

Basic guidelines to keep a packhouse as cool as possible during packing

Keeping the packhouse as cool as possible during the day is just as important as quick field heat removal after harvest to maximise the fruits' storage life.

Optimally, packhouses should be well ventilated and maintained between 18-25°C with a high relative humidity (85-95%).

Building design and insulation

- **Insulate the walls and roof** of the building to reduce heat transfer from the outside.
- **Use reflective or light-coloured roofing** to minimize heat absorption. Recycled water can be sprayed on the roof to enhance cooling of the roof.
- **Install thermal curtains or insulated doors** to keep cold air in and hot air out.
- **Seal gaps** around doors, windows, and loading bays to prevent warm air leaks.

Manage heat sources

- **Limit door openings:** use air curtains, strip curtains, or rapid-acting doors to reduce warm air entry.
- **Designate one loading/unloading area** and keep other areas closed.
- **Keep forklifts and other equipment outside** if possible – engines generate heat.
- **Lighting in the packhouse should be sufficient, but should not have an effect on the fruit temperature.**
- **Switch off unnecessary lights and machinery** inside the cold areas.

Other

- **Establish a routine maintenance schedule** to keep machinery operating optimally, minimize downtimes, and prevent packing delays to preserve fruit quality.