

Okra



Care During Handling

Due to its high respiration rate, okra has been grouped under highly perishable crops. Okra has a vast potential as one of the foreign exchanges earning crop and accounts for about 60% of the India's export of fresh vegetables excluding potato, onion, garlic etc. India is also the largest producer of Okra in the world.

In India, okra is generally harvested without any safety to prevent bruising and after harvesting it is dumped at one place. For export purpose, the quality criterion is that the okra pods should be green, tender, 4-5 ridged and about 6-8 cm in length. To reduce the postharvest losses in okra, it should be least handled. Precooling plays an important role in maintaining quality during long distance transport.

Packaging during Export

Small size tender okra is suitable for export. Box packing is prevalent in areas like Gujrat and Maharashtra. Hardy variety okra packed in nylon bags. No use of water during the supply chain as it blackens the produce. It is packed in bamboo baskets in the eastern part to protect it from breaking.

Freshness Facts



OPTIMUM TEMPERATURE
7.0-10.0°C

Optimum CA levels: **O₂: 5.0-10.0%,**
CO₂: 4.0-10.0%

Weeks in Air: **1-2**

Weeks in CA: **2-3**

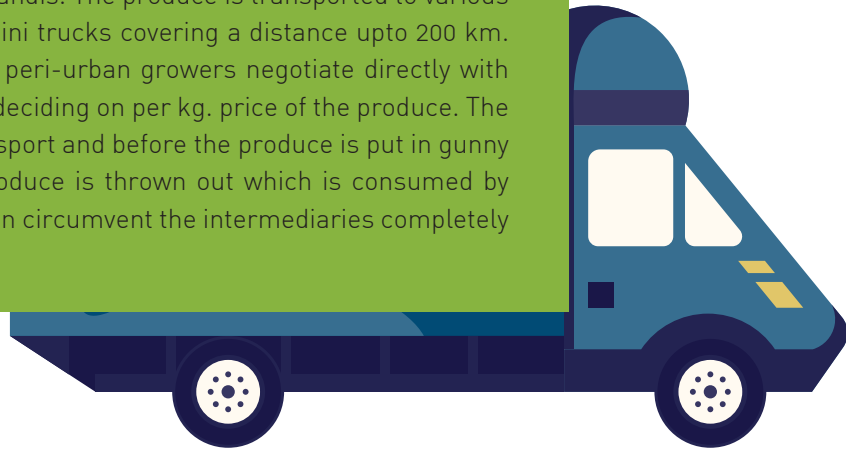
Relative Humidity: **90-98%**

Benefits of CA: (Controlled Atmosphere Storage) Low O₂ has limited benefit. Elevated CO₂ can delay decay, and maintain tenderness, high mucilage, and green colour.

Ethylene: Okra produces very little ethylene, but it is sensitive to it. Ethylene can cause loss of green colour and enhance decay. Avoiding ethylene in transit can help extend transit life potential.

Surface Transport

Produce is transported in gunny bags by bullock carts, Jugad & tractor trolleys covering a distance up to 20 km from farm to local mandis. The produce is transported to various wholesale markets in towns and cities in mini trucks covering a distance upto 200 km. Produce is loaded and unloaded manually. peri-urban growers negotiate directly with the retailers who have their own method of deciding on per kg. price of the produce. The retailer brings his own gunny bags and transport and before the produce is put in gunny bags sorting is done and unmarketable produce is thrown out which is consumed by stray animals. In this process, the grower can circumvent the intermediaries completely and get a good price for the produce.



Water Transport

Exports of Okra usually take place via sea. They are transported in LDPE (Low density Polyethylene) or PP (polypropylene) boxes as well as 5 -10 kg Corrugated Fibre Box. The major export destination via ports includes Singapore, United Kingdom, UAE, Qatar, and Canada.

In the recent past, some of our country's okra export consignments have been rejected at the destination because of blackening of ridges, shrivelling of pods and development of moulds.

