



Quality Control Internship
Stemilt Growers Wenatchee, WA
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Introduction

Stemilt growers is a fruit packing warehouse located in Wenatchee Washington. The company was founded by Tom Mathison in 1964 and is a leading distributor of fresh fruit to this day. The company is still owned and run by the mathison family today. Stemilt is the world's leading distributor of sweet cherries and has roots with several international markets. Stemilt prides itself in having only the highest quality fruit and strives to improve those standards every day. Quality Control staff are there to ensure only the highest quality fruit is packed and sold.

Duties

Sampling

- Take field samples of fruit for evaluation (figure 1)
- All growers are required to be sampled.
- Sugars and temperatures are taken on the sample.
- Fruit sorted and graded into 4 categories clean, undersize, condition and quality.
- Condition and quality count towards cull percentages.

Data Entry

- Tray with clean fruit is then given a ticket and moved to the firm-tech (figure 2).
- Firm-tech measure the cherries pressure and average size.
- Attached to a computer the firm-tech will add the data along with analysis to the Stemilt database.

Ticket Entry

- Record grower bin count and variety.
- Enter information into system.



Figure 1: Average cherry sample size



Figure 2: Firm-tech can measure size and pressure of cherries.



Figure 3: One of the new Stemilt cherry graders

Pack Schedules

- Once graded the fruit must be put on a pack schedule.
- Pack schedules contain fruit with similar grades and destined for the same client (Export/Domestic).
- Pack schedules give the packing line the order which the fruit is going to be packed as well as its location.

Conclusion

Quality control is the first step in determining the location of the fruit we see on our local grocery shelves. The first big step in a career is getting a taste of the extra responsibility that these higher education jobs expect out of you. The internship was a great way to get my foot in the door with a good company and gave me experience in the field I am currently studying. Before I started back in May I would have overlooked QC. Like many jobs in agriculture it is a thankless job and often goes overlooked. But if you work with good knowledgeable people it can be as good a career as any in the field. After spending three months in the department I may look for a permanent job in this field after my final year in college.