

Economic Analysis of Post-Harvest Losses in Plantain (and Banana): A Case Study of South Western Nigeria

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Abstract : Losses are common in most vegetables because the fruit ripens rapidly and most plantain products can only be stored for a few days thereby limiting their utilization. Plantain (and banana) is highly perishable at the ambient temperature prevalent in the tropics. The specific objective of this study is to identify the socioeconomic characteristics of banana/plantain dealers and determine the perceived effect of the losses incurred in the process of marketing banana/plantain. The study was carried out in Ondo and Lagos states of south-western Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was used to collect information from "Kolawole plantain depot", the point of purchase in Ondo State and "Alamutu plantain market" in Mushin the point of sales in Lagos state. Preliminary study was conducted with the use of primary data collected through well-structured questionnaires administered on 60 respondents and 55 fully completed ones analysed. Budgeting, gross margin and multiple linear regression were used for analyses. Most merchants were found to be in the middle age class (30-50 years), majority of whom were female and completed their secondary school education, with eighty percent having more than 5 years' experience of in banana/plantain marketing. The highest losses were incurred during transportation and these losses constitute about 5.62 percent of the potential total revenue. On the average, loss in gross margin is about ₦6,000.00 per merchant. The impacts of these losses are reflected in the continuously reducing level of their income. Age of the respondents played a major role in determining the level of care in the handling of the fruits. The middle age class tends to be more favoured. In conclusion, the merchants need adequate and sustainable transportation and storage facilities as a matter of utmost urgency. There is the need for government to encourage producers of the product (farmers) by giving them motivating incentives and ensuring that the environment is made conducive also for dealers by providing adequate storage facilities and ready markets locally and possibly for export.

Keywords : post-harvest, losses, plantain, banana, simple regression

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