



22/05/09

Information Sheet – Grading and packing

Grading of papaya happens up to 5 times before export. Grading is carried out by:

- Farmers
- Exporters
- Quarantine
- NWC staff
- Importers/wholesalers
- Retailers

Each time grading takes place some fruit is removed. Removing fruit is the same as removing money. The further down the supply chain the fruit is; the more valuable it becomes. It is much better for good grading to take place on the farm before the fruit incurs many added costs.



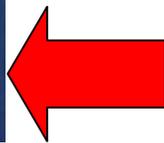
The market wants each box to be the same in terms of:

- Size (weight)
- sex (shape)
- stage of ripeness.

For this reason NWC staff use scales in order get fruit of the same size. What is much more difficult is trying to get fruit of the same stage of ripeness – this is where our competitors are doing a better job.



The blossom end of the fruit is more resistant to bruising and so fruit should be packed with this end down.



Blossom end – this end should be placed down

The Carton

The papaya carton exported from Fiji has an average net weight of 5 kg.

Papaya cartons are sold based on their 'count', which means how many fruit are within this 5 kg box.

The quality of cartons varies between different exporters.

Individual fruit socks are used to protect fruit from rubbing up against each other.



Once fruit arrives in the importing country it is taken to a packing house and inspected. Depending on the level of uniformity in the box the importing will have to again grade his fruit in order to sell boxes that have the same size fruit at the same stage of ripeness. Fruit are usually kept at around 7°C, any colder than this could result in chilling injury.

Sometimes fruit is artificially ripened by the importer in order to get it ready for delivery to the client. This artificial ripening is done by placing the fruit in a room and increasing the temperature to 21-26.5°C and/or using ethylene gas.