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Try this quick quiz to test your fresh fruit handling knowledge before you start the training program. As you move through each course, you’ll take short quizzes to test your knowledge, followed by a final assessment to see how much you’ve learned.

1. What could you do to encourage your customers to purchase more fruit (and boost sales)?
   • Only offer one variety of each type of fruit — one variety of apple, one variety of pear, and so on.
   • Offer at least two varieties of each type of fruit.
   • Offer only one type of fruit.

2. What is the most important feature of an attractive produce display?
   • The display is clean.
   • The display is orderly.
   • The display separates fruit by color.
   • All of the above.

3. How can you best manage shrink in your produce department?
   • Discard all damaged produce immediately.
   • Never hand stack produce — this causes severe damage.
   • Use slightly damaged fruit in prepared foods.

4. What does it mean to “rotate a display”?
   • To turn the display table around 180 degrees.
   • To move fruit from one end of the produce section to another.
   • To move the oldest produce to the top of the display, and restock the bottom with produce from storage.

5. When should you order more produce for your department?
   • As soon as you run out.
   • When your customers make requests for certain produce items.
   • Weekly.
   • Order every few days depending on need and available stock.
Overview

In this course, we’ll focus on how you can order the right amount of fruit and produce for your store’s immediate needs.

Scenario

It’s Tuesday! Leo smiles as he makes his way through the produce department of his mid-sized neighborhood supermarket. He stops to compliment Kamal on the lighting and arrangement he has set up for the pears display. He notices that Sal, the newest member of the produce staff, is correctly rotating the grapes display.

Alternating fruit displays by color was Sal’s idea, and Leo is pleased that his newest employee is already making good suggestions. When Leo gets into his office, he’ll check grape sales for this week to see if there is a positive response to the new layout on the display floor.

Leo’s first order of business is to get his next produce order in by noon for delivery the next day. Before he orders, he needs to check his email for produce updates from the head office.

These updates provide important information on which products are on promotion and what stock is currently available. Information on weather conditions during growing season will help him estimate the quality of the fruit and produce he’ll need to order.

Leo also needs to factor in his own in-store promotions, and keep an eye on what is happening locally that might affect his order this week. Even the local weather forecast could change the demand for items. Because there’s a local festival coming up this weekend, Leo has planned a seasonal special on berries to start on Thursday. Berry and cream desserts are a tradition at the festival, and there will be high demand for those items during the weekend.

Last year at this time, Leo didn’t plan his orders well and his store ran out of berries before the festival had even started. He definitely wants to do better this year to keep his customers happy.

Leo ordered enough berries for the special sale, and during the town’s festival week his customers purchased all the berries in record time. Leo is fairly certain he can sell even more berries during the post-festival and post-promotion period – his customers loved them so much they were walking out of the store with entire flats of berries!

Leo has a great relationship with Max, one of his direct suppliers. Max recently ended up with more berries than he had planned on and asks Leo to take more than he originally ordered.
Decision Points

- How much stock does Leo need to order for tomorrow? For the rest of the week?
- Should Leo take the extra berries from Max?
- Is the quality still as good as the fruit sold during the promotion?
- If Leo orders more seasonal berries, how can he make sure that they sell?

Key Background Information: Video Overview

Let’s learn more about the importance of making smart ordering decisions for your store.

As produce manager, you’ll want to gather as much information as you can when ordering produce for your store. First, you’ll need to know what’s currently on display and what you have in stock. Think about the display floor: How much fruit sold yesterday? How much fruit do you expect to sell today? You might ask these kinds of questions each day as part of your routine, and also when training new staff members.

Let’s look at the storage situation: How much fruit is in stock in the current storage room? And, how much room is there for storing produce that needs to stay at its optimal cold temperature in cold storage? Is there enough stock to fill the displays for tomorrow?

By checking what’s on display and in your storage rooms, and how much cold storage space you have, you’ll be able to make good ordering decisions and avoid waste.

Resources from your head office, distribution center, or from your wholesaler or supplier will help you learn more about the quality and variety of fruit on promotion. Take a look at both last year’s customer purchasing patterns and the overall amount of produce sold during promotions from previous seasons to get a better idea of what you’ll need to order for your store this year.

How much produce you order can depend on some important factors including:
- The day of the week
- The season of the year, and which holidays or festivals are coming up
- What competitive products are available
- What previous ordering records show you about successful purchasing strategies

Note that if you order too much produce, you may not have sufficient storage space to maintain quality. Without sufficient storage space, you may not be able to sell it all before it spoils, causing waste, or you may have to mark down the price, causing decreased profits for your department and your store.
Ordering Produce

If you order too little produce, you might run out of popular items, especially during a promotion, and lose potential sales. If this happens too often, you may lose customers, and that could hurt your store’s reputation. Your number one goal is to order produce daily for your store’s daily demand, especially for the more perishable items.

Only order the amount of produce that you can sell in a day and that you can store comfortably in your storage or cold rooms. Always keep in mind that your store’s daily demand will fluctuate, and that you have limits on your overall storage capacity.

If it’s summertime, customers are likely to be buying more fruit. At the end of the week, people will probably be purchasing more produce for their weekend cooking and meal planning.

Be sure to pay attention to your customers’ produce buying patterns so you can always order the right amount for their needs. Your store may not have a lot of cold storage space, so ordering too much produce could lead to unnecessary waste.

Remember that fruit quality suffers if it sits unrefrigerated. For example, delicate berries do not last long in warm climates. Pears may seem in good condition upon arrival to your store but can become soft very quickly on display. Apples need to be kept cold until they reach displays on the produce department floor.

Order all these fruits based on customer demand and your cold storage capacity.

When stocking produce for special or seasonal promotions, you’ll need to order more than your store’s regular volume.

If pear season is just starting, your suppliers will begin to source many varieties of pears. You’ll want to make sure to place orders for a range of varieties, so you can offer your customers a choice of their favorite seasonal fruits or conduct a special pear promotion.

In general, ordering two or more varieties and sizes of fruits also increases volume purchases and overall sales.

You might also want to offer both larger and smaller sizes of these fruits in separate bulk packaging.

Always make sure that you have enough fruit ordered and in stock in time to start your store’s special or seasonal promotion.

You may also want to continue ordering popular items for your store’s stock if produce demand remains high after a special promotion.
Some customers realize that seasonal fruits and vegetables may only appear in their local store for a short period of time, and they may wish to stock up by purchasing larger amounts.

Remember that for apples, pears, seasonal berries, and other produce, always order daily for your store’s daily demand and according to your available cold storage capacity.

Order more products that are popular during holidays and seasonal promotions. It is much easier to sell products for which there is a greater demand.

If your department runs a successful special promotion for a particular fruit like berries, there’s a good chance that if you extend the promotion or run another sale soon after the first, your customers will continue to make purchases of these desirable items.

Another tip for improving your merchandising is to get to know your suppliers. When you establish good working relationships with your suppliers, you might be able to have more flexibility in your ordering.

If your supplier is local and has reliable staff who are accurate with your orders, you may be able to order extra cartons or boxes of produce when you've run out of a popular item or have a promotion coming up.

In return, your supplier may ask if you can take on extra produce that he needs to quickly move out of storage.

Working together, you can get creative to keep quality produce in stock and ready for your customers to buy and eat!

Activity: Try It for Yourself

Consider your ordering patterns.
• When did you over or under order produce?
• What was the produce item that you didn’t order in correct amounts?
• During which season?
• What was the result of this over or under ordering?
• Did you meet customer demand?
• Did you have waste?
• What will you do differently the next time you place an order?

It’s apple season. You know that your customers usually buy multiple varieties of apples, and you’ve kept track of the types your customers most enjoy. You usually stock five varieties of apples, but your supplier says there’s a new variety in stock this season that is very popular.

• How could you effectively place an order for your store to meet seasonal demand for regular varieties as well as new varieties?
• How could you encourage your customers to try a new apple variety?
Keep track of the amounts of each variety you sell daily, and be sure to include the newly added variety in your notes. See what happens.
- Do your customers choose the new variety, too?
- Is there something else you could do to promote that new variety of apple?

When you familiarize yourself with important information about the produce you handle, you’ll be able to offer the best quality product to your customers.

Review: Show What You Know

Now let’s check what you have learned so far in this course with a quiz.

How much produce should Leo order?
- As much produce as he did at the same time last year.
- Only what he can sell in a day.
- As much as he can store for two+ weeks.

What could Leo do to increase volume purchases of fruit?
- Only offer one variety of each type of fruit – one variety of apple, one variety of pear, and so on.
- Offer at least two varieties of each type of fruit.
- Offer only one type of fruit.

Should you ever consider extending a sale on fruit?
- Only if it will save your store money to place a larger order.
- Only if you sold out of all promotional fruit in one day.
- Only if you know that customer demand is still high.

Cross-merchandising means:
- Giving another department your products to sell.
- Partnering with a department or other produce items to potentially sell multiple products at once.
- Giving your customers the chance to see your products in other places in the store.

If your preferred supplier has extra produce he wants you to take that’s more than the amount you originally ordered, you should:
- Never take extra fruit.
- Always take extra fruit.
- Decide if you can easily sell the extra fruit without compromising quality and if so, take it.
New Ways of Doing Things

After working through this course, what are the things that you might do differently when placing orders?

Consider three new things that you might do when placing orders.

Managing shrink (or waste) starts with smart ordering. Always order the right amount for your store’s customer needs and storage conditions.

Here’s what Leo did to make smart ordering decisions:

• Every week when Leo prepares his ordering plan, he reviews the previous week’s orders, sales, and shrink to know what the recent trends are. He keeps track of sales trends in notes that he can share with the entire staff to keep them informed.
• Each day before Leo prepares his orders to meet the following day’s needs, he talks with Sal and Kamal to find out what’s currently on display and what’s in the cool room. He knows it’s important to be aware of what’s in stock to make smart ordering decisions.

After thinking about how to do things differently in your job, you might want to check out additional resources in the Learn More section of this course.
Overview

In this unit, we’ll focus on how you can inspect produce deliveries to ensure the best quality for your customers and avoid waste, and make decisions about when to move produce to the retail floor or back room.

Specifically, we will learn more about inspecting produce deliveries quickly and efficiently, managing produce storage and display, and effectively implementing FIFO.

Scenario

The produce department staff at Leo’s mid-sized neighborhood supermarket are quick and efficient with many aspects of their jobs. In the back rooms (store rooms and cold rooms) the team knows how to handle fruit shipments carefully and understands the FIFO rule (First In, First Out) to make smart decisions about storage and display.

Today, however, a shipment of fruit has arrived in the store that is much riper than anticipated and obviously needs to be sold quickly. Even though it’s good quality, this shipment of fruit is at a riper stage than what is currently in storage. The team decides to stick with routine and places this new stock into cold storage and moves the older fruit from cold storage to put on display shelves.

Sales are strong. When the team re-stocks two days later, the fruit in storage has turned bad and is unsaleable, creating an out of stock situation. With the big holiday weekend coming up, the store could lose sales if the most popular produce on not on display, at the best quality, ready for consumption.

Decision Points

• What specific tasks should Leo teach Kamal and Sal about inspecting incoming produce shipments?
• How can the team be sure which incoming shipments are ready to be placed in storage – or placed directly on the produce display floor?
• How can the team best manage their storage capacity to ensure that fresh produce makes it to the display floor?
• When should the team supersede the FIFO rule?

Key Background Information: Video Overview

Let’s learn how to inspect deliveries efficiently and effectively.

Open boxes and cartons immediately. You know how important it is to keep the cold chain. Since you must keep fruit deliveries at the optimal temperature for each type of fruit you order and receive, your goal is to inspect shipments thoroughly and quickly.

 Boxes and cartons of fruit should be quickly inspected directly in your shipment receiving area or in a larger store room area, if you’ve got the space. Once your initial inspection is complete, you and your teams can then move cartons to the appropriate storage room for a deeper inspection of the produce.

Open boxes and cartons of fruit shipments when they arrive and inspect their contents immediately. First, you should always check that the delivery is consistent with
Inspecting and Storing Shipments

the order (variety, grade, size, number of cartons). Next, you should always check for fruit quality. Pull out all poor quality fruit you come across. Set aside whole cases or boxes that contain inferior quality or over-ripe fruit.

Look carefully into each box, not just at the top layers of fruit. When you inspect your shipments of fruit more carefully, be sure to look at all parts of each shipment box – the side, top, and bottom layers – not only the top.

Boxes passing inspection should be moved to appropriate storage immediately. Remember that keeping the cold chain is critical. When you maintain the cold chain, you will keep your fruit in its best condition for your customers.

Move cartons and boxes of newly arrived, fresh, ready-to-sell fruit into your main store room space. Be sure to implement FIFO – First In, First Out – and place the ripest fruit on the display room floor. Move newly arrived, less ripe fruit that can wait a day or two to be placed on the display room floor into the appropriate cold storage room. Keep fruit at its optimal storage temperature based on its condition.

Remember that it’s most important to order and store fruit according to daily demand. You will know the purchasing patterns of your customers which will help you order fruit in correct amounts based on demand each day, week, and season.

Now, let’s learn more about how to make the best decisions for storing and displaying fresh produce.
You already know that it’s critical to quickly store incoming deliveries of fresh fruit to keep the cold chain and to keep the quality of fruit optimal for your customers. Your department team should have a system in place for recording (on cartons and boxes) the date you receive deliveries of fruit. It is important to keep track of each delivery so you know which fruit should be placed on the display floor first.

It is important to pay close attention to the type of fruit you store and where it should be placed before it can go out on display. You also already know the optimal temperatures and conditions needed for storing incoming deliveries of fresh fruit.

As a produce manager, you will make on-the-spot decisions about moving produce directly into cold storage or into “regular” storage areas of your back room. You will also know the coldest and warmest parts of your cool room, and where to store the different products, according to temperature.

What if an incoming delivery contains fruit that is actually riper than a previous day’s delivery already in storage? It’s important to keep track of the date of each delivery and it’s important to carefully inspect each delivery so you can see the quality of fruit you’ve received.

When you have a carton or box of fruit that is ready to sell to your customers, you’ll need to make adjustments in your display plan. You always want to present your customers the freshest, best quality fruit possible and you want to reduce loss of product in your department. If this means you will have to shift your storage and display plan, fine!

Being aware and flexible is one key to successful storage and display management.

You’ll learn more about creating effective displays in a later course.

**Activity 1: Try It for Yourself**

Open a carton of fruit that has just arrived in your receiving area.
- What do you notice first?
- In what condition is the fruit on the top layer? Good quality? Poor quality? Ripe? Over-ripe? Not yet ripe?

Now, lift the top layer of fruit to reveal the next layers.
- Is this fruit in the same condition as the top layer?
- What do you notice about the overall quality of fruit in this carton? Is it acceptable?
- Do some individual pieces need to be removed?
- Is the fruit ready for your retail floor display, or is it ready for storage for a day or two?

Discuss your findings with your team to teach them more about inspecting fruit and recognizing quality.

**Activity 2: Try It for Yourself**

Take an uninterrupted tour of your store’s back room including the produce receiving area, the cold storage area, and the regular storage area.
- What do you notice about these areas?
- Are they neat and tidy, with an obvious organization to boxes and cartons?
- Are they dirty or disorderly?
- What changes need to be made to make sure these important areas are in the best condition possible for storing fresh produce?

Now, survey the space you have for cold storage and regular storage.
- What are the different temperature zones in the cool room?
- What should be stored in each zone?
- Is there good air circulation around packages in the cool room?
- Do you have effective plastic curtains on the cool room doors?
• Do you need different cold storage areas for different types of produce?

If you do not have access to different cold storage areas, what storage practices can you and your team implement to ensure the best case scenario for storing incoming fresh fruit?

When you take the time to observe what is really happening in the back of your store, you can change poor storage practices. Your goal is to make fresh fruit storage efficient and effective so that you can always present your customers with the best quality produce and reduce waste overall.

Review: Show What You Know

Now let’s check what you have learned so far in this course with a quiz.

When fruit shipments arrive at your store’s receiving area, you should FIRST:
• Check that the delivery is consistent with the order (variety, grade, size, number of cartons).
• Immediately place fruit cartons into cold storage to not break the cold chain.
• Conduct an initial inspection to make sure that the quality of the shipment is good.
• Place all incoming fruit directly on the display floor – it always arrives ready to sell!

When inspecting a newly arrived carton, you should check:
• The top layer of fruit.
• The middle layers of fruit.
• The bottom layer of fruit.
• All layers of fruit in the carton.

When you inspect a carton of fruit more carefully, you should always look for and remove:
• Fruit that is spoiled.
• Fruit that is bruised.
• Fruit that is overripe.
• All of the above.

New deliveries of fresh fruit should always be:
• Placed directly into cold storage.
• Placed directly into regular storage.
• Placed into the appropriate storage for the condition and type of fruit.

FIFO – First In, First Out – is a practice that only applies:
• To incoming deliveries of fresh fruit.
• To storing cartons and boxes of fresh fruit.
• To placing fresh fruit on display.
• To all of the above.

Incoming deliveries of fresh, ripe fruit do not need to be stored. Ripe fruit can be placed directly on the display floor.
• Always true
• Never true.
• Sometimes true.

New Ways of Doing Things

After working through this course unit, what are the things that you might do differently when inspecting produce shipments and moving produce to the appropriate location?

Consider three new things that you might do when placing orders.

The main take-aways from this unit are:
• Inspect produce deliveries quickly and efficiently.
• Supersede FIFO when fruit is more mature/ripe than fruit already in storage.

Here’s what Leo and his team did to make smart changes when inspecting orders:
• Every time a new shipment arrives, the point person on the team checks the delivery against the order,
quickly opens each carton, and gives it an initial inspection.

- After the initial QC, the team moves newly arrived and acceptable boxes of fruit into the main storage area where there is room for a more thorough inspection.
- Someone from the team then inspects each carton, carefully looking at all layers in each box, and removing subpar fruit.

Here’s what Leo and his team did when considering to move produce to the back room or retail floor:

- Every staff member is trained in inspecting incoming deliveries quickly and efficiently so they can all recognize the quality of fresh fruit and decide on-the-spot where it should be placed.
- Incoming deliveries of fresh, ripe fruit are often placed directly on the display floor. When ripe fruit arrives and is ready to sell, Leo and his team want to move it quickly so their customers always get the best quality fruit.
- Leo’s team understands the FIFO rule (First In, First Out) and also knows when to over-ride this rule.
- Leo’s team also understands the different qualities of both the cold storage and regular storage areas of their back rooms AND the different temperature conditions for storing fresh fruit so they can store fruit appropriately.

After thinking about how to do things differently in your job, you might want to check out additional resources in the Learn More section of this course.
Overview

In this course, we will explore how to create effective produce displays, particularly for holidays and special or seasonal promotions.

Scenario

The holiday season is always a bustling time in Leo’s store, especially in the produce department as customers shop for essential items for favorite seasonal recipes. Many of the desired products in the produce department are specialty items not regularly in stock during other times of the year, and customers will be attracted to them as they are planning their special holiday meals.

Other departments in Leo’s store are also dealing with the chaos of the holiday crush and all are eager to sell more of their own offerings. As most families prepare traditional holiday meals, Leo realizes that it is a great time to combine forces with other departments and sell more products overall and throughout the store. To make the most of this opportunity, Leo needs some fresh ideas about the best ways to do cross-merchandising in his store.

Leo and his staff have noticed that produce displays get more damaged during busy weekends especially during the holidays when shoppers are more frantic to grab what they need and go. The display cases become untidy and produce staff need to stay constantly on watch, regularly cleaning and checking the displays for disorder, restacking fruit, and immediately removing damaged product. Leo and his staff need to keep the department looking its best for their valued customers.

Decision Points

- How can Leo and his staff best attract customers to new products and seasonal offerings?
- How could Leo engage in effective cross-merchandising with other departments in his store?
- How can Leo use lighting effectively to help create eye-catching displays and a pleasant shopping environment in the produce department?

Key Background Information: Video Overview

Let's learn more about how to promote your produce effectively.
During busy holiday shopping times, it’s important to strategically place impulse purchases such as specialty fruits and new seasonal offerings in prominent locations and high traffic areas.

You’ll position them so customers will have to walk past them on their way to pick up staples like vegetables and legumes, or get to the weighing station and check out.

Another technique is to place new and seasonal products next to products that are purchased regularly, such as bananas. This placement will help to boost sales.

You already know how important it is to create eye-catching displays throughout your produce department. Merchandising practices for increasing sales of apples and pears include placing multiple varieties, colors, and sizes on display, and using color breaks to highlight the different varieties of fruit within one display case or area.

It’s also important to create bigger displays of these popular items during holidays and seasonal shifts, such as just after harvest when there are more varieties available.

Tickets and other Point of Sale materials, such as posters, flaglines, and danglers, can also attract customers to a display.

Present as many pear varieties as you can on the display floor. Attractive color variations and size selections will appeal to shoppers. Having two or more sizes available offers customers a choice and can increase volume purchases.

Always place impulse purchases, like seasonal berries and pears, in high traffic areas. If these fruits are buried deep within the produce section, they are likely to be overlooked by distracted customers. Provide generous space when placing popular produce in the display cases so your customers can easily see and reach the fruit they wish to purchase.

Larger strawberry displays located at the front of the department can increase strawberry sales by 12% and total produce sales by 5%.
Display all package sizes, segments, and specialty items together to increase sales of all berries. Include related items in your display. Try pairing berries with dessert items from the bakery and dairy sections to help drive incremental sales.

When it comes to displaying apples, place different varieties together as a category. For example, offer a minimum of two sizes of apples, and use popular varieties such as category leaders.

Create excitement with newer varieties, too. In your apple displays, you'll always want to use the different colors of different varieties to create effective color breaks.

Consider using special effects like a waterfall, island, or secondary bins depending on store space and layout. Apples are easy to cross merchandise, so consider adding apple slicers, juice, and other food items to your apple displays to drive sales.

You can also experiment with props in the produce department for your seasonal displays. Match containers like festive baskets or bowls with appropriate holiday decorations. But don’t overdo it! Using too many items to attract attention can overshadow your product.

No matter the season, it’s important to offer your customers choice when presenting produce.

Focus on showcasing the best combination of sizes, varieties, colors, and packs. For holiday season and other celebratory times of the year, you can create festive packs of fruit to match the theme. If gift giving is an important part of a seasonal event, consider developing gift baskets of mixed fruits to celebrate the occasion.

You know that promoting your produce helps generate sales, attracts new customers, and enhances your store’s image and reputation. Your number one goal for effective merchandising is to appeal to all the senses of your customer.

Cross-merchandising is a wonderfully creative way to sell products across different departments. By doing this, you can extend your produce department into other areas of the store. When you think creatively, you’ll find plenty of opportunities in your store to sell your produce outside of your department.

Produce like apples, grapes, and pears can be a perfect match for cheese and nuts. Avocados and tomatoes can be paired with tortilla chips. Seasonal berries always entice when partnered with other dessert items like ice cream, cake, and whipped cream. Other ideas for perfect pairings could be showcasing fruits with yogurts and granola, apples with bagged salads, pears with varietal wines, and of course, strawberries with champagne. Different regions may have different customs.

As you create cross-merchandising displays in your department, consider delicious in-store sampling...
opportunities to entice your customers to taste and buy.

In-store samplings are a great way to introduce new products, varieties, and flavors. Samplings also provide personalized selling opportunities and encourage both immediate impulse buys and longer term sales. When your customers have a chance to sample your produce in the store, it can reinforce brand loyalty and remind them to come back and buy their favorite products.

In-store samplings can also help you minimize potential losses by presenting products that aren’t selling quickly enough in a more attractive way.

Offering health information and recipes about fruits like apples and pears along with your samplings is another great opportunity to attract customers to new varieties and products and to build customer loyalty for your store.

When you plan carefully with attention to detail, you can better promote your produce department offerings.

Activity: Try It for Yourself

A fun promotional activity to engage your staff and customers is to offer staff recommendations via information areas in your store’s produce section. This gives staff the opportunity to directly communicate with customers about their favorite products. With such signage, your customers will feel more connected to the store and its offerings, and that will drive sales.

Talk to other managers in your store about how they promote their products.
- What tools have worked best for them? Flyers? Sampling? Contests?
- What could you try in your store?

When speaking with other department managers about cross-departmental promotions and merchandising, make a point of discussing which holidays, festivals, and other special events are coming up and how you could work together to sell multiple products in multiple departments.

After your cross-promotion partnership has ended, talk with the other managers about what happened.
- Did sales increase? For all products? For only one?

• What worked? What didn’t work?
• What might you do better the next time you partner with another department?

When you familiarize yourself with important information about the produce you handle, you’ll be able to offer the best quality product to your customers.

Review: Show What You Know

Now let’s check what you have learned so far in this course with a quiz.

The busy holiday season is just around the corner, and Leo wants to make sure specialty produce items sell out every day. What should he do to get close to his goal? (Choose one)
- Display products in a prominent location at the front of the department.
- Display all seasonal items near the weighing station so people don’t forget to choose them on their way out of the department.
- Create festive, eye-catching displays with samplings to entice customers to try and buy new varieties of produce.
- All of the above.

The in-store bakery made too many shortbread cookies and may not be able to sell them all while fresh. What cross-merchandising idea might help sell more cookies and more produce at the same time?
- Create flyers about the sale and post them in the produce section where most shoppers spend their time.
Merchandising / Promoting Your Produce

• Host an in-store contest and offer the winner the extra cookies.
• Combine forces within the store. Make a few sampling displays with the cookies, fresh seasonal berries, and whipped cream, and people will be encouraged to buy all three products!

What could an in-store sampling do for your produce sales?
• In-store samplings don’t affect overall sales.
• In-store samplings are not allowed in most stores.
• In-store samplings let customers try produce they might not otherwise try and which will encourage them to buy something new.

New Ways of Doing Things

After working through this course, what are the things that you might do differently in your own job, to make sure you’re effectively merchandising your fruit products?

Consider three new things that you might do differently in your job today.

Here’s what Leo did:
• Makes sure that his produce displays are always carefully hand stacked, showcase color breaks, and are monitored for order and cleanliness.
• Makes certain his store showcases the most interesting and colorful seasonal displays. To help with this effort, he often visits other stores and retailers to gather new ideas that he brings back to his team.
• Plans and creates tasty samplings and visual promotions with products from other departments to keep the offerings interesting and seasonal which Leo believes are some keys to sale success.
• Collaborates with other departments to cross-merchandise complementary products to increase sales throughout the store.
• Leo knows that the first loss is the best loss, and he trained his staff to pay close attention to unacceptable produce on display and to either discard it or save it for another use. By taking bruised or damaged fruit off the display, they can eliminate an invisible loss factor.

There are two main takeaways from this course:
• Increase sales and visibility of products.
• Create seasonal displays that attract.

After thinking about how to do things differently in your job, you might want to check out additional resources in the Learn More section of this course.
Overview

In this course, we will explore best practices for selling more produce by creating effective, appealing produce department displays.

Scenario

Last weekend, Leo and his family visited Leo’s uncle in a nearby town. During lunch, the kids ate all the bananas, so Leo walked over to the local supermarket to buy some more for later. The supermarket was similar to Leo’s store, and he was interested to see what their produce area looked like.

The first thing that Leo noticed was the pear display. With bruised fruit on top, the pears weren’t selling well. The store’s strawberry display, however, was much cleaner, and the fruit was fresh and attractively presented. Although the display wasn’t very large, Leo noticed that while he was there, a staff member came out several times to replenish the punnets (clamshells) to keep the display looking full. This was a smart move because it was a busy Sunday afternoon, and the strawberries were selling fast.

It took Leo a few minutes to find the banana display, because it was tucked into the back corner, near the entrance to the dairy department. The display was stacked with green banana bunches with nothing ripe enough to feed his hungry nephews.

Yes, he had no bananas, but Leo did come away from the store with ideas for changes he could make in his own produce department to keep it stocked with the freshest fruit and to brighten up the displays overall. He also realized how hard his staff – especially Kamal – worked without complaint, to keep the produce displays clean and tidy. He made a mental note to compliment them at Monday’s staff meeting.

Decision Point

- What floor layout changes could Leo consider to make sure his produce department attracts customers?
Creating Effective Store Layouts and Displays

Key Background Information: Video Overview

Let’s learn more about how to create effective store layouts and fruit displays.

Your produce department can attract or distract customers with its displays.

You want your entire produce department to be as appealing as possible by keeping it neat and clean, with the best quality produce on display.

You want your customers to spend time there productively sampling and selecting both new and favorite products.

Good lighting makes a big difference in how customers view not only the fruits and vegetables on display, but also the general ambience of the store. The cosmetics aisles in your own or competitor’s supermarkets offer a great example for understanding the best lighting for retail.

For produce departments, one of the best lighting solutions is triphosphor fluorescent lights, which highlights the freshness of produce with low installation, running, and maintenance costs.

Run fluorescent lights parallel to your displays for the best effect.

Choose bright, white bulbs because when compared with cream or yellow light, white light makes produce items, especially leafy greens, look fresher. If down-lights are used, make sure they overlap to provide uniform lighting on the display.

Now that you’ve put your effective lighting plan together, let’s turn to developing a more effective floor layout plan, using display placement options that will enhance your customers’ shopping experience.

Fruit displays usually appear in the front of the produce department so customers see these attractive items first. Vegetable displays most commonly appear along the back walls of the department.

Special varieties of fruits should always be placed in high traffic areas at the front of the department. These products are typically impulse buys, and people will grab them en route to the weighing station or check out. To design a more attractive produce section display, start with a good balance and use of color.

Appealing produce displays help customers easily find the fruits they already enjoy, and entice them to try new, appealing varieties as well.
Creating Effective Store Layouts and Displays

Customers want choice, and a balanced, colorful display area helps them make purchasing decisions, and helps you sell more produce.

Now, let’s learn about fruit specific design options that help sell more fruit. Always make your displays as colorful and pleasing as possible.

Use contrasting colors to separate fruit varieties and attract customers. Use green and yellow varieties to create a visual separation from the red varieties.

For pears, always place ripe fruit at the front and top of the display, and unripe fruit at the bottom and back of the display. Rotate fruit position as you add more fruit to displays that have been picked through by customers. Berries are often on seasonal promotion, and can be cross-merchandised with other products like cakes and shortbread.

Your berry displays will make the best impression if they are kept clean, tidy, and stocked with the ripest, freshest fruit. These displays should appear at the front of your produce department where traffic is heaviest. You might also consider a visually appealing secondary display near the weighing station for last-minute impulse sales.

Focus on creating smaller displays at the beginning of each week, when traffic and turnover is lighter, that can expand enough for the busy weekends and holidays. If available, false bottoms can be used to make displays with less product look larger.

By following these tips and best practices, you’ll be able to create more appealing displays for your customers.

Activity: Try It for Yourself

Take a tour of your store’s produce display floor during a quiet part of your shift.

• What do you notice first?
• Are the fruit displays neat and tidy?
• Is it clean both above and below the display?
• Is the lighting effective, and are all the lights working?
• Are featured fruits displayed near high-traffic areas?
• Is there anything distracting about the displays?
• What about the colors? Size? Shape?
• Where are the fruits displayed?
• Where are the vegetables displayed?

Make note of specific qualities about your displays that could be easily changed to make them more appealing.

• Should the display cases be positioned differently on the sales floor?
• Do you need to move smaller cases and tables near the front of your department for displaying seasonal fruits and impulse items?
• Is the weighing station easy to find, and visibly located in the department?

What changes – small or large – will make your department more inviting and easier for customers to navigate?

Talk with your staff about making needed changes soon, and then observe and track how your customers respond to the new layout. You don’t have to make big changes to see different purchasing patterns – small but effective shifts in presenting produce can offer big impact. (Hint: The quickest and easiest way to measure change is by monitoring activity in the weighing station and check out areas.)
Review: Show What You Know

Now let’s check what you have learned so far in this course with a quiz.

What is the most important element of an attractive produce display?
- The display is clean.
- The display is kept in order.
- The display showcases fruit separated by color.
- All of the above.

Effective produce display lighting is:
- Important.
- Not important.
- Only important for night time shoppers.

Highly perishable fruit like seasonal berries should always be:
- Displayed in front of vegetables.
- Monitored often to check quality while on display.
- Placed on display for only a few hours at a time.

New Ways of Doing Things

After working through this course, what can you do differently in your store to enhance the produce section display layout?

Consider three new changes that you can make in your job today.

Here’s what Leo did:
- Shared pictures of creative produce displays from other stores with his staff. They discussed making simple changes in their own produce display area.
- Leo’s staff also learned to arrange colorful fruits and vegetables in ways that attracted more customer attention.

The two main takeaways from this course are:
- Make easy changes in your displays to attract customers and boost sales with great lighting, attractive and accessible display layout, ticketing that communicates to customers, and clean displays.
- For product requiring refrigeration, only display what you can sell in a day – store the rest appropriately.

After thinking about how to do things differently in your job, you might want to check out additional resources in the Learn More section of this course.
Overview

In this course, we'll introduce some creative ideas for managing produce displays and shrink.

Scenario

Leo's produce department is always clean, orderly, and attractive, and his staff is trained and motivated to work hard to keep it in such good condition. After his recent visit to the store in his uncle's town, Leo changed the produce display layout to encourage more sales.

The department now presents seasonal and specialty items in high traffic areas near the center aisle at the entrance to the department. Apple and pear displays always showcase produce with contrasting colors stacked next to one another.

Fruits are in the front of the department, and most staple vegetables are in the cases towards the back of the room. The weighing station is now located at the back of the vegetable section, so there is a logical flow for customers that encourages them to see the full offerings in the produce department.

Leo has recently noticed that staff is disposing of all damaged produce in the garbage bin in the back for the store, even if the damage to the fruit is not severe. Sometimes customers drop fruit, causing an apple or pear to bruise in only one small spot. Leo wants to save money for the department by finding a way to keep slightly damaged fruit that can still be safely used.

Decision Points

- How should Leo and his staff best monitor the new display layout to make sure it remains top-notch?
- What can Leo do with less severely damaged fruit from his department to minimize overall losses?

Key Background Information: Video Overview

Let's learn more about the importance of managing your fruit displays.

Managing shrink at every step of the fruit storage and display process is an important part of your role as produce manager, and there are multiple ways to minimize ultimate losses from the produce department.

There will certainly be times when fruit is spoiled or damaged and needs to be discarded — but there are also several different ways to safely use fruit that is not of produce floor quality.

Many types of partly bruised or ripe fruits can safely be used in store-made prepared foods. Slightly damaged or bruised fresh fruit that has been removed from the display cases can be used for samplings for your customers to try.

Fruits like pears, apples, and grapes that suffer only slight damage on the display floor are great to use for samplings.
Managing Displays and Shrink

Your customers will enjoy trying new varieties of these fruits, so offering samplings of the undamaged portions of the fruits can encourage them to buy.

Some lightly damaged fruit can be used in the preparation of additional ready-made produce items such as fruit salads, smoothies, and other snacks. Grapes are a perfect example of the type of fruit that can be used in this situation.

Finding ways to salvage damaged produce can help defray the cost of potential waste and can even become a good profit center.

A clean, bright, attractive display is most important to your customers.

You’ll want your staff to monitor produce displays as often as they can during their shifts to make certain that the areas stay clean and orderly. Your team should follow a schedule that includes regular rounds of checking the displays during their shifts so nothing is overlooked.

Your staff should be in the habit of restocking displays quickly when produce is depleted or picked over, especially during high volume shopping days like Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, and always during special sales and holiday promotions. With this attention, the displays will keep a fresh, full, and clean appearance.

Work closely with your staff to make sure they know best practices for maintaining clean, tidy, and effective displays.

You’ll also want to make sure that your staff only displays what can be sold in a day, and that they are always prepared to bring cold stored produce onto the display floor when it’s needed.

If you store extra boxes under the display for easy access, make sure the area is kept neat and tidy and is stocked with only the amount that can be sold during one shift or day. Always keep in mind that breaking the cold chain will compromise quality.

Activity: Try It for Yourself

Meet with your staff and discuss how some produce can be salvaged as a means of reducing shrink.

- What new ideas did you come up with?
- What prepared foods does your produce department offer? Salads? Smoothies? Fruit and yogurt cups?
- What needs could be filled by using fruit that is no longer fit for display, yet still safe and fresh?
When you familiarize yourself with important information about the produce you handle, you'll be able to offer the best quality product to your customers.

Review: Show What You Know

Now let's check what you have learned so far in this course with a quiz.

Leo is running a special promotion of seasonal berries at the peak of the summer – just in time for a week-long festival. Where should he place the berry display?

- Right next to the front doors of his store.
- At the back of the produce section, near the leafy green vegetables where the strawberries won't be handled roughly.
- At the front of the produce section, in a prominent position, where most customers walk.

Leo notices that fruit displays are very disorderly during busy weekends. What can he ask his staff to do to keep the produce section clean and neat when there's so much customer traffic? (Choose one)

- Allocate staff to constantly monitor the different sections of the produce department and restock accordingly.
- Store some product for use that day under the display, for easy access and to save time.
- Practice FIFO when restocking. Move existing stock to the front and top of the display; remove damaged product; hand stack new product at the back and below the display.
- All of the above.

The produce department in Leo’s store has been suffering above average waste for the past few months. How can Leo more effectively manage shrink?

- There's nothing to do. All damaged produce must be discarded immediately.
- If Leo's staff were better trained in hand stacking produce, they could significantly decrease waste.
- Leo and his staff can use slightly damaged produce in fruit salads and other value-added offerings. They can also reduce waste by using knowledge of customer demand at different times of the day and on different days to determine the best size of displays.

New Ways of Doing Things

After working through this course, what are some key tasks you want your staff to do every shift to maintain the quality of your produce displays?

What can you do differently to help manage shrink or waste overall?

Plan on changing three things in the way that you operate on your shift.

Here's what Leo did:

- Created a schedule for his produce department staff that included regular rounds of checking the displays, keeping them clean, and using damaged or less than desirable produce elsewhere.
- Made sure that all staff knew the importance of hand stacking fruits and produce to keep damage to a minimum.

The two main takeaways from this course are:

- For product requiring refrigeration, only display what you can sell in a day – store the rest appropriately.
- Manage shrink with smart handling and new uses for fruit that won’t sell on the display floor.

After thinking about how to do things differently in your job, you might want to check out additional resources in the Learn More section of this course.
Overview

In this course, we will learn about apples and their unique handling requirements.

Scenario

Alvaro is a produce staff member at a small grocery store catering to a lively town population. Alvaro hopes to get a promotion, and has spent many years as part of the dedicated produce staff team for his store. Now, he wants to show his supervisor and team that he can and should be promoted to produce manager.

To demonstrate his skills and enthusiasm for the job he hopes to gain, Alvaro wants to help one of the newest staff members, Jaime, learn as much about the job as possible. Alvaro wants to be Jaime’s mentor on the job. Jaime asks Alvaro about a new shipment of apples that has just arrived. He’s never seen this variety before, and wants to make sure that it’s handled correctly. Alvaro jumps at the chance to give Jaime some important information about handling, storing, and displaying apples in their store.

Decision Points

- What should Alvaro tell Jaime about apples? What is unique about apples?
- How do they fit with other fruit or produce? What cold storage requirements do they have?
- How can Alvaro or Jaime quickly check the quality of the apples to move the best product to the store floor?

Key Background Information: Video

Overview

Let’s learn more about how to handle apples.

Unlike some fruits that are picked or shipped when they are unripe or partially ripe, apples are at full ripeness when they are picked from the tree.

Because apples arrive ripe, they keep well, but they do not ripen or improve over time, so when stocking apples, make sure that you are only ordering what you need and will be able to sell within a few days.

As long as apples are kept cold and never allowed to warm up, they will stay crunchy. Apples will slowly lose their quality after warming up and being held at room temperature.

Apples that are dropped will bruise and the resulting damage may not show up immediately. Dropped apples can also sustain stem damage where the stems of one fruit damage the adjacent fruit. Bruised or damaged fruit loses its value.

Apples arrive in boxes, usually packed in separate cardboard holders like an egg carton, so the fruits don’t touch each other and bruise during shipping.

When your apple shipment arrives at your store, lift each box top to inspect the fruit. Because apples are stacked
a few rows high in each container, you should lift each level of the container to quickly check each row of fruit. This should only take about 30 seconds.

If you discover a damaged apple, quickly place that box in a separate section of your receiving area. You can sort out any damaged fruit later, once the rest of your order has been received and there’s more time to deal with subpar product.

Remember, the more damaged a fruit is, the more ethylene gas it produces. Don’t place a soft apple in the cold room where it can cause damage to other produce. Newer staff members should be trained to always remove soft or damaged apples and other fruit as soon as they see it to avoid creating more problems later.

The key to success is to always handle apples with care!

Activity: Try It for Yourself

Open a box of apples from your incoming order. Handling them carefully, look at the apples in the top layer of the box.

- Do you see any stem injury, discoloration, or mushy sections?

Look at the box:
- When was it packed?
- How old is the fruit you are viewing?
- Where did it come from?
- What size or grade is the fruit?

Becoming familiar with basic information about your incoming apple orders will help you understand how to better handle, store, and sell your produce.

Review: Show What You Know

Now let’s check what you have learned so far in this course with a quiz.

Apples:
- Are ripe when picked.
- Ripen after they are placed in stores.
- Are ripe when they feel soft to the touch.

Apples:
- Generate ethylene.
- Become ripe as they sit on display shelves.
- Should always be stored when soft.

The optimum temperature for storing apples:
- Doesn’t matter as long as it’s not too warm.
- Should be 0 to 1 degree Celsius.
-Ranges from -10 to +10 degrees Celsius.

New Ways of Doing Things

If you were like Alvaro, helping your new produce staff member get a good start on your team, what are three things you would show and tell him about handling, storing, and displaying apples?

After exploring this course you’ve learned more about handling apples. Here are some of our suggestions for best practices:
- Always handle apples gently – from storage to display floor.
- Keep apples cold.
- Remove damaged fruit immediately.
After thinking about how to do things differently in your job, you might want to check out additional resources in the Learn More section of this course.
Overview

In this course, we will learn about apples and their unique storage requirements.

Scenario: Storing Apples

Now that Jaime understands more about the qualities of apples, he is ready to handle them carefully as the team moves the boxes to cold storage in his store but there’s limited space in the cold storage room.

Alvaro orders apples every two to three days, replenishing his stock in cold storage. And, Alvaro wants Jaime and the team to stack all varieties of this new shipment of apples in the main cold storage room with the other vegetables and fruit that are nearly ready to be brought out to the store floor and put on display.

Decision Points

- Can Jaime and the team stack this shipment of apples in the cold storage room with other produce without harming quality?
- How long should the apples be kept in cold storage?

Key Background Information: Video Overview

Let’s learn more about the importance of storing apples and keeping them cold.

Optimal storage conditions for apples are 0 to 1 degree Celsius with 90 to 95% humidity. Apples soften FIVE TIMES faster at 4 degrees Celsius than at 0 degrees Celsius.

When apples are stored at temperatures above 2 degrees Celsius, they give off a gas called ethylene. Ethylene does not harm people, it has no odor, and does not degrade the quality of the apples. However other fruits and vegetables are affected by ethylene if they are stored near apples.

Fruits and vegetables that are ethylene sensitive will ripen faster, so always keep apples away from kiwifruit and ethylene sensitive vegetable such as carrots, cucumbers, leafy vegetables, lettuce, and potatoes. Ethylene is not a problem if apples are kept cold, at 0 to 1 degree Celsius, but with even a small increase in temperature, the ethylene level will begin to rise.

Ethylene damage shows up as tough asparagus, yellowing in broccoli and cabbage, bitter flavor in carrots, loss of color in leafy greens, or leaf spots on lettuce.

Never store apples near potatoes or other vegetables which are sensitive to ethylene, such as carrots, cucumbers, leafy vegetables, and lettuce. Do not store
apples next to onions, as apples will absorb the strong flavor of onions.

Avoid stacking apple boxes more than six cartons high. If a whole carton is dropped, then all of the fruit in the carton can bruise, and will be unsaleable by the time it reaches your consumers.

When you practice the rule of FIFO, you’ll remember to rotate your apple boxes in storage so that the oldest, or First In, produce is placed on the display floor first, making it First Out.

Activity: Try It for Yourself

Take a closer look at the apples in your cold storage area. Choose a specific box and note:
- When was the fruit picked and packed?
- How old is the box of apples you’ve chosen?
- How are they packed – individually wrapped or in trays? Are the apples touching each other? How well they are packed dictates how gently you need to handle them.

Look at the apples in the top of the box and along the sides. Is there a quality difference? The apples at the edges may get bruised more frequently and will warm up more quickly when the temperature rises.
- Pick up an apple and hold it in your hand. Is it firm? Ideally, apples should be firm and crunchy.
- Do you see any signs of bruising anywhere on the apple? Bruises devalue apples and bruised fruit may need to be discarded before it is placed on display.
- Do you see any cuts on the apple? Where there are cuts, the apple’s flesh turns brown and your consumers won’t want to buy damaged or discolored fruit.
- Does it feel cold? If they’re in cold storage, they should feel cold!
- Is this box of apples ready to go out on the display floor? Why or why not?

When you familiarize yourself with important information about the produce you handle, you’ll be able to offer the best quality product to your customers.

Review: Show What You Know

Now let’s check what you have learned so far in this course with a quiz.

Apples should never:
- Be kept cold.
- Be stored next to onions.
- Remain in storage for more than one day.

FIFO means:
- First In, First Out.
- Rotate the oldest stock in the storage room to the display floor first.
- Move the oldest fruit from the bottom of the display case to the top.
- All of the above.

New Ways of Doing Things

If you were like Alvaro, helping your new produce staff member get a good start on your team, what are three things you would show and tell him about handling and storing apples?

After exploring this course, you’ve learned more about handling and storing apples. Here are some of our suggestions for best practices:
- Always handle apples gently – from storage to display floor.
- Keep apples cold!
- Always practice the FIFO rule – First In, First Out. In most cases, sell your oldest stock first.

After thinking about how to do things differently in your job, you might want to check out additional resources in the Learn More section of this course.
Overview

In this course, we will learn more about apples and their unique handling and display requirements.

Scenario

Alvaro wants to make sure that the quality of fruit on display on the retail floor is always excellent for his customers. He knows that displays should be orderly stocked with the best fruit, and always kept clean, neat, and tidy.

Jaime and the rest of the team know this and do a good job monitoring the displays during their shifts. Jaime is also eager to learn more about making sure apple displays are appealing to his customers so they can sell more produce and move more fruit from the storage room to the displays.

Decision Point

• How should Jaime, Alvaro, and the team create effective apple displays to attract more customer attention?

Key Background Information: Video Overview

Let's learn more about how to effectively place apples on display.

There are many different varieties of apples that you may order on a regular basis. When you group the different apple varieties together in one large display case, you make it easy for your customers to find their favorites.

Grouping all of the apples in the same display will attract attention and showcase new and seasonal varieties. Be sure to group different colors side by side for contrast and balance. For example, place red apples next to yellow varieties, yellow next to green apples, and so on.

For more display case appeal, get creative by using waterfalls and islands, or add secondary bins and baskets to your display.

Always showcase correct signage of each apple variety and taste characteristics for your customers.

While it's true that abundant fruit displays sell produce, overloading the display cases can cause potential damage to fruit. When you focus on what you can sell
Displaying Apples

in a day, and rotate displays every day, you’ll provide the best quality fruit to your customers. Try adding secondary displays to increase display space for apples. Remember to only display what you know you can sell in one day.

Since apples lose their crunch and visual appeal after three days without refrigeration, you and your staff will need to practice First In, First Out to keep each display looking its best.

Frequently check for rot, punctures, and other defects, and always pull damaged fruit off of the display. Always remember to rotate the oldest apples to the top and add the newest additions on the bottom of each display.

Always handle apples carefully. Never roughly dump apples on the display. Hand place and stack each fruit, and always with care.

If you and your produce department team mind these best practices – from gentle handling to FIFO to making creative displays – you’ll make your customers happy!

Review: Show What You Know

Now let’s check what you have learned so far in this course with a quiz.

Apple displays should always attract attention. Which are features of effective apple displays?

• Displays that group different varieties together.
• Displays that position different colors next to each other for contrast.
• Displays that are neat, clean, and tidy.
• All of the above are features of effective apple displays.

Apples must be handled:

• With gloves.
• With care.
• With special equipment.

FIFO means:

• First In, First Out.
• Rotate the oldest stock in the storage room to the display floor first.
• Move the oldest fruit from the bottom of the display case to the top.
• All of the above.

New Ways of Doing Things

If you were like Alvaro, helping your new produce staff member get a good start on your team, what are three things you would show and tell him about displaying apples?

After exploring this course, you’ve learned more about displaying apples. Here are some of our suggestions for best practices:

• Always handle apples gently – from storage to display floor.
• Always practice the FIFO rule – First In, First Out. In most cases, sell your oldest stock first.
• Make creative displays to sell more fruit – attract your customers’ attention with clean, neat, tidy, and colorful displays.

After thinking about how to do things differently in your job, you might want to check out additional resources in the Learn More section of this course.
Overview

In this course, we will learn about pears and their unique handling requirements.

Scenario

As you know, Alvaro has spent many years as part of his dedicated produce staff team. Eager to be promoted to produce manager, Alvaro has served as mentor to another staff member, Jaime. Jaime asks Alvaro about a new shipment of USA Pears that has just arrived. He’s never seen this variety before, and wants to make sure that it’s handled correctly. Alvaro jumps at the chance to give Jaime some important information about handling pears in their store.

Decision Points

• What should Alvaro tell Jaime about USA Pears?
• What is unique about pears? How do they fit with other fruit and produce?
• What cold storage requirements do they have?
• How can Alvaro or Jaime quickly check the quality of the pears to move the best product to the store floor?

Key Background Information: Video Overview

Let’s learn about best practices for handling pears.

Pears are picked from the tree when they’re mature and unripe and, as long as they stay cold, at storage temps of 0 to 2 degrees Celsius, they won’t soften and ripen. Once pears warm above 2 degrees Celsius, they start their ripening process and within a few days to a couple of weeks they could become overripe.

If the pear is chilled again to 0 to 2 degrees Celsius, the ripening process will slow down, but once ripening has started, it can’t be completely stopped.

Handling pears is one of the few exceptions where you may break the cold chain. Breaking the cold chain will allow pears to ripen so you can offer your customers the best quality fruit.

Fruit put on display should have enough ripeness to maximize sales and purchase frequency while still maintaining enough shelf life to minimize loss. Your customers want to see fruit on display that looks and is good enough to eat!

The pears you receive may actually need to warm up a bit before they are ready to be placed on display in
the produce department. Always test the pressure of the pears when they arrive at your store in order to determine how they should be handled.

If you have a lot of pears in stock and on display when a new shipment arrives, you may want to keep that shipment cool to discourage ripening.

If pears are allowed to sit for long periods of time, they may ripen and soften. Even after just one day in the sun, the shelf life and storage time for pears can be greatly decreased.

In addition to spoiling, pears also bruise easily, so it’s important to inspect your orders and remove any damaged fruit. You may have to work quickly to place quality fruit in the cold storage room if there’s no room for ripening fruit while on display.

To test a pear for ripeness, you can do a simple check. Press gently on the neck of the pear, near the stem. Since pears ripen from the inside out, the body of the pear may seem hard but if the neck yields with gentle finger pressure then the pear may be more ripe than it appears from just looking at the outside. Always check the neck to make sure that the quality of the pear is appropriate for display.

Different countries have different preferences where pears are concerned. A longer ripening time makes the flavor richer, sugars become more prominent, and the fruit becomes softer in texture.

In the US, Canada, and Australia, consumers prefer to eat pears that have this richer, softer texture, which occurs around 3lbs or 1.36kg pressure on a penetrometer. In most other countries of the world, however, consumers prefer to eat a slightly crunchy pear, that's more like an apple in texture around 5lbs or 2.26kg pressure on a penetrometer.

When you're experimenting with pears, you may consider some of the soft pears as over-ripe and inedible. Be brave and try tasting them to experience the flavor of a riper, sweeter pear.

Get to know your customers’ preferences. What type of pears do they prefer? By placing a mix of ripeness levels on display, you will increase purchase volume if some of
your customers buy fruit for immediate use and others buy fruit they want to ripen at home.

**Activity: Try It for Yourself**

Buy four pears from your store, each with the same general level of pressure. Put one on a hot windowsill in the sun, one in an un-air-conditioned room, one in an air-conditioned room, and one in a refrigerator. After two or three days, go back and see what the pears look like and whether they feel soft.

You may find that some varieties of pears can be stored at room temperature for several days without getting softer at all while other varieties will always get soft at room temperature and begin ripening quickly.
- Would you want to eat the pear after it spends a week on a sunny window sill?
- Would you eat any of the pears after a week?

Notice that most pears do not change color over time. Only Bartlett pears turn yellow as they ripen. Yellow Bartlett pears could be ripe and need to be displayed immediately.

When you familiarize yourself with important information about the pears you handle, you’ll be able to offer the best quality product to your customers.

**Review: Show What You Know**

Now let’s check what you have learned so far in this course with a quiz.

**Incoming shipments of pears should:**
- Be immediately stored at 0 to 2 degrees Celsius.
- Be immediately placed on the display floor.
- Be checked for ripeness levels — and then you can decide whether they should be stored or displayed.
Overview

In this course, we will learn about pears and their unique storage requirements.

Scenario

Small retailers like Alvaro’s market typically store their pears for one day before putting them on display on the produce department. Alvaro wants to make sure that his main storage room is orderly and safe. He notices that some staff members currently handle boxes of fruit in a rough manner. Sometimes cartons are stacked too high because there is limited space in their main cold storage room.

Decision Points

• How should Alvaro organize his main storage room with cartons of pears awaiting placement on the display floor?
• Should Alvaro store his pears in the cool storage room next to the other fruits and leafy green vegetables?
• What would you tell him to do?

Key Background Information: Video Overview

Let’s learn about best practices for storing pears.

The most important thing to remember is that pears are tender. Never stack pears more than five boxes high in your storage room.

If you are a small retailer, you might only receive two to three boxes of pears in every order. Since you may be stacking newer and older fruit boxes together in one storage area, always be sure you know which box of fruit needs to be placed on display first.
Storing Pears

If a whole carton or box is dropped, falls off the top of a stack, or is crushed at the bottom, some or all of the fruit can be damaged, and will be not be saleable by the time it reaches your produce department display.

You should only order pears daily or every other day in small quantities so you don’t have too many boxes waiting in your storage room to be moved to the displays.

Your own store probably carries many different varieties of pears. It’s not always easy to tell which variety of pear you may be holding. For example, a green pear could be an unripe Bartlett pear or a nearly ripe Anjou pear. The variety of the pear is stamped on the end of each box. Know which varieties ripen under what conditions and you’ll be able to make display placement decisions that will avoid spoilage and delight your customers!

Storing pears next to fruits that generate ethylene during their ripening cycle like apples, mangoes, and bananas, will cause your pears to ripen more quickly. Pears should be stored at the other side of your cold storage room, away from ethylene-generating fruits.

There is also a problem of ethylene cross contamination with leafy green vegetables. If you store pears in the cool room with the leafy greens it can cause the leafy green to brown and wilt.

If you are storing pears for just a day, you probably won’t have any ripening problems. For storage times longer than a day, how quickly the shipment of pears will ripen depends on the temperature in the cool room.

Your department needs to have ordering, storage, and display placement strategies that are based on the ripeness of pears you receive and the quality and condition of the pears your customers enjoy.

Remember that pears keep optimally at 0 to 2 degrees Celsius. Because other fruits and vegetables require higher temperatures, it’s more common to keep the cold room at about 5 to 6 degrees Celsius. This means that you should always place the pears near the back where it’s cooler.

Remember that in your store, how ripe the pears are when you receive them, how soon you’ll be moving them to the displays, and the level of ripeness your customers prefer all matters. Pears may continue to ripen at 5 to 6 degrees Celsius while they sit in your cold room, so plan your storage carefully.

Activity: Try It for Yourself

Open a box of pears from an incoming order. Bartlett pears are the best choice if they are available. Handling them carefully, look at the pears in the top layer of the box.

- Can you see any stem injury or discoloration?
- What color is the fruit?
Look at the box:
• When was it packed?
• How old is the fruit you are viewing?
• Where did it come from?
• What size or grade is the fruit?

When you are familiar with the quality or and condition of the pears in your daily or weekly orders, you'll become an expert at placing the best quality fruit on display for your customers and skilled at managing potential waste.

Review: Show What You Know

Now let's check what you have learned so far in this course with a quiz.

Pears in cartons or boxes should be stacked:
• 5 or 6 cartons high.
• 7 or 8 cartons high.
• Only 2 or 3 cartons high.

Pears should never be stored next to what kinds of produce?
• Stone fruits like peaches and nectarines.
• Potatoes and root vegetables.
• Ethylene — producing fruits and leafy greens.

New Ways of Doing Things

After working through this course, what are the things that you might do differently in your own job to store pears effectively?

Here are some of our suggestions for best practices:
• Determine the best ordering, storing, and selling strategy for your store depending on your storage capacity, supplier reliability, and average daily sales.
• Keep pears away from ethylene-generating produce such as apples and leafy greens.
• Always handle pears gently, and hand stack your displays on the produce department floor.

After thinking about how to do things differently in your job, you might want to check out additional resources in the Learn More section of this course.
Overview

In this course, we will learn about pears and their display requirements.

Scenario

Alvaro is on vacation for a few days from the store, and Jaime needs to take the pears from the cool storage room and place them on display.

Customers have been buying a lot of pears over the past few days, so after Jaime cleans the display case and removes a few pieces of less than desirable fruit, he’ll need to replenish the display to attract more buyers.

Decision Point

• What are some strategies for maximizing pear sales and attracting more customers to Jaime’s pear displays?

Key Background Information: Video Overview

Let’s learn more about how to effectively display pears.

Since pears are impulse buys, stores should place pear displays in a prominent position. The best place for pears is always front and center in your store’s produce section.

Your store may choose to display a few different varieties of pears. If so, you’ll want to make sure that each variety is placed next to another of a different color. Try placing green pears next to yellow pears next to reddish pears and so on. This contrast in color attracts customer attention and you’ll most likely sell more varieties this way.

Because pears are delicate fruits, they should always be hand stacked and handled with care. Stacking pears too high can cause damage to these delicate fruits. Never dump a box of pears in the display case! If you are placing pears in a chiller display, be aware of putting too much fruit in that small, confined space. If are able to use end-caps, islands, or middle of the aisle displays, you can create bigger, more abundant displays without damaging fruit.

Make sure you rotate the pears in your displays daily by placing the riper fruit on top, or moving riper fruit to a refrigerated display case. Always remove damaged or bruised fruit to keep your display looking its best. You may also choose to add signage to alert your customers that pears are “ready to eat” to help sell ripe pears quickly.
Activity: Try It for Yourself

Open a box of pears from an incoming order. Bartlett pears are the best choice if they are available. Handling them carefully, look at the pears in the top layer of the box.
• Can you see any stem injury or discoloration? • What color is the fruit?

Look at the box:
• When was it packed?
• How old is the fruit you are viewing? • Where did it come from?
• What size or grade is the fruit?

When you are familiar with the quality and condition of the pears in your daily or weekly orders, you’ll become an expert at placing the best quality fruit on display for your customers and skilled at managing potential waste.

Review: Show What You Know

Now let’s check what you have learned so far in this course with a quiz.

Always display pears:
• In tall pyramids of fruit.
• In sections of alternating colors.
• Next to leafy greens for contrast.

Pears are delicate fruits so when creating displays be sure to always:
• Hand stack fruits.
• Stack fruits on only one level.
• Use tongs when handling pears.

New Ways of Doing Things

After working through this course, what are the things that you might do differently in your own job to keep pears at their best quality?

We recommend that you display pears with care, always. We also recommend these best practices:

• Determine the best ordering, storing, and selling strategy for your store depending on your storage capacity, supplier reliability, and average daily sales.
• Keep pears away from ethylene-generating produce such as apples and leafy greens.
• Always handle pears gently, and hand stack your displays on the produce department floor.
• Display pears prominently and make sure to keep display cases clean, neat, tidy, and filled with the freshest fruit for your customers.

After thinking about how to do things differently in your job, you might want to check out additional resources in the Learn More section of this course.
Overview

In this course, we will learn about strawberries and their unique handling and storage requirements.

Scenario

Alvaro and Jaime have worked together in their produce department for some time, but Jaime still turns to Alvaro for guidance. Jaime asks Alvaro about a new shipment of strawberries that has just arrived. He knows berries are to be handled differently than other fruits and produce, but he’s not exactly sure what to do. Alvaro is always willing to provide Jaime with some important information about handling and storing strawberries in their store.

Later, Alvaro asks Jaime to reorganize the cold storage room so that produce is arranged with the oldest fruit easy to gather and bring out to the produce department displays. The cold storage room isn’t very full with produce right now, since the day’s orders have not yet arrived. There’s space and time to move boxes and flats around in the cold storage room.

Decision Points

• What does Jaime need to know about strawberries when they arrive in the receiving area for the store?
• What are some unique features about strawberries that affect how they should be handled?
• How do they fit with other fruit and produce?
• What cold storage requirements do they have?
• How can Jaime quickly check for quality to move the best product to the store floor?
• What else does Jaime need to know about strawberries as he reorganizes the cold storage room?

Key Background Information: Video Overview

Let’s learn more about best practices for handling and storing strawberries.

Strawberries are among the most delicate of all fruits. Because strawberries are so fragile and have a high respiration rate, you need to unload packs promptly into refrigerated storage that is ideally kept at 0 to 2 degrees Celsius with 90 to 95% humidity. If strawberries warm above 2 degrees Celsius, they may begin to soften and are at risk for decay or mold.

Once the berries have been placed in cold storage, then you can inspect and count your order.
Handling and Storing Strawberries

Strawberry quality will fall if the temperature fluctuates. To avoid unwanted temperature fluctuations that are harmful to your berries, place them well inside the cooler away from entry areas and refrigeration units.

Store strawberries at 0 to 2 degrees Celsius in your warehouse, away from water, free moisture, and away from doors and cooling units. Keep strawberries away from moisture and never mist them, as they will break down rapidly if misted. Strawberries also dehydrate quickly, so keep them away from airflow sources.

Strawberries are not affected by ethylene. It’s fine to store strawberries next to ethylene-producing fruits like apples and pears in the 0 to 2 degree Celsius cold storage room.

All produce staff must handle strawberry flats and packs very gently when moving them around, as dropping delicate berries can bruise them.

Strawberry flats are designed so they can be stacked in layers. The flats should be placed on top of other fruit boxes when moving a mixed pallet of fruit.

Now, look at the flat holding packs of berries:
• When was it packed?
• How old is the fruit you are viewing?
• Where did it come from?
• What size or grade are the berries?

When you familiarize yourself with important information about strawberries, you’ll be able to handle and store them without compromising their quality.

Review: Show What You Know

Now let’s check what you have learned so far in this course with a quiz.

Why should you always put strawberries on the top of a mixed stack of produce cartons?
• Strawberries are colorful and make the stack of containers look bright.
• Strawberries need to be moved and placed in displays before other fruits.
• If you place other fruits on top, the strawberries will be crushed.

Dropping strawberries:
• May cause bruising.
• Isn’t a problem.
• Is fine if the strawberries are fresh.

Moisture:
• Doesn’t affect strawberries.
• Causes strawberries to spoil faster.
• Helps strawberries keep in storage longer.

Activity: Try It for Yourself

Look at a flat of strawberries from an incoming order. Handling them carefully, inspect some berries in their clamshell pack.
• What color are the berries?
• Are they shiny with fresh green caps (calyx)?
• Is there any damaged or spoiled fruit?
Handling and Storing Strawberries

New Ways of Doing Things

If you were helping a new co-worker get started, what are three things you would show and tell them about handling and storing strawberries?

We recommend that you handle and store strawberries with care, always. Here are some of our additional best practices:

• Handle strawberries very gently and make sure to transfer them quickly to cold storage.
• Always keep strawberries at their optimal temperature – never warm, but not too cold.

After thinking about how to do things differently in your job, you might want to check out additional resources in the Learn More section of this course.
Overview

In this course, we will learn about strawberries and their unique display requirements.

Scenario: Displaying Strawberries

Strawberries are in stock and ready to be placed on display in Alvaro’s produce department. Jaime and Alvaro know that their customers will select as many strawberry packs as they can, since this is the first appearance of the delicious berries this season. Seasonal strawberries are always popular items.

Decision Point

• What specific considerations do Jaime and Alvaro need to think about in order to best display this first order of seasonal berries?

Key Background Information: Video Overview

Let’s learn how to effectively display strawberries.

Strawberries are the most delicate and popular of fruits. Stock strawberry displays early in the day. Check and rotate your product every two hours to make sure displays are always clean and orderly. Keep your displays full of fresh product, especially during high-traffic times in the store.

As you know, seasonal berries are often impulse buys. Always display strawberries in highly visible areas of your department. Larger strawberry displays near the front of the produce department can increase strawberry sales by 12% and total produce sales by 5%.

Display strawberries in all package sizes, segments, and group related specialty items together to increase sales. Drive additional impulse purchases with cross merchandising opportunities like crepes, dessert shells, angel food cakes, whipped cream, yogurt, and granola.

Berry sampling stations add to more sales opportunities, too. Customers are more willing to make purchases of items they can sample in your store.

Review: Show What You Know

Now let’s check what you have learned so far in this course with a quiz.

Strawberry displays should be monitored every two hours:
Displaying Strawberries

- To restock during high traffic times.
- To keep the display clean and orderly.
- To discard any damaged fruit.
- All of the above.

Customers might buy more berries if:
- They are displayed near the front of the produce section.
- They are displayed near the back of the produce section.
- They are displayed with green vegetables, for color contrast.

New Ways of Doing Things

If you were helping a new co-worker get started, what are three things you would show and tell him about displaying strawberries?

We recommend that you display strawberries with care, always. Here are some of our additional best practices:
- Always keep strawberries at the right temperature – never warm, but not too cold.
- Place strawberry displays in the front of the produce section and monitor them every two hours to ensure that consumers get the best quality fruit.

After thinking about how to do things differently in your job, you might want to check out additional resources in the Learn More section of this course.
Now that you’ve completed all your fresh fruit handling courses, take this final assessment to measure just how much you’ve learned.

1. What could an in-store sampling do for your produce sales?
   - In-store samplings don’t affect overall sales.
   - In-store samplings are not allowed in most stores.
   - In-store samplings let customers try produce they might not otherwise try – which may encourage them to buy something new.

2. Pears should always be handled carefully because:
   - They bruise easily if dropped.
   - They will rot quickly.
   - They take a long time to ripen.

3. In cold storage, strawberries should always be placed on top of a mixed stack of produce cartons. Why?
   - Strawberries are colorful and add contrast to the stack of containers.
   - Strawberries need to be moved and placed in displays before other fruits.
   - Strawberries are delicate and could be crushed by other produce cartons.

4. Highly perishable fruit like seasonal berries should always be:
   - Displayed in front of vegetables.
   - Monitored often to check quality while on display.
   - Placed on display for only a few hours at a time.

5. What does cross-merchandising mean?
   - Giving another department your products to sell.
   - Partnering with a department or other produce items to potentially sell multiple products at once.
   - Providing your customers the chance to see your products in other places in the store.

6. What happens differently in your produce department during holiday season?
   - It’s usually a busier time in the produce section of most stores.
   - There are specialty and seasonal items not found during other times of the year.
   - There’s an opportunity to create holiday displays to sell more produce.
   - All of the above.

7. Why are your store’s high traffic areas important for your produce department?
   - It’s a great place to display popular, impulse, or specialty items to be sure they sell.
   - These crowded areas become disorderly quickly so you have to monitor them more carefully and more often than other areas in the store.
   - Most shoppers spend most of their time in high traffic areas.

8. Apples require:
   - Special storing, handling, and displaying considerations.
   - No special treatment. Apples should be stored, handled, and displayed just like other produce in your department.
   - Detailed tracking records so you know how many you sell every day.

9. It’s important to have effective lighting in your produce department so:
   - Customers can see your produce in good light that enhances their appeal.
   - Customers can navigate their way around your department safely.
   - You can highlight different fruits and vegetables with sharp, bright light.

10. Your produce department should be organized:
    - Without attention to detail, color, or position. It doesn’t matter – people will buy only what they are looking for.
    - With impulse items - like seasonal fruits and berries - positioned in high-traffic areas of the department.
    - With the least appealing fruits and vegetables in the front of the department so customers will choose them first.
Learn More

_Eager to learn more?_ Here are some resources you can use to gather more information.

Explore these sites!

USA Pears
California Pears
California Strawberries
USA Apple Export Council
Washington Apple Commission
California Table Grape Commission
Produce Marketing Association
UC Davis Produce Information
The Packer Guide
Produce Marketing Association
Maintaining Quality Of Fresh Strawberries, California Strawberry Commission, p. 19-22.