

Internet research

Search for the keywords *strawberry quality* to discover more about the main factors influencing the quality of strawberries you buy in the shops.

Listening for gist

1:56 Listen to the telephone conversation between Suzanne Van Peeters, Schuurman's Quality Manager, and Piotr Sieberski, Managing Director of Zaluski Strawberries. What is the purpose of Suzanne's call?

Reading for detail

4 Read the information below. Underline the main points Suzanne will need to raise during her audit meeting.

TEMPERATURE

Less than a one-hour delay between harvest and the cooling of berries in the cooler is recommended. This means regular collection of picked fruit and frequent trips to the cooler.

Upon arrival at the cooler, fruit should be cooled to 0–1°C before being placed in the storage room to await packing. Cold storage air temperatures should be monitored and records maintained.

When shipping by road, trucks should be cooled to near 0°C before loading. The refrigeration system must be checked on each load.

The golden rule is *Don't break the cold chain*. Once strawberries have been cooled after picking, they should be kept cold until 30 minutes before eating.

PACKING

Care should be taken to pack only sound fruit from harvesting trays to punnets. Decaying, damaged or shrivelled fruit should be removed.

HANDLING

Strawberries are very fragile and bruise easily. Careful handling and sorting during harvest is needed.

Training and supervision of harvesting teams is critical. Harvesters should be given an incentive to pick with care. Crew supervisors should monitor harvested trays to ensure that only sound fruit are being placed in them. Shallow trays should be used to prevent squashing (no more than 5cm in depth).

RIPENESS

Strawberries do not continue to ripen after harvest and will not increase in sugar content. Riper fruit tends to have a high sugar content and better flavour quality. Pick only ripe fruit, generally pink or red in colour.

CULTIVATION

The use of heavy nitrogen fertilization has been associated with softer fruit and less flavour.



Key factors affecting strawberry quality and recommended best practice

Listening for detail

1:57 Listen to Suzanne's audit meeting with Piotr Sieberski and Klara Solak, the packing shed supervisor. Complete Suzanne's notes below.

Audit meeting - points to raise

Harvesting procedures

No (1) _____ paid for quality fruit.

Pickers receive little (2) _____.

Transport

Strawberries are placed in trays

(3) _____ deep.

Transport to cooler takes (4) _____ hours.

Cooling process

Berries are cooled to (5) _____.

They keep no (6) _____ of storage shed temperatures.

Packing procedures

Packers receive little (7) _____.

No (8) _____ is paid for good packing.

Shipping

The (9) _____ on each truck is not always checked.

Cultivation

The use of nitrogen fertilizers will stop in (10) _____ years.

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bruise
bulk
harvest
shallow
shelf life
sound
tray
wastage

Presentation

6 Work in small groups. You are quality consultants to Schuurman Supermarkets. Prepare a presentation of your recommendations for improvements to Zaluski's procedures to ensure top quality strawberries. Make your presentations and hold a class vote for the best one.