



## ZERO LOSS FOR ZERO HUNGER

### WFP's Work to Prevent Post-Harvest Food Losses

#### About post-harvest food losses

Global food production has reached a record high in recent years. However, one-third of all food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted, equivalent to 1.3 billion tons. Post-harvest food loss is a leading cause of food insecurity for millions of families across the world.

Achieving zero hunger by 2030 will require that no more food is lost or wasted. By preventing post-harvest losses in food systems, we can increase the availability of food worldwide without requiring additional resources or placing additional burden on the environment.

Food losses happen at every stage of the supply chain, as commodities become damaged, spoiled or lost while harvested, handled, processed, stored and transported. These losses are most significant in developing countries. Post-harvest losses have significant nutritional, health, and financial impacts for both consumers and farmers, disproportionately affecting women, who are largely responsible for managing post-harvest drying, cleaning, and storage. For rural families, many of whom already live on the edge of hunger, lost food means lost land, water, fertilizer and income for those who can least afford it. Lost food also deprives farmers of the opportunity to grow and strengthen their businesses.

#### Preventing losses and improving lives

As part of its efforts to support smallholder farmers and agricultural markets, WFP is strongly promoting a greater focus on reducing food losses throughout the value chain. Thanks to WFP's deep field presence and supply chain expertise, we have learned that simple

and affordable steps like improving storage infrastructure, and sharing storage best practices can drastically reduce food losses and increase the availability of food on local and regional markets. This also means improved food security and increased resilience to shocks for smallholder farmers.

Throughout WFP's five-year Purchase for Progress (P4P) pilot, WFP and partners organized training on improved post-harvest handling practices for over 166,000 smallholder farmers and traders across 20 countries, 43 percent of whom are women.

#### Sustainable household storage solutions

In Uganda, WFP established a Post-Harvest Knowledge and Operations Center. Engagement of the private sector is key to the long term sustainability and of mainstreaming the approach. Participating farmers attend a highly interactive workshop and purchase hermetic (airtight) storage equipment, including drying tarps, at a subsidized rate. WFP provides on-farm support to ensure proper positioning of silos and application of improved handling techniques.

The Government of Uganda has acknowledged the importance of addressing post-harvest losses based on the success of the WFP operation and is now including this in all future programmes.

In countries such as Burkina Faso and Uganda, WFP works with local manufacturers to support the development, manufacture and sale of simple technologies to reduce post-harvest losses, such as threshers, blowers and storage silos. Working with local private sector actors supports the development of affordable and accessible technologies which respond directly to farmers' needs.

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### Connecting farmers to markets

Not only do better post-harvest handling practices and storage technologies allow farmers to retain more of their harvest, they also allow them to store their crops for longer periods, benefiting from sales for better prices at later points in time. By providing smallholder farmers with a quality market opportunity to collectively sell their surplus, WFP incentivizes improvements in crop quality.

### Improving food quality

Poor post-harvest handling can result in low quality crops, which, when consumed, have a negative impact on health and nutrition. Inadequate crop quality initially posed a major challenge for WFP purchases from smallholder farmers under P4P. However, WFP support generated results, leading to a decrease in overall default rates by farmers' organizations, who improved the quality of their crops.

To address high levels of aflatoxin, P4P Guatemala developed and launched the Blue Box – a testing kit for the on-the-spot screening of food quality parameters and grading. The Blue Box, as well as training on its correct use, has been scaled-up to enable more WFP country offices, Government partners and farmers' organizations to test and promote quality.

### Advocating for quality standards

In most developing countries, the lack of food quality standards or their enforcement is a major constraint. The P4P experience pushed the agenda on the development and enforcement of food quality standards and safety at the national and regional levels with government authorities responsible for food standards, food safety and quality and other relevant market actors such as millers and processors.

### Why WFP?

With our deep field experience, and supply chain expertise and capacity, WFP is well-placed to play an active role in post-harvest loss mitigation and support smallholder farmers to participate in markets. We bring three core strengths:

- Through the P4P pilot, WFP explored models for supporting smallholder farmers and connecting them to markets in 20 diverse countries. Thanks to this experience, we are acutely aware of the challenges that smallholder farmers still face. Moving forward, the 500 partnerships formed with Governments, NGO's and other development partners under the pilot will continue to strengthen our efforts to support smallholder farmers.
- Given our expertise in procurement, logistics and supply chain management, we are able to cover the critical aspects of post-harvest losses and design our projects accordingly. Through supply chain analysis, we are able to ensure sustainable business solutions. We understand the complexities of proper food storage, yet at the same time recognize the levels of food quality required at the local and regional level. With this knowledge, we are able to directly assist farming families with the help of our local partners.
- We operate on a large scale, meaning that we have the experienced staff, the required networks and the close partnerships with many farmers' organizations to manage and implement large-scale post-harvest loss mitigation efforts. By leveraging our capacity, WFP in collaboration with its partners, has the opportunity to take on this challenge and bring about profound change.

More information: [www.wfp.org/content/wfp-post-harvest-loss-prevention](http://www.wfp.org/content/wfp-post-harvest-loss-prevention)

