

Press release

The training was delivered in the framework of the project “*Mainstreaming food loss reduction initiatives for smallholders in deficit areas*” funded by the Swiss government and operated by the Rome-based agencies: FAO, IFAD and WFP. It was held from 9 to 13 November 2016 in Bulungu by the multifunctional hall of the Kivulu high-school.

The training aimed at strengthening capacities of the 35 delegates, 15 women and 20 men, coming from Bulungu and Idiofa, two zones of intervention where the project is operating in the province of Kwilu. The 35 delegates included personnel from the decentralized services of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fishery, Livestock and Rural Development, from producers organizations, managers of storage systems, wholesalers, stakeholders supporting the value chains, private sector actors, NGOs, high level trainers and universities as well as institutions for professional training like the National Institute for Professional Preparation.

In this framework, participants have learned about good practices in managing grain storage systems, how to treat infested products, as well as basic knowledge on food loss reduction good practices.



Basics of this training went along the following points:

1. Basics on good practices for managing grain storage systems;

This section addressed the issues experienced by small farmers during harvest and the losses occurring since the products are stored.

It is demonstrated that traditional storage methods are not comfortable, less remunerative and in some cases generate huge losses. Without taking into consideration the stocks of grains which may have high levels of contamination (dust, small rocks, fragment of raids).



Trainers were trained for being able to give the smallholder farmers any appropriate advice regarding the following aspects:

1. Foundations for building a warehouse;
2. Type of warehouse to build;
3. Warehouse building techniques;
4. How to prepare grains for being stocked;
5. How to fight against insects and other pests.

The trainers have insisted that these good practices for managing the grains constitute one of the strategies for securing access to food.



2. Managing grains warehouses and storage systems;

The food loss assessment studies undertaken by consultants in the four area of intervention (Idiofa, Bulungu, Seke-banza and Luozi) have demonstrated that the storage is one of the critical loss point in the supply chain where major losses occur. It has been also reported that small-farmers are not able to assess precisely the losses caused by insects at the storage time.



The RBA project was interested in the way the small producers perceive and assess the losses produced by insects in some way, such as quality of conservation of the different cereals and time of infestation, etc.

By means of this training module it was possible to train the small-farmers on the way to act for better storage conditions and increasing the revenues from their activities.

In this way participants had the occasion to learn about new storage techniques such as metal and plastic silos and the utilization of PICS sacks and pallets.





3. Treatment of infested goods

Protecting the stocked goods and storage constructions against any pest attack is a priority in managing grains storage. For this reason has been recommended to put in place all possible measures of prevention for reducing at maximum contamination risks and avoid to treat grains with fumigation.

Traditional methods for preventing pest attacks can equally be envisaged. For example, the use of leaves or coffee is a good practice for preventing and fighting against pests. It has been also demonstrated that in case of contamination it is possible to proceed as ultimate solution with fumigation treatment. Techniques and phases of fumigation have been described during the training.

Participants have been instructed during the 5 days on good practices for managing warehouses and on the impact of food losses in their specific contexts. In addition notions on food quality, food security and economic development of their livelihoods have been considered. The food losses causes and actions to be undertaken have been discussed with the aim to face the changes.

In the course of the training has been indicated how weather, moisture and temperature levels in the grains can be causes of losses. Therefore, the trainers have insisted on how better storage conditions are an alternative for reducing the frequency of losses in this phase along the supply chain.

Engaging the local authorities

The training ended with the preparation of a note in local language (Kikongo) on the managing of warehouses and grains storage. At the presence of the territorial administrator of Bulungu the training has been closed with a ceremony for distributing certificates of participation.

To note also the involvement and engagement of the local authorities, which have promised to follow up the up-taking of the training results within the small producers. This is a good sign for the sustainability of the project activities, the improvement of livelihoods and food security.



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