

CHAPTER 2

Recommended support procedures and handling protocols

8. DISPATCHING

8.1 General

- As a result of the limited amount of nutrients (no starch) present in stone fruit, the storage potential is drastically reduced and the time between harvest and shipping must be kept as short as possible.
- Ship stone fruit within 5 days after packing.
- The form of transport used must be able to maintain the cold chain, eg. refrigerated transport.
- During the loading process, cold fruit may not be exposed to the surrounding temperature for more than 20 min. There is a higher danger of the temperature of the fruit increasing during windy conditions.
- Only fruit that has been re-cooled may be unloaded. The pulp temperature in the centre of the pallet may not exceed 1.0°C during the loading of containers, or 2°C during the loading of conventional ships. The pulp temperature of fruit on the 'outside' of the pallet (third layer from the top) may not exceed 2°C during the loading of the containers, or 8°C during the loading of conventional ships. **(Do note that all stone fruit that is warmer than this tolerance may not be shipped directly, the fruit must first be re-cooled.)** The target temperature is -0.5°C and the fruit must be cooled to this temperature to ensure that quality is maintained. The tolerance is only there to make provision for handling during the loading of containers in conventional ships.
- Note the temperature of the fruit on the record chart as well as on the thermocouple sticker on the pallet.
- Unload strictly according to the loading specifications and strictly apply the first-in-first-out principal. The oldest fruit must be unloaded first.
- Tighten the straps of each pallet securely before placing the pallets on the lorry or in the container.
- No damaged or broken cartons/pallets may be loaded.
- Fill in the consignment note completely and correctly.
- Immediately inform the transport coordinator or receiver of the departure time and other relevant details about the consignment.

8.2 Refrigerated transport

- PPECB may certify refrigerated transport (yellow triangle and certification sticker) and these trucks must maintain the cold chain within the specifications. Certification is not regulatory, but producers are strongly advised to insist on certified trucks as there is then at least an independent third party verification that the equipment is in good order. The transport unit must be clean and odour free. Be especially alert to fish odours, as the product will be rejected if a contaminated truck is used

- Ensure that the tachometer and the data logger of the cooling unit are in working condition and that the temperature is set to 0°C. The cooling unit must be switched off immediately once the doors are opened to load the fruit.
- The temperature chart of the tachometer must be authorized with the required details by the cold-room manager.
- On completion of loading, immediately close the doors securely and attach the required stamp.
- Enter the stamp number on the consignment note.

8.3 Transport by container

- Make timeous arrangements with PPECB to ensure that they are present when the containers are loaded.
- Ensure that upon arrival the doors of the containers are sealed with the yellow sticker of the PPECB. In the event of a seal missing, or is older than 30 days, the container must not be loaded. This is because it may be an indication that the container was rejected as a result of faulty equipment.
- Remove the stamp and ensure that the container is clean and odourless. The ventilation valve and flap must be closed, except in the case of plums (see Table 1). If a container is defective then PPECB must be informed immediately.
- In the case of integral containers the cooling unit must be switched off during the loading process.
- Pallets must not be removed from the cold room before the container is ready for loading. This is to minimise the exposure of the fruit to high temperatures.
- Pallets must preferably be placed in the container with fork lifts or with hand held lifts and not be pushed into the container. In the event of the latter practice being unavoidable, care must be taken not to damage the first two pallets or the ventilation valve. (5 'guide blocks' must be placed in the 'T' groove on the floor, against the metal plate, at the front of the container, to avoid damaging the pallet.)
- Try not to load the consignment against the side panels or block the air sock, and leave a space between the product and the doors.
- No load/pallet may be higher than the indicated red line in the container and the coil in front of the container may not be blocked.
- The total loading time of containers must preferably be no longer than the following: a 6m container, 30 min, and a 12m container, 40 min.
- On completion of loading, close the doors securely and attach the required container seal.
- Enter the stamp number on all the relevant documents.
- Under no circumstances may changes be made to the "CTO" (container terminal order) document that accompanies the container to the harbour, as this could lead to shipping of the container at the wrong temperature. If details must be adjusted, the relevant shipping line and PPECB must first be informed.