Introduction

Capacity building is important to reduce poverty, improve the welfare of smallholder farmers and an essential tool for sustainable development (UNEP, 2002). Challenges of tomato smallholder farmers can be surmounted if they are exposed to capacity building opportunities as these will aid in the build up of their capabilities and skills (KGF, 2011). Tomato production quantity in Nigeria is about 1.8 million metric tons while the demand is 2.3 million metric tons; however, post-harvest losses account for 40-50% of the tomato produced. The volume of tomato produced necessitated drying of tomato as a means of reducing post-harvest loss of tomato. However, the traditional drying process (on the bare ground, etc) is devoid of good hygiene procedures, thus resulting in low quality, contamination of product and low income for farmers. This prompted the need for training of farmers and processors on safe handling and drying of tomato for income generation, health benefit, and food security in the country.

Objective: To build capacity of farmers and processors on safe handling and drying of tomato

Materials and Methods

The study was carried out in Kano state (Northwest zone of Nigeria) due to its comparative advantage in tomato production. Participants were 90 tomato farmers and processors randomly selected from Bebeji and Garun Mallam Local Government Areas of Kano State. The training covered pre-processing operations for tomato and drying using improved low cost sun driers. Practical demonstration was done showing the different stages involved in the drying process and participants were also involved through hands-on experience. The knowledge of the trainees prior and after the training on handling and drying of tomato was investigated with a pre and post knowledge test. Data on socio economic characteristics, costs involved in processing and other related variables were obtained and analyzed with frequency, percentages and t-test.

Results

Socio – economic characteristics of the tomato processors

Figure 1: Age of trained participants

Figure 2: Educational status of trained participants

Features of Tomato processors

Figure 3: Years of experience of trained participants in Tomato processing

Figure 4: Processing system utilized by participants

Figure 5: Participants’ reasons for drying tomato

Figure 6: Types of tomato used by participants for drying

Pre and Post Knowledge Assessment of Participants

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<tr>
<th>Score</th>
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Results continued

Conclusion

Tomato processing can significantly help in solving the problem of post-harvest losses in tomato production while increasing the income of the processors’ households. Consumers can also have access to dried tomato during period of scarcity, as it could be stored for a year. This will help in achieving food security among households. The study supports that capacity building activities are imperative for dissemination of improved technologies.