Quality Control Internship
Stemilt Growers, Wenatchee, WA
Nathan Coggins
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Introduction:

Stemilt is fruit packing warehouse that's located in Wenatchee, Washington. It was founded by Tom Mathison in 1964 with the goal to give the best possible fruit to the customer. They have become the leading distributor of fresh fruit since then. The company to this day is still owned by the Mathison family, with the grandson West Mathison taking charge and pointing Stemilt into the future. They work with markets all over the world to send the highest of quality fruit. That's what they pride on and hold themselves to high standards to be the best when it comes to quality. That's where the Quality Control staff come in to insure that the highest of quality of fruit is packed and sold around the world.

Responsibilities:

Samples:

With Samples there would be a certain amount of cherries to put into a plastic clam shell from as many cherry bins as possible to make sure to obtain a large selection of fruit. This happened for every single grower that comes in during the day. Then sugars and temperatures were then taken on these samples and recorded. The fruit was sorted and then graded into three categories, those being the clean fruit, undersize, and quality which is the cull percentage of the sample. (this is shown in Figure 1)
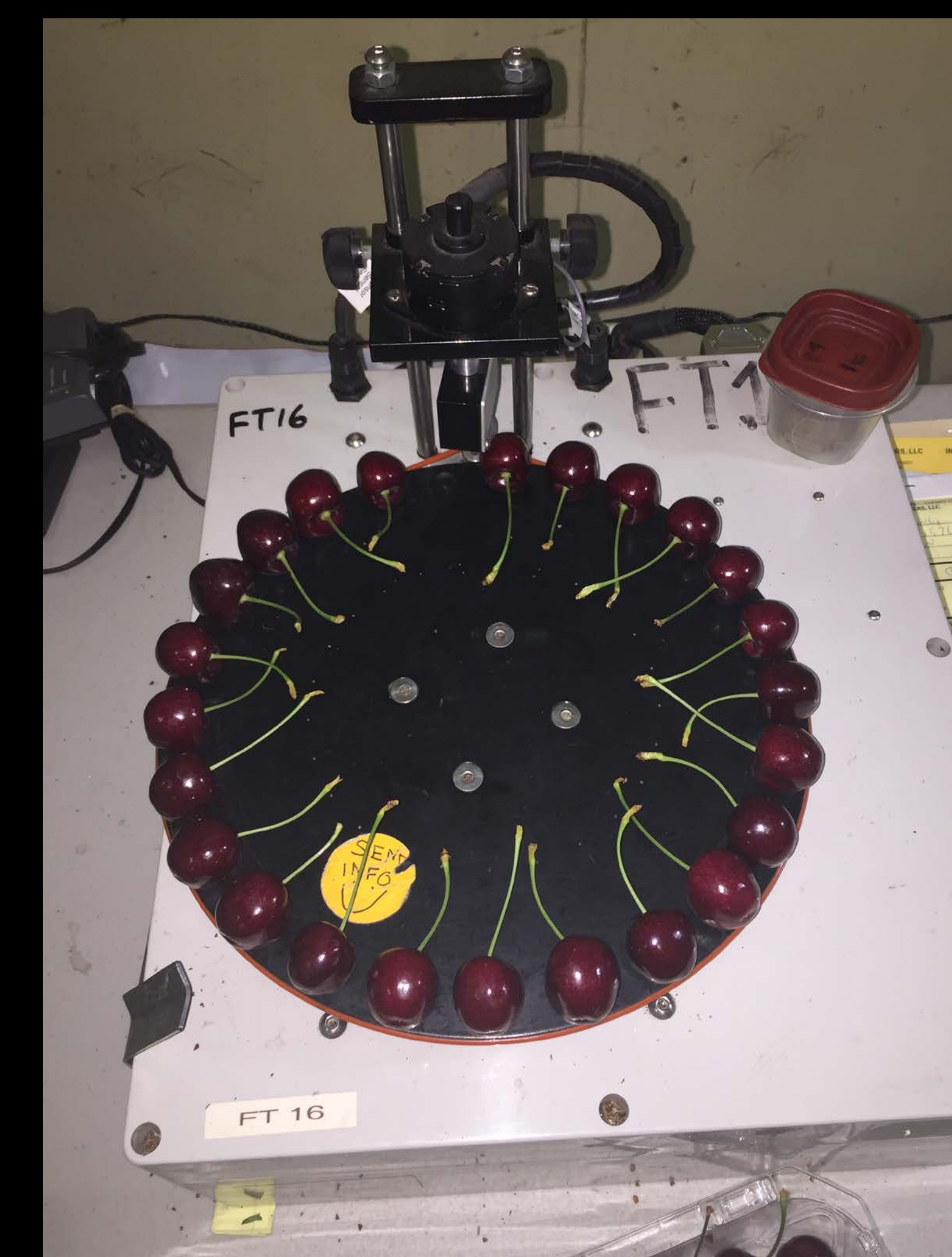
Entering Data:

Once the samples were done being sorted out they needed to be entered into the system. This was done by entering the information on to a ticket and the information wpuld be put into the firmtech (Figure 2). The firmtech is a machine that measures the cherries for there firmness and size. Those two pieces of information are important when deciding which fruit to use. Next the information is then sent into the Stemilt data base where its available to look at on a system called discover.

Pack Schedules:

Once all of the fruit has been graded and entered into the system, its ready to be chosen for packing. That's what pack schedules are used for to enter the fruit in orders from greatest to least packable. The best fruit is used for the export market and the fruit that's not top grade is used for domestic. This is what is outlined in pack schedules, It tells the packing line what to run, how many bins, and where it is located. It's a job that has to be taken very serious because any wrong information could mess up a whole order.

Ticket entry:

When the growers bring in there fruit, each load needs a ticket written ou so that we know how many bins they brought in what variety they have. This is the information that we use when filling out are sample sheet. Then that ticket is entered into the Stemilt data base so that it can be found on discover.

Conclusion:

From this experience, I have learned that Quality Control is the first initial contact in determining what fruit is good and what's bad and how are we going to use it when shipping it off. This is a job I didn't know anything about and was something I didn't think was used as serious as it is. This internship really gave me some valuable experience that I needed with the field of study that I am doing. Having such a knowledgeable group of people showing me everything I would ever need to know is what makes this internship standout and make me consider this department as a possible line of work in the future once I'm done with college. It's a great career choice and its an important department that's apart one of the leading fruit company's in the world.

(Figure 1. Sampling)

(Firmteching)

(Figure 3. Sugar and Temperature tools)

(Figure 4. Culls from a sample.)