

**Title** Factors affecting the adopting of the mechanical harvesting of citrus in Florida  
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#### **Abstract**

Most of the world's citrus production including that grown in Florida is harvested by hand. With increased labor cost and concerns regarding labor availability, considerable research has been conducted in Florida over the past 10 years aimed at the development of mechanical harvest methods for citrus, mainly citrus destined for the processed market. Two competing systems have been developed, each of which offer potentially considerable cost saving over hand harvest. The citrus industry in Florida has been slow to adopt mechanical harvest. The purpose of this paper is to describe mechanical harvest systems, compare the cost of hand versus mechanical harvest of citrus for processed utilization, and discuss issues related to wide scale adoption of mechanical harvesting systems. Of particular interest is the use of mechanical harvesting on Valencia oranges. For harvesting, Valencia offer a challenge in that two crops hang on the tree at the time of harvest; fruit to be next season's crop. Is it feasible to use mechanical harvesters to selective harvest the mature crop with little effect on next year's crop?