

# POST HARVEST LOSSES IN RED ONIONS

*Ben N. Emerson and G.S. Selvaratnam*

(Research Officers)

Agricultural Research Station

Thirunelveli, Jaffna

## INTRODUCTION

Red onions is grown during both Maha and Yala seasons. But a larger acreage comes under red onion cultivation during the Yala season. The greatest problem with this crop is heavy storage loss. Red onions being bulky, cold storage will be very expensive. Therefore an experiment was conducted at Agricultural Research Station, Tirunelvely to determine how long the farmer could store his produce without suffering economic losses. The percentage in loss could help to determine how long the farmer could store his produce without suffering economic losses. The percentage in loss could help to determine:

- \* the price factor of stored onions over a period of time, and
- \* to estimate quantity of onions to be stored for use as seed or for consumption after elapse of a given length of time.

## THE METHOD

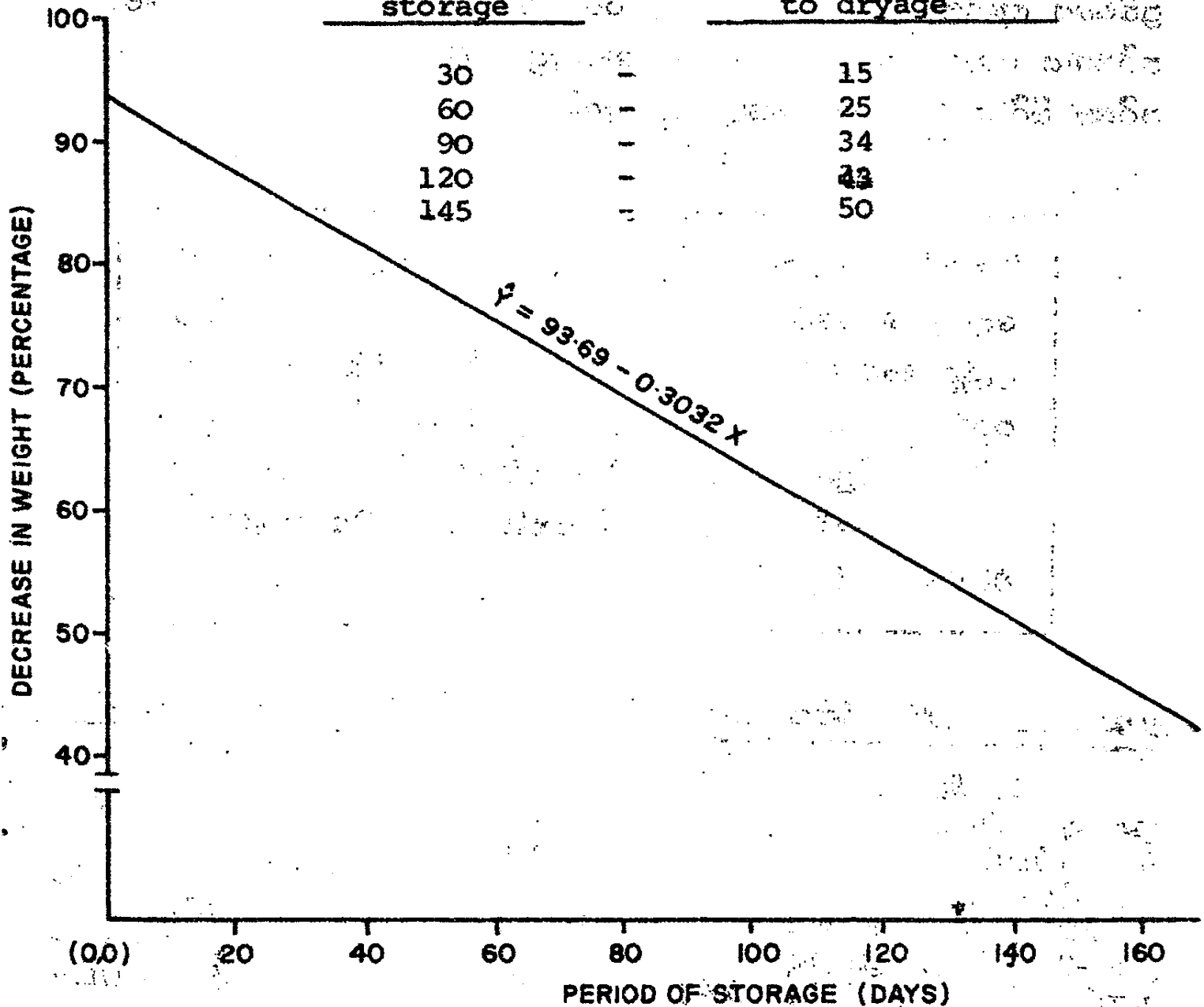
Freshly harvested bulbs were sun dried in the field for two days and the leaves were removed. These bulbs were then placed in wooden trays in four pound lots. This was replicated in times. The trays containing bulbs were stored at room temperature. The maximum temperature ranged from 27 to 38°C and the minimum ranged from 32 to 26°C during the period of study. Oryage was noted at weekly intervals during the first four weeks and later to fortnightly intervals till the end of the experiment (6 months).

OBSERVATIONS

Percentage decrease in weight is linear. The regression coefficient was -0.3032, and it is highly significant. This regression analysis reveals a daily loss of 0.3 percent of the bulbs sprouted in 6 months.

Post harvest weight losses in red onions:

<u>No. of days in storage</u>	<u>Percentage lost due to dryage</u>
30	15
60	25
90	34
120	43
145	50



This experiment will be repeated using onions with cut leaves and also with onions tied-up into bundles (similar to the storage method used by the farmers).

