Module 33
Inspections – PPECB

Presenter: Shubesco Heilbron

Introduction

South Africa is a member of the inter-governmental Codex Alimentarius, which develops international food safety standards. These regulations are legislated and published in South Africa by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

In South Africa, the PPECB is the assignee of DAFF who conduct inspections on their behalf. The task of the PPECB is to check that all the standards and requirements for the export of fresh produce are adhered to, before they allow the product to be exported.

The PPECB physically inspects and approves products and systems before the exporting of fruit is authorised.

The PPECB

The Perishable Products Export Control Board is an independent service provider. The PPECB derives it mandate from the following legislative provision, APS Act number 119 of 1990, which mandates the board as an assignee for the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to conduct quality inspections on agricultural, perishable products destined for export.

The PPECB acquired the European Union accreditation which means that, the effectiveness and the efficiency of the inspection systems are equivalent to the European Union requirements.

This accreditation contributes to the cost saving for the South African perishable export industry, as products are not inspected again on arrival in the importing country. Therefore we can say that the PPECB inspections provide our clients with a passport to international trade.
The operating environment in which PPECB does the various inspections for the various products, gives us a national geographical footprint which comprises of 42 offices and 1,350 inspection points, giving us a client base of 1,611 and a supplier account base of 1,764.

The 42 offices which we operate from nationally consist of 11 regional offices which are located in the following regions:

- Cape Town
- Paarl
- Grabouw
- Worcester
- Ceres
- Citrusdal
- Port Elizabeth
- Durban
- Nelspruit
- Tzaneen
- Johannesburg

**PPECB Inspections**

At these locations we do more or less 220 different types of product inspections, which comprises of the following groups:

- Deciduous fruit
- Citrus fruit
- Subtropical fruit
- Vegetables
- Grain
- Processed products
- Animal feeds
- Flowers

Each and every food business operator, that is the producer who produces products for export, must provide PPECB with a room on the premises where inspection can take place. This room must be separate from production and packing areas and not shared with the other packhouse functions.
Export Standards

The products that we inspect for export are being checked according to product standards, which are compulsory minimum quality standards. The purpose of these standards is to provide for a disciplined export and a minimum quality platform.

These standards are updated annually with input from the various industry bodies, the Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries, and the PPECB. These updates include international developments as well.

Now the standards prescribe requirements for:

- Quality
- Food safety
- Traceability
- Containers
- Packaging
- Marking
- Sampling

The standards also prescribe the methods according to which these products must be evaluated. The tolerances are also prescribed, which gives allowance for maximum permissible deviations from the quality defects on the products.

On citrus for example we look at the internal quality of the citrus product, with regard to the juice content, the brix, that is the sugar content, and also we look at the sugar to acid ratio of the fruit.

The external quality of these products are covered by the colour and blemish charts that we use to determine the specific colour as per market segment and as per season, and also the defects allowable or the blemishes on the outside surfaces of the fruit.
Export Standards

For more information on citrus export standards, please look at Module 5 – Citrus Export Standards.

Inspection Procedures

At the inspection point, PPECB inspectors look at sample cartons from every pallet of export citrus.

They open the cartons and remove the fruit, counting it to check that the correct number of fruit is in the carton. They measure the fruit to confirm that the right size reference was used, and use colour and blemish charts to determine whether the fruit was graded correctly.

After this, internal quality tests are performed on a selected sample and checked against the minimum requirements. If the fruit passes all these inspections, the whole pallet is approved for export.

active learning

Watch the DVD clips, read through the learning material and do workplace research to gather the knowledge and information to complete the assignments below.

Activity 33.1 – Flowchart

Observe how the PPECB do inspections at your packhouse. Draw a flowchart in your workbook, showing how this process works, and when and how they do what tests.

Activity 33.2 – Practical

Observe a PPECB inspection in your packhouse, and record their findings in terms of the internal and external quality of the fruit. Take a sample of the same fruit, and perform your own inspection on the sample. See if you get the same results as the PPECB inspectors. If not, explain why this is the case.
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Activity 33.2 – Practical

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<th>Day</th>
<th>Details of tasks completed</th>
<th>Time spent on tasks</th>
<th>Signature of supervisor</th>
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Take a sample of the same fruit, and perform your own inspection on the sample.

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<tr>
<th>Tools and equipment</th>
<th>Handling before, during and after task completion</th>
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SOPs:

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