Module 45
Container Loading

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Introduction

Over the past few years, the volume of citrus fruit exported by container has shown huge growth. The cost saving to the producer by minimising port handling and storage fees has made this way of exporting the preferred method. The citrus industry expects this trend towards container shipping to continue.

There has also been a move towards container loading inland, at packhouses, and not at the harbour facilities. This means that regulations concerning the loading of containers are becoming more and more critical to the citrus industry.

Reference

For more information on the growth of container shipping in South Africa, please look at Module 38 – Export Shipping Overview.

Container Loading Procedures

Container Approval

PPECB will start of by inspecting the depot where the containers are being washed and prepared for use.

We will arrive at the depot and physically ensure that the container has been washed, is dry, has no foreign taints inside and contains no foreign objects. We will ensure that the container is running like it should.

After these checks we will apply a yellow PPECB seal to the container door to show that it was inspected, and also a yellow PTI PPECB sticker will be placed on the container to indicate that these checks were all done. These two checks are both valid for 60 days.
**Cold Store**

The container will arrive at a cold store. The cold store itself is inspected by PPECB annually to ensure that it conforms to the PPECB act.

Before loading the PPECB will again ensure that the container is as booked by the clients. We will make sure that the set points and the vent setting is as per booking. We will ensure that the container inside and outside is in the correct condition for loading.

We will then also monitor all temperatures of fruit that has to be loaded in the cold store itself to ensure that it applies to the protocol within the specific tolerances.

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**The Q67 Form**

The Q67 form stipulates the temperature settings and other protocols that must be followed when the fruit is in transit.

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**Container Loading**

While loading the container the PPECB will ensure that no damaged pallets, damaged cartons or damaged fruit is loaded. While the fruit is being loaded into the container, the PPECB will also check that the fruit is loaded in such a way that the airflow inside the container is not affected.

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**Container Sealing**

After loading, the container will be sealed and will be trucked to the terminal, where PPECB will ensure that the container is plugged in, running at the preferred set point that the client wanted, and that the vent settings are as it should be.
Container Carrying

Before the container is loaded aboard the vessel, the PPECB will compile the carrying instructions, with the lines manifest, which will be handed to the captain of the vessel to ensure that he knows exactly how every single container has to be handled for the entire voyage.

The vessels also report all container temperatures daily to the PPECB. We scrutinise and manage those temperatures and place them on the PPECB website for every client to monitor.

Conclusion

The cost advantages of exporting fruit by container is considerable, as containers can be used to ship fruit at a stable temperature or even be set to follow a cold sterilisation protocol.

It is important though to note that, to maximise the cost saving of containerisation, fruit should be stacked in a high-cube formation on pallets. If standard pallets are loaded into containers, some pallets have to be broken up and re-packed before being loaded into the container. In most cases, this means that a few loose cartons end up in the container and these are likely to become damaged.

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 45.1 – Research Report

Write a 1-page report on the advantages and disadvantages of exporting citrus in containers.

Activity 45.2 – Internet Research

Get hold of the export and logistics information for the last citrus season from the CGA website. Lists how many containers of citrus were exported from each harbour in South Africa in this season. Now compare these figures with the projections that were made in module 35, and discuss the deviations.

(Annual CGA logistics report – CGA website)
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