

You can use self-audits during picking to informally assess harvest performance and provide immediate, evidence-based feedback to the picking teams working on your orchard(s).

The audit shows supervisors where performance is good and should be praised, or where retraining is needed so the team can continuously improve. This can help the harvest team to maintain focus on safety and quality.

BEFORE YOU AUDIT

This self-audit guide and template is designed for use by harvest contractors and growers to self-monitor harvest practices. This is not an official audit process, it is intended as a guide only, to support and encourage good harvest practices. Official harvest audit templates will vary based on post-harvest company.

Growers planning to do any self-audits should discuss this with their harvest contractor before picking starts.

Agree in advance:

- who you'll discuss the audit results with - we suggest this should be the harvest or site manager.
- how any differing results between your self-audit and a harvest team audit will be addressed.



HOW TO COMPLETE YOUR SELF-AUDIT

Use the template on page three to help you work through the following steps:

Quantitative fruit sample audit

1. Take samples from three to four bins, with an equal number of fruit from each bin e.g., for a 300 fruit sample get 100 fruit from each of three bins.
 - Larger samples e.g. 300 fruit, give you more useful, accurate results. The allowed defects numbers in the template are based on a 300 fruit sample.
 - If you use a different sample size remember to calculate the allowed number of defects for the sample size used.
2. Inspect each piece of fruit for the presence of stalks, punctures, cuts, explosives, juice and softs.
3. Record the results on the template.
4. Return undamaged fruit to their original bins for traceability to remain intact.

Observational audit - picking, supervision and bin handling

5. Walk to the area being picked and watch the harvest for 10-15 minutes. During that time, record your observations on the template provided, marking if the expected practice was observed (ü) or not (û).
6. Move to the loadout pad. Observe and record the bin handling practices for 10-15 minutes there also.

Discuss results

7. Meet with your agreed contact to discuss your audit results and how they'll be shared with the picking teams. Use this as an opportunity to praise the team for good practice and highlight any improvements needed to the picking supervisor.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- **Punctures & cuts** - it's useful to make distinctions between fresh and old punctures or cuts.

Fresh damage is likely to have occurred during picking. Old damage will be from previous orchard activity and should not be recorded for picking audit purposes.

- **Dropped fruit** - look for dropped fruit that are not rejects. If they are found around or approaching the picking bins, this could indicate that bags are being overfilled.

Ignore dropped fruit that are obvious rejects e.g., fruit that have been removed from the bin, softs, or hail damaged fruit.

- **Unpicked fruit** - count the number of pickable fruit that have been left behind in the canopy, do not count reject fruit that has been deliberately left in the canopy.

There should be tolerances for fruit that is difficult to access due to canopy structures.

- **Select picks & difficult picks** - if a select pick is happening, make sure that fruit size is being checked frequently for each picker.

For difficult picks (e.g., softs, explosive fruit, hail damage, or fruit prone to short broken stalks) use additional audits or auditors that are focused on the specific issue to prevent rejects from reaching the bins.

FREQUENCY OF AUDITS

The frequency of your audits will depend on the number and size of teams, the length of time they will be picking in the orchard, and the speed of the auditor. Aim for two to three audits per picking team per day.

COMMUNICATION OF AUDIT RESULTS

Audit reporting should ideally use a written assessment form. Deliver feedback to the picking team supervisor (through agreed channels) while picking is still underway. This means pickers are kept aware of how they are performing as they go.

Note that a poor audit result may be influenced by issues out of the pickers control. Consider whether there is an issue in the orchard that's contributing to poor results e.g., a young orchard where stalks do not break off cleanly, high numbers of soft fruit.

FIND OUT MORE

For feedback and questions on this guide, please contact extension@zespri.com.

HARVEST SELF-AUDIT TEMPLATE

Auditor name: _____

Audit date: _____

Team name/leader: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Audit 1

Audit 2

Audit 3

| Quantitative audit | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|-------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Sample size (300 fruit sample recommended) | | | | | |
| Fruit audit | Allowed defects | | No. seen | No. seen | No. seen |
| | Percent | No. per 300 | | | |
| Stalks | 3% | 9 | | | |
| Punctures | 1% | 3 | | | |
| Cuts | 1% | 3 | | | |
| Explosives or juice | 0.3% | 1 | | | |
| Soft fruit | 2% | 6 | | | |

| Observational audit - expected practice | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Picking | Observed (✓) or not observed (✖) | | |
| Fruit placed in bags carefully | | | |
| Bags not overfilled | | | |
| Bags lifted over bins | | | |
| Bags emptied gently | | | |
| No rain picking | | | |
| No dropped fruit | | | |
| No more than three fruit left unpicked per bay | | | |
| No fruit picked off ground | | | |
| Sweeper used | | | |
| Supervision | Observed (✓) or not observed (✖) | | |
| Supervisor present | | | |
| Supervisor not picking | | | |
| Bin handling | Observed (✓) or not observed (✖) | | |
| Bins not over or under filled | | | |
| Bins free of debris/mud | | | |
| Tractor/forklift speed acceptable | | | |

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|--------------------|
| Comments - Audit 1 |
| Comments - Audit 2 |
| Comments - Audit 3 |