

Farm Operation – Post-Harvesting

Good postharvest handling maintains produce quality.



1. Produce destined for marketing should be as free as possible from skin breaks, bruises, spots, rots, decay, and other deterioration.

2. Farmers should keep harvested produce and loaded vehicles in the shade to minimize heating.

3. Farmers should sort and pack produce carefully to achieve uniformity and to avoid mechanical damage (compression, scrapes, etc.) which causes decay and inferior quality.

4. Produce should be washed as appropriate as this improves salability and removes dirt, pathogens, spray residues, etc. The water used for washing must be clean.

5. Stackable containers should be used for transporting the produce. The container, not the produce, should bear the stacking load. Farmers should not over-pack or under-pack containers, and should load containers carefully into transport vehicles.

6. Pre-cooling/cooling should be applied promptly and thoroughly to harvested produce whenever possible.



About “GAP- CROP”

The GAP-CROP provides guidelines on local sustainable production of safe, healthy vegetables and fruits. It focuses on reducing the risk of chemical contamination (e.g. by pesticide and heavy metal) at farm level. This article is the tenth of a series of 12 Codes of Practice (COP) making up the GAP-CROP. Farmers may voluntarily follow this COP, identify potential problems in their farms, take appropriate control/mitigation measures, and monitor the effectiveness of such measures.





7. Containers, tools and equipment and the sorting, packing and storage areas concerned should be cleaned up and sanitized frequently. These working areas should be kept clean, tidy and well ventilated.

8. Farmers should ensure personal cleanliness, and their hands be washed with soap before and after handling the produce. Rubber gloves and apron should be worn as appropriate. Smoking, drinking or eating should not be allowed while handling the produce.



9. Containers and other packaging materials (e.g. plastic bags) must be kept away from rodents, birds, farm animals and chemicals (e.g. pesticides or fertilizers).

10. Transport vehicles should be clean and well-maintained. Harvested produce should not be transported in trucks which are also used to carry live animals or chemicals.



Next COP:
Farm Management –
Record Keeping

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