

Special Issue

Reducing Food Loss and Waste at the Farm Level: Seeking Sustainable Path to Food Security

Message from the Guest Editors

Food losses and food waste remain high and display high variation across food categories in rural households, household locations in various economic zones, and different cultures. Plant-based foods account for a sizable share of both waste and loss, suggesting that the path to reduce waste may vary with food category. Fruits and vegetables account for a relatively higher waste and loss share than other plant foods. Factors aggravating the situation include inadequate storage facilities, an insufficient logistical infrastructure needed to move crops to consumption centers, and processing capacity, as well as the natural attributes of the crop. Food loss and waste avoidance make the choice of crops, farming techniques, and technology location-specific, as the variations in weather patterns suggest climate adaptation as an alternative path to food insecurity mitigation. The ability of rural communities to raise food but their failure to protect it post-harvest handling implies the need for education and training, especially for limited-resource farmers, and stakeholders within the supply chain, to minimize food loss and waste.

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