of the Sustainable

Development Goal (SDG) framework, which has assigned a specific target to food losses and waste: “Target 12.3: By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses”.

As custodian agency for target 12.3, FAO developed an SDG indicator 12.3.1: Global Food Loss Index (GFLI) that focuses on post-harvest losses occurring from production up to (and not including) the retail level. The index measures the changes in percentage losses for a basket of 10 main commodities by country in comparison with a base period.

Despite this increased attention, food loss and waste data is very scarce world-wide. When data are available, they are often accompanied by major uncertainties. Against this background, there is a clear need to develop, test and provide guidance on appropriate methodologies for the measurement of food losses. To this end, FAO and the Global Strategy have developed guidelines for countries on the measurement and estimation of losses along the supply chain.

Objectives

The objectives of the training course are to enhance the capacity of the National Statistical Office, the Ministries of Agriculture and/or the Ministries of Food through provision of training to statistical staff. At the end of the workshop participants’ knowledge will be increased as well as their skills to produce data; apply appropriate statistical methods to produce PHL statistics and indicators including GFLI; interpret and utilise these for monitoring progress in achieving the SDGs.

Expected outcome

To understand (i) PHL, especially the methodology of estimation by category of products such as rice, wheat, vegetables and fruits, (ii) the role of loss data in decision making, and (iii) the methodology how to compile FLI.

Topics

The course will cover the following:

- Introductory lecture on basic concepts of PHL
- Introductory lecture on data needs and application of GFLI in various development fields

- Sessions to learn about good examples and best practices on GFLI
- Practical sessions on compilation of GFLI

Participants

Officials in the National Statistics Office, the Ministries of Agriculture and/or the Ministries of Food in countries of Asia and the Pacific.

Notes

The Workshop will be held in English.