

B-97 Hot water treatment for quick drying of chilli (*Capsicum annuum*)

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Poor quality of dried chilli accounts for considerable economic loss to farmers in Sri Lanka. Drying of chilli for longer periods in cloudy weather prevailing during the post harvest period is one of the reasons for the poor quality. Hence, investigation of quick drying methods of chilli in order to improve quality of chilli is of great importance.

An experiment was conducted during Maha 1996/97 season at FCRDI, Maha Illuppallama to evaluate 4 drying methods on drying time and quality of dry chilli. Full ripened (Red) pods of chilli variety MI-2 were used. Drying methods used were (1) sun drying after immersing pods in boiling water for 30 sec, (2) sun drying without immersing in boiling water (control), (3) drying under shade after immersing pods in boiling water for 30 sec and (4) drying under shade without immersing in boiling water. Pods were then dried to the standard moisture 9%. Moisture losses were recorded daily. Quality parameters: appearance, colour and number of whitish pods were also recorded at regular intervals for a two month period.

The duration taken to complete drying for (1) boiling water treated sun dried (2) normal sun dried (3) Boiling water treated shade dried and (4) shade dried without boiling water treatments were 1-2, 3-4, 6-7 and 7-8 days respectively. This indicates that adopting boiling water treatment before sun drying can shorten the drying period by about 30% over the normal sun drying method. Quality of dried chilli was not affected by any treatment. Therefore, boiling water treated sun drying method can be adopted to reduce the drying period without affecting the quality of chilli.