

Title Causes and control of post-harvest deterioration in fruit and vegetable consignments carried by sea

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Abstract

Evidence is gathered during out-turn surveys at the discharge port (on behalf of cargo receivers, underwriters, shipowners or charterers) or during the study of claims documentation submitted by lawyers acting for one or other of the above parties. It is also helpful to be able to visit the producer country. Pre-shipment factors influencing cargo quality and out-turn condition include the weather, crop husbandry, harvesting and handling techniques, post-harvest treatments, method of packaging, schedule of loading, and carriage instructions written by the shipper/ exporter. Shipboard factors include design and function of the refrigeration and ventilation equipment, method of stowage, interpretation of carriage instructions, and duration of voyage. For container shipments it is the shipper's responsibility to "stuff" the container in an appropriate manner; the container operator accepts the closed box and undertakes to supply refrigeration/ventilation in accordance with the shipper's carriage instructions. Case studies will be presented, demonstrating that deterioration is often the result of a combination of adverse factors. Accurate diagnosis of the causes of deterioration can assist in prompt settlement of claims and reduction of losses in the future.