

Title Current supply chains of cabbage in Lao PDR
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Citation Book of abstracts, APS2010 & SEAsia2010 & GMS2010, August 2-4, 2010, Radisson Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand
Keyword Supply chain; cabbage; vegetable

Abstract

The domestic and export supply chains of cabbage produced in Pakxong District, Champasak Province, the leading production area in Lao PDR, were mapped. Initial information on cabbage supply chains were gathered from provincial and district agriculture and trade offices and from actual visits and interviews of key farmers, collectors and wholesalers. The selected route for the domestic supply chain was from Champasak to the capital city of Vientiane which is about 700 km away (about 14 hours). The supply chain was short and direct involving four main actors; farmers and collectors in Pakxong and wholesalers and retailers in Vientiane. Cabbages were transported loosely (no packaging container) using tractor-driven cart by farmers to the collector's house. The collector arranged public bus transport for the cabbages packed in 20 kg plastic bags after confirming the order of Vientiane wholesaler by mobile phone. The wholesaler received the cabbages at the Vientiane Bus Terminal and brought them to Nongteng Vegetable Wholesale Market for disposal to retailers. On the other hand, the export supply chain from Champasak to Ubon Lathsathani Province, Thailand, about 80 km away (about 2 hours), and to Pathom Thani Province, Thailand, about 500 km away (about 9 hours), was more complicated involving farmers and collectors in Pakxong District, collector-wholesalers in Songmaek Wholesale Market in Champasak near the Lao-Thai border; collector-wholesalers in Thailand, and finally, retailers. Cabbages were transported to the collector's house in the same manner as that in the domestic supply chain. They were then loaded and arranged in the cargo load (also no container) of a mini-truck with six tons per load for transport to the wholesale market in Champasak. After trimming, sorting and packing in 10-kg plastic bags, the cabbages were transported to Thailand either using non-refrigerated 10-wheeler trucks or pick-up cars. At the nearby Ubon Lathsathani Province, the cabbages upon arrival in Chaleansy Market were re-trimmed, re-sorted, and re-packed in 7-kg plastic bags by the collector-wholesaler for disposal to retailers. For cabbages destined for Pathom Thani Province, the cabbages were first brought to the collector-wholesaler's house, packed in bamboo baskets, and transported to Symomeuang Wholesale Market in Pathom Thani where re-trimming and packing in 7-10 kg plastic bags for disposal to retailers were done. In both domestic and export supply chains, major bottlenecks resulting to losses of produce were identified.