

Abstract:

In this paper the data collected from three Italian mega stores of Viterbo (Rome area) from different types of fruit (peaches, apricots, apples and pears) purchased twice in the same season are presented. Fruit quality was compared to the minimum EU quality standard requirements. The fruits were kept in a laboratory simulating the usual conditions in the market. All fruit met the EU quality standards only for size. Not all the fruit met the UE quality standards related to the category assigned from the mega store, for freshness, appearance, shape, integrity, and colour uniformity. Only apples in one mega store responded to all the EU quality standards. No relationship existed between the assigned category, the quality and the price of the product. Since fruits were kept in non-refrigerated bulk display, the recorded temperature varied between 20-25°C with R.H. varying from 40 to 50%. The conditions during simulated laboratory storage were 20°C and 65% R.H. despite these better thermohygro-metric conditions, in terms of firmness and overall quality, fruit quality decreased in 8 hours, from the morning to the evening. Apples and pears lost firmness quickly during the day especially during the first purchase.