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PII: S0956-7135(17)30596-0
DOI: 10.1016/j.foodcont.2017.12.017
Reference: JFCO 5909

To appear in: Food Control

Received Date: 24 October 2017
Revised Date: 11 December 2017
Accepted Date: 12 December 2017


This is a PDF file of an unedited manuscript that has been accepted for publication. As a service to our customers we are providing this early version of the manuscript. The manuscript will undergo copyediting, typesetting, and review of the resulting proof before it is published in its final form. Please note that during the production process errors may be discovered which could affect the content, and all legal disclaimers that apply to the journal pertain.
Identification of determinants of postharvest losses in Zimbabwean tomato supply chains as basis for dedicated interventions

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Abstract

Postharvest losses (PHL) are a major problem in tomato supply chains, especially in tropical climates, as up to 40\% of harvested fruits are estimated to decay along the chain. The study aimed at identifying which farmers’ context characteristics, logistics and quality control activities relate with the generation of PHL in tomato supply chains, particularly in Zimbabwe. Commercial and subsistence tomato farmers (n=197) from five major tomato-growing areas were analysed using a diagnostic tool to assess the status of logistics and quality control activities, the vulnerability of farmers’ context, and the actual PHL. Hierarchical cluster analysis resulted in three clusters of farmers grouped based on similarities on context vulnerability and status of logistics and quality control activities. Spearman’s rank correlation analysis and multiple linear regression analyses revealed that more advanced logistics and control activities, and context characteristics with a lower vulnerability to PHL
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