

# Harvest debris and cost implications for mechanical harvesting

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## Abstract

Citrus juice processors regard harvest debris of leaves and twigs as a cost to their operations and impose penalties on growers who send “excessive” amounts of debris with their fruit loads. A survey of citrus processors in Florida was developed in fall 2009 to ascertain the amount of costs associated with handling debris. This paper discusses the survey design. Interviews with processors identified a common set of cost categories around which the survey was designed. Quantifying costs of handling debris will have important implications in the future development of citrus mechanical harvesting in Florida. Previous research has shown that the mechanical harvesting equipment currently in use increase the volume of debris being delivered to juice processing plants. At the very least, processors could impose higher fines on mechanically harvested loads which would directly increase the cost of mechanical harvesting. At worst, processors could restrict the daily number of loads from mechanical harvesting operations, which would significantly undercut operational efficiencies of the equipment.