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Evaluation of Postharvest losses of mango (*Mangifera indica*) in Batticaloa district, Sri Lanka and reducing stem end rot disease by retention of latex at harvest

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This study was conducted to assess the postharvest losses of mango, due to the existing postharvest handling practices in Batticaloa district, Sri Lanka and to investigate on the sanitation practices in reduceing the stem-end rot (SER), during ripening. A survey was conducted to assess the extent of loss due to post harvest handling practices of mango at field, transport, storage and market levels. The data was collected using oral questionnaires, personal interviews, group discussions and informal observation in the field and at the markets, selected randomly. The postharvest losses were found 10.0, 4.7, 2.63, 6.71, 6.89 and 3.73% at harvest, transport, piker, wholesaler, retailer and consumer levels, respectively. Considering the channels involved in mango marketing, the growers, wholesaler and retailers had the highest percent of losses followed by the consumers (3.73%). Thus, the total postharvest loss was estimated as high as 34.67%. Further, the results revealed that soon after picking, drying the mango latex in the sunlight was practiced by 34% of the growers while 12% of the growers wash and dry in the direct sunlight. Yet, 54% of the growers, the majority, sell the mangoes without any sanitation practices. The harvested mangoes, washed and air dried before storing for ripening, showed a significant reduction in the SER development.

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