

Pre Harvest Orchard Management:

Nuts:

1. QWP P/L recommends that harvest not commence until the packing tissue around the nut kernel has just turned brown (PTB) and at least 60 - 65% of the walnut hulls have started to crack and/or separate from the shell. For further information on these issues please refer to Chapter 33 (page 273) of the Walnut Production Manual – UCA or contact QWP at lachie@qwp.net.au.
2. European and USA growers, who shake and then pick their nuts off the orchard floor, often allow between 5 – 10% of nuts to fall (mostly the dummy and blight affected nuts) prior to the orchard floor being treated with a **flail mulcher** for the final time before harvest tree shaking commences thus smashing these nuts and removing them from the final sample.
3. Delivery of the nuts for hulling within thirty six (36) hours of harvesting is strongly encouraged as this will generally result in a higher quality outcome for both the processor and the grower.

Chemical Use:

QWP P/L requests that all grower customers only use registered chemicals in the orchard and that the (on-label) “Directions for Use” conditions and withholding periods for all chemicals (pesticides, fungicides, herbicides, etc) used are strictly adhered too. At the very minimum growers should maintain an Orchard Diary which details all chemical applications.

Organic Growers:

Please Note: That QWP P/L may not be able to comply with all of your organic registration requirements.

Please indicate, on the Grower Pre Harvest Survey form, if you are an organic grower.

Orchard Floor:

QWP P/L is encouraging all grower customers to implement a “Pre Harvest Orchard Floor Management Strategy” which best suits their individual harvesting procedure(s). The aim of such a strategy is to minimise the processing costs for all through a reduction in processing equipment damage, staff injury and/or processing time.

Key objectives of such a strategy will include some, or all, of the following actions

- a. Flail mulching and/or spraying of the orchard floor prior to harvest with aim of reducing the quantity of grass, grass clippings, and in particular spiny seed pods (e.g. caltrop, thistle, etc), delivered with your nuts.
- b. Sweeping or cleaning of the orchard floor prior to harvest with the aim of minimising the quantity of the following being delivered with your nuts
 - i. Glass – only total exclusion will be acceptable
 - ii. Stones or rocks
 - iii. Last season’s nuts - including dummies & rootstock
 - iv. Pruning’s and branches

- v. Orchard equipment such as lost secateurs and tools, tree ties, irrigation components, etc.

Delivery Requirements:

Vendor Declaration forms are available by clicking on the document below and **must accompany each consignment** of nuts delivered to the QWP processing facility located at Koraleigh, NSW.

Harvest Delivery Schedules:

QWP P/L is continually striving to improve the quality of the services that it delivers to all customers.

A harvest delivery schedule is seen as a key strategy to assist with reducing growers processing costs and retaining nut quality.

Key objectives of the strategy include

- a. Receipt of harvested nuts, at the Koraleigh facility, within thirty six (36) hours of harvest occurring.
- b. Hulling of the nuts to occur within twenty four (24) hours of receipt of the nuts at the Koraleigh facility.
- c. Drying of the nuts in-shell to at least twelve percent (12%) equivalent moisture content (EMC) within twenty four hours (24) hours of the completion of the hulling process and with all nuts in-shell dried to at least ten percent (10%) EMC in the shortest possible timeframe.

A delivery schedule will be devised by the Koraleigh Processing Manager and grower customers that maximises the facility's operating capabilities as well as matching the stage of maturity of ripeness of the grower's orchard. Scheduling timeframes will be determined by factors such as the anticipated available hulling, drying and grading equipment capacities.

The delivery volumes and timeframes of growers requiring their nuts to be dried will relate to the available drying capacity. It is important that growers confirm their harvest schedule as early as is possible (preferably four (4) to six (6) days in advance) with the Processing Manager in order that processing costs can be contained as much as is possible.

The Processing Manager will endeavour to match the preferred delivery requirements of all grower customers where it is possible; however QWP P/L is unable to guarantee that all grower delivery preferences will be met.

Deliveries:

Please be aware that the QWP P/L plant at its Koraleigh facility is designed to accept and handle in-shell nuts in plastic fruit pallet bins (approximate dimensions of 1200 mm x 1200 mm x 760 mm [ht.]) thus QWP will be using plastic fruit pallet bins during all processes to handle grower's nuts.

Occupational Health and Safety considerations require that all plastic pallet bins be delivered either on a flat top trailer or truck easily accessible by a forklift.

Experience of recent hulling seasons has highlighted that a small quantity of sticks and leaves can impact critically on the hulling process and hence costs. Deliveries that include significant trash

levels will not be processed until the Processing Manager has discussed the implications of proceeding (with hulling) with grower and the need to pre-clean the delivery. Please note that a relatively small quantity of grass clippings and/or leaves can create difficulties at a number of points in the hulling line thus increasing costs and reducing efficiencies for everyone.

Excess grass clippings and /or leaves can

- Restrict / stop flow at the feed elevator and huller hoppers requiring plant shut down (to clear) or extra staff,
- Reduce huller efficiency for both hulling and nut washing

Excess sticks can

- Restrict / stop flow at the feed elevator and huller hoppers requiring plant shut down (to clear) or the employment of additional staff,
- Damage plant – huller brush wires
- Reduce huller efficiency
- Increase visual sorters workload

Storage - Post Processing:

QWP P/L is able to provide storage of in-shell nuts between the end of the drying process and marketing and/or the packaging of nuts.

Growers are required to provide either plastic fruit bins or bulka bags for the purpose of storage of their in-shell nuts post processing.

Bulka bags are available for purchase from QWP P/L. Two sizes are available; the smaller size holds approximately 320 – 340 kg of dried nuts, whilst the larger size holds approximately 510 – 520 kg of dried nuts.

Post Processing & Packaging Options:

Size grading will be available as follows

- 36 mm (diameter hole) plus,
- 32 to 36 mm (diameter hole), and
- Less than 32 mm (diameter hole).

QWP P/L is able to package in-shell walnuts into either string bags (10 kg net weight), bulka bags (two sizes available) or white cardboard boxes (10 kg net weight).

Marketing Opportunities:

Please contact Peter Stanton at peter@qwp.net.au for further information on walnut in-shell sales opportunities.