

Title Quality management systems approaches in Moroccan citrus packinghouses
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Abstract

Food safety and security and good quality produce has become in the recent years a major concern for exporters and packers of fresh fruit and vegetables in Morocco, in order to comply with the requirements of foreign markets and meet the needs of the consumers. Therefore, exporting groups and their affiliated packinghouses are strained, in one way, to adopt and demonstrate the implementation of Quality Management Systems (QMS) approaches fully integrated with production systems. Such approaches aimed to guaranty safe and good products in overseas markets. In Souss area, a major producing and exporting area in the country, with more than 50% of citrus and 80 to 85% of fresh vegetables, most of the orchards producing for export are certified GlobalGAP and/or Nature's choice. The packinghouses have adopted ISO 9001-2000, British Retail Consortium (BRC) Global standards, International Food Standards (IFS) guidelines or ISO 22000 standards requirements. Our survey of 2008 concerning the existing 18 packinghouses in the area that export yearly an average volume of 350 000 Tones revealed variations in the type of QMS implemented and certification awarded. The data showed that 64.2% are certified IS09001 V2000, 71,4% BRC v4; 28% ISO 22000 v2005 and 15% are certified IFS. Other systems such as SA 8000 and OHSAS 18001 as well as ISO 14000 are either implemented or in the process of doing so. A large number of the packinghouses about 72% are adopting the HACCP approach, in order to prevent any hazard that may affect fruit quality postharvest. The ultimate aim of the certification is to provide the end market with appropriate quality produce. The paper will highlight and discuss major criteria for choosing the type QMS as well as the main constraints that the packinghouses owners and exporters are facing.