



Here is a receiving location where cherries are received and then transported to town.

### Introduction

Stemilt Growers is a family- owned tree fruit growing, packing and shipping company in Wenatchee, Washington. Stemilt is the largest fresh market sweet cherry shipper in the world and one of the nation's largest grower-packer-shippers of apples, pears, cherries, and stone fruit. The company is also a leader in organic fruit production, producing 26% of Washington's organic apples and 32% of the Pacific Northwest's organic pears. Stemilt employees around 1'500 people full-time.

### Job Description

During my internship, I worked in the Quality Control department when cherries were received from the grower. When the fruit is received a sample would be taken of the fruit. The fruit from that sample would then be sorted by taking out all the undersize and all the culls (bad cherries) that are outlined by the warehouse. All this information would then be entered into the computer and then the fruit would be ran on a machine called the Firmtech. The Firmtech determines what the size of the cherry is and also its firmness. This information would then be uploaded into a database where decisions would be made on how the fruit was going to be packed on the line. As you can see, this Quality Control position is very important to the warehouse and shows a lot of responsibility that this position is given.



**Stemilt Growers  
Wenatchee WA  
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Here is a picture of cherries going through a Hydro Cooler. The cherries would drop in temperature 40 degrees after the fruit was put through this hydro cooler. The fruit would then be loaded on Semi- trucks and sent to the warehouse where it would be packed.



Here is a typical station for doing a fruit quality sample. The cherries would sorted in the plastic trays and then the clean cherries would be ran on the firmtech which would measure the size and the firmness of the cherry.

### Summary

This internship was extremely beneficial in helping me understand the warehouse side of tree fruit production. I learned how to properly identify culls in cherries and how a packing line works. This information will help me understand how to look for fruit quality in my future career after I graduate from Washington State University.



Here is a mechanical sizer that sizes the cherries before they are put into a box. The picture on the right is people sorting the cherries for defects.