

15th Triennial ISTRC Symposium

SUMMARY OF SESSION XI

Market chain development for root and tuber crops

Friday Nov. 6 2009

Moderated by D.H. Picha and A. Devaux

Lead lecture: **Andrew Westby** (UG-ISTRC)

Presentations by: **G. Thiele, A. Devaux, A. Thomann, J. Andrade, G. Asumugha, M. Ordinola** and **D. Picha**.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Numerous challenges and opportunities were presented regarding the marketing of root and tuber crops. The difficulties of maintaining uniform product quality and economy-of-scale production are common marketing constraints for smallholder producers. The challenges of linking thousands of small farmers with market opportunities were discussed. Potential potato product value chains were identified for limited resource Andean potato farmers and East African cassava producers. The aversion to risk and lack of investment in improved production and postharvest care practices were identified as common limitations, which restrain the advancement of smallholder farmers in penetrating additional markets. Limited resource farmers must be provided with capital in order to make the necessary improvements in production practices and postharvest infrastructure to provide the market with consistent supplies of high quality product. In addition, market opportunities must be identified in order to provide producers with the incentive to make financial investments in their operations. Market innovations, which include adherence to corporate social responsibility policies, may afford additional opportunities to limited resource farmers. Common constraints in the market development of root and tuber crops were identified as: low yields, high postharvest losses, and the lack of agro-processing in the production areas. Highlights were presented regarding the significant growth in the orange-flesh sweetpotato market, which has occurred in the last decade, especially in the high-value European supermarket sector.