

Supply-side Problems in Food Loss and Waste: Issues in Mitigation through Cold Chain

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Abstract

The food systems approach proposes reducing food loss and waste as a potential solution to achieve food and nutritional security. This is formalised in the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. Despite the issue receiving such ubiquitous recognition, systematic efforts to measure and address FLW are absent in India. Our calculations show that one-sixth of agricultural production, accounting for one-tenth of the gross value added in agriculture, is lost. An efficient cold chain can reduce these losses substantially. However, the concept of an integrated cold chain is still in its infancy in the country, with greater emphasis being placed on single commodity cold storage. Promotional policies like the negotiable warehousing receipt system and the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund have not made an impact. Cold chain development will remain exclusive to export-oriented farmers and traders unless policies are introduced to enable small farmers, farmer producer organisations, and self-help groups to harness its benefits. Relevant start-up innovations can be scaled up through public support. A new institutional mechanism is needed to address the issue of FLW and achieve India's SDGs.

Keywords: United Nations, Farmers, SDGs, FLW, Cold chain, agriculture

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