

Why Attend and Who Should Attend?

The purpose of the seminars is to familiarize participants with the most efficient ways of receiving and checking a load of produce on arrival to determine its quality according to USDA and CFIA protocol and inspection procedures. Topics covered include determining the quality and condition of a load upon arrival, determining if a formal inspection on a load is warranted, and reviewing the requirements of the federal inspection program and other independent inspection services.

The seminar series is broken down into three one-day sessions which may be taken together or individually, according to the business conducted by the participants' employers. Seminars can also be customized to cover a range of commodities that a specific company may deal with regularly, while removing commodity information that is not relevant to the company.

Defect identification panels and grading exercises are conducted so that participants are exposed to a "hands-on" learning environment. There will also be discussion and training on how to interpret Canadian and U.S. grade standards and their corresponding inspection manuals.

As fees for inspections continue to increase, it is important to have well trained receivers who can determine when an inspection is warranted and when it is not. A properly trained and up-to-date receiver will save your organization time and money by requesting inspections that will be of a maximum use to you when negotiating a claim with your shipper. Inspections that "don't score" cost your company money.

The seminars have been attended by receivers, quality control personnel, growers, packers, buyers, shippers and retail staff. Anyone who is involved in the fresh produce supply chain can benefit from these seminars.

Session 1

Identifying How Defects Are Scored

The first session in the series begins with identifying how defects are "scored" and whether they are either "within tolerance" or "out of grade". The morning session deals with general inspection information used by federal inspectors in Canada and the U.S., eg.

- selecting samples from a load
- selecting and examining sub-samples
- documenting findings on a Detail Sheet
- determining percentages of defects

Discussions revolve around grade standards and Good Arrival Guidelines, how they are different, and how they are used by the industry. The "Confirmation of Sale" document and its importance is also discussed. The morning session ends with tips on:

- where to look for potential problems
- how to conduct an in-house inspection
- how to determine maturity, and
- when and how to request a CFIA inspection in order to obtain the most information on a certificate.

The afternoon of the first session applies the information learned from the morning to apples and pears, lettuce and other greens, and tomatoes. The binders provided to participants of the seminar include inspection instructions and grade standards for over two dozen of the big sellers in the fruit and vegetable category.

Session 2

How to Inspect Fruit

The second session in the series deals with fruit. While only the most popular commodities are discussed (eg. citrus fruit, grapes, melons, kiwi, mango, peaches / nectarines, strawberries), the information applies to all fresh fruits in one way or another.

For most fresh fruits, maturity and ripeness are the biggest factors in appeal to the customer. Product which is immature will never ripen. Product which arrives too ripe is difficult to sell. Determining ripeness and maturity is essential in deciding whether an inspection is required. Other factors can affect ripeness in transit, which may result in a claim against the carrier. Having a receiver trained who can identify these factors is important in a "just in time delivery" industry.

Questions answered include:

- How much Watery Seed Cavity is allowed in a U.S. No. 1 cantaloupe?
- When does Hollow Heart score in a watermelon?
- Why is brown discolouration important to note on a honeydew?

Session 3

How to Inspect Vegetables

The third session deals with vegetables (e.g. asparagus, cauliflower, broccoli, garlic, peppers, beans, onions, and green onions, potatoes). A good portion of this session is devoted to potatoes.

Receivers will learn how to request and receive statements on inspection documents regarding defects that are "within tolerance" but affect the appearance of the commodity. These types of statements can be a big help in settling a dispute with a shipper when the product meets grade, but just doesn't have the shine that you were looking for. It is also very important if your company has their own produce specifications that are above number one grade.

Questions answered include:

- When is broccoli flowering?
- What is yellow colour on a cucumber?
- When are green onions not green anymore?

A properly trained receiving staff can save your organization money! You can't afford to get inspections that don't score and you can't afford to miss the loads that do need an inspection. You could pay for this course with just one claim that you might have otherwise missed.

The Instructor

Jeff Honey has been inspecting produce for over 30 years. His reputation for thoroughness and accuracy is well known in the industry. He gained his experience as an accredited inspector with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). His formal education includes training at the Canadian National Training School for Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Inspectors, the U.S.D.A. Terminal Market Inspector Training School, as well as other training sessions directly or indirectly related to produce, training and communication. During his last 5 years with CFIA, he supervised a staff of up to 16 inspectors responsible for performing federal inspections of fresh fruit and vegetables at the Ontario Food Terminal in Toronto.



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information
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Testimonials

"Jeff and the OPMA put on an excellent course. I am still amazed at how much I learned not only from Jeff but also from the other participants. This course is a must have, especially for new people joining the industry. At the DRC we can tell when someone has benefited from Jeff's training. The course goes a long way to keeping trade on track."

*Luc Mougeot
Vice-President
Dispute Resolution Corporation*

"I've never seen anyone so enthusiastic about finding and defining defects on fresh fruits and vegetable as Jeff. Jeff's knowledge on inspection procedures is easily contagious throughout his training seminar"

*Jaime Bustamante
Trading Assistance Manager
Dispute Resolution Corporation*

"I recently attended the OPMA Produce Inspection Training and can say that it will make a significant difference to our business. I attended with 3 other team members and now we have a common language when describing quality on incoming produce. We have also noticed an improvement in spotting less obvious issues as well as understanding what may have caused the problem. Our growers are showing improved comfort accepting our claims without the need for inspection delays as our descriptions and pictures have improved allowing them to trust our request. I would encourage anyone in the produce business to consider this course as a foundational requirement for their teams."

*Robert Kuenzlen
Mike and Mike's
Woodbridge, ON*



THE ONTARIO PRODUCE
MARKETING ASSOCIATION

QUALITY CONTROLLERS' Information & Training Seminars

A Hands-On Approach To
Receiving & Inspecting
Your In-Bound Produce Loads

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