IMPROVING BLUEBERRY POSTHARVEST QUALITY

Rapid Transit from Field Harvest to Cooling Facility

DELAYS IN COOLING REDUCE FRESH APPEARANCE, INCREASE BERRY SOFTNESS AND ANTHRACNOSE

The time between harvest and cooling in a packing facility has a direct influence on the final quality of blueberries at market. Research done by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada scientists has shown that reducing the time from field harvesting to initial cooling has significant effects on the blueberry fresh market appearance, acceptable softness, and presence of anthracnose rot after cold storage (0.5 °C) for one week, followed by shelf conditions for three days (13 °C).

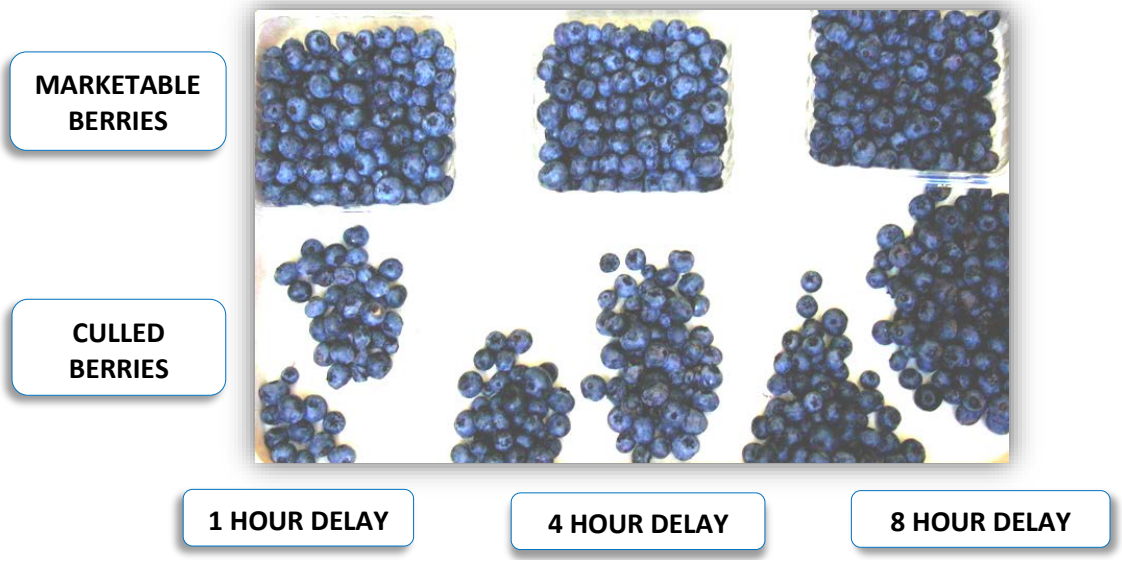
DELAYING COOLING IMMEDIATELY AFTER HARVEST REDUCES BERRY QUALITY AT MARKET

Fruit becomes unacceptably soft:

- 45% of berries remain firm when there is an 8 hour delay to cooling
- 60% of berries remain firm when there is a 4 hour delay to cooling
- **Over 70% of berries remain firm when there is only a 1 hour delay to cooling**

Presence of rot increases:

- 40% of berries show anthracnose rot when there is an 8 hour delay to cooling
- 25% of berries show anthracnose rot when there is a 4 hour delay to cooling
- **Under 20% of berries show anthracnose rot when there is only a 1 hour delay to cooling**



Berries sorted according to marketable or culled after being delayed 1 hour, 4 hours, or 8 hours from harvest to cooling

TAKE HOME MESSAGE: COOL YOUR BERRIES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER FIELD HARVEST TO MAINTAIN QUALITY WHEN IT GOES TO MARKET!

For more details, please contact:

Peter Toivonen, PhD
Research Scientist, Fruit Post-Harvest Physiology
Summerland Research and Development Centre
Email: peter.toivonen@canada.ca

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