

Sorting and weighing harvested fresh fruit bunches

Sorting and weighing can be done at the roadside before collection by a middleman or cooperative truck, or at the cooperative collection area.

Step 1.	Count the total number of bunches.
Step 2.	Check each bunch to make sure it is good quality and note the number of 'bad bunches' according to the categories below: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unripe• Underripe• Overripe• Empty• Damaged (e.g. by rats, fungus, etc.)• Too small• <i>Dura</i> (if present) Cut off any remaining long stalks (a waste of money!) and remove fresh fruit bunches that are too bad to sell (e.g. empty, very unripe).
Step 3.	Weigh all the fresh fruit bunches harvested in the plantation (including the bad bunches that can still be sold) and write down the total weight of the bunches.
Step 4.	Weigh the loose fruits and record the total weight.
Step 5.	Record in a notebook: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total number of fresh fruit bunches (Step 1);• Number of 'bad bunches' per category (Step 2);• Total weight of fresh fruit bunches (Step 3);• Total weight of loose fruit (Step 4). Ensure the record includes farmer name, date, time, and the field that was harvested.

Operating co-operative collection areas

If the cooperative sells the fresh fruit bunches directly to the mill, it may establish 'collection areas' where member farmers with nearby plantations can deliver their fresh fruit bunches once every 10 days. In the collection area, bunches are sorted and weighed.

The cooperative should assign members who are responsible for the activities in the collection area and should provide all the tools required for the weighing and recording activities (such as scales and notebooks).

Transport of fresh fruit bunches from the plantation to the cooperative collection area is usually by car or motorbike. It can be useful if farmers mark their fresh fruit bunches before transporting them to the collection area.



Figure 1: A cooperative collection area.

Selling to traders or middlemen

When selling directly to traders or middlemen it is important to:

- Keep clear personal records of the total number of fresh fruit bunches, the number of 'bad' bunches, the total bunch weight and the loose fruit weight;
- Be present when the weighing and sorting takes place in order to be sure about the results.

Just relying on the records of the trader or middleman is not a good idea, because it is important to know exactly how much was produced and earned.

Transporting fresh fruit bunches from the collection area to the mill

Transport to the mill is generally arranged through the cooperative or the middleman. If transport is arranged individually, then the farmer needs to carry out all activities which are usually the responsibility of the cooperative. If transport is arranged by a middleman, then it is not the responsibility of the farmer.

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| Step 1. | Purchase or hire good trucks. Check trucks regularly for issues that need repair. Hire truck staff along with the truck or arrange in the cooperative. |
| Step 2. | Stack fruit bunches into the truck carefully and neatly (Place loose fruits in the middle of the truck so they are not lost during transport). |
| Step 3. | Discard fresh fruit bunches that cannot be sold (e.g. empty, rotten). Cut remaining long stalks to less than 2 cm before loading. |

- Step 4.** When the truck is full, place a cover net over the load to ensure safety and prevent loss of fresh fruit bunches. Note: net covers are mandatory by law in Indonesia.
- Step 5.** Ensure the fresh fruit bunches are transported to the mill on the same day, or at the latest at the beginning of the following day (within 24 hours from harvest to mill).