

Farm to Fork

www.food-safety.com/



Fresh food sales are skyrocketing globally as the appetite for healthy eating and living continues to soar. More and more research studies are finding that consumers are not only placing a high value on healthy foods, but are willing to pay for them.

Already in 2015, an AC Nielsen report found that with sales growth in fresh produce departments on such a high growth trajectory, retailers can't afford to ignore fresh. More so, retailers have for years been advised that fresh is the way to win consumers in an increasingly crowded market.

This was also found in a subsequent Oliver Wyman study that surveyed more than 17 000 consumers in some 14 different countries.

It showed that fresh was a vital card that grocers could play to attract high-value customers and differentiate themselves from other players.

Whilst there are many ways retailers can use produce to stand out and gain a competitive advantage, quality remains the critical element in all of this. This means greater control over supply chains has become imperative. The Oliver Wyman study found that to excel in every aspect of the fresh value chain, high standards have to be guaranteed from farm to fork.

"Freshness of produce is a critical factor that directly influences customer satisfaction and loyalty. Customers expect high-quality, fresh products when they shop at supermarkets, and meet-

ing these expectations ensures repeat business," explains Yashen Naidoo, a senior auditor at JC Auditors.



Yashen Naidoo

“Fresh produce attracts customers and enhances their shopping experience, leading to positive word-of-mouth and increased loyalty.”

Furthermore, ensuring high standards of freshness can prevent foodborne illnesses. Consistently offering fresh produce builds trust with customers, who are more likely to return to a store they trust to provide safe, high-quality food.

Rigorous supply chain management ensures top quality fresh products



Vijan Chetty

According to Vijan Chetty, Cool Chain Association (CCA) Treasurer, cold chain management includes all service providers within the value chain from – production to the final consumer (farm to table).

He highlights that cold chain management is essential in maintaining the original product integrity of the perishable product when harvested or processed, right up to the time it is consumed. He explains ...

“This will maintain the desired shelf life of the product. Proper effective cold chain management will reduce food loss and waste and ensure compliance to food safety.”

Effective solutions for maintaining freshness

United Nations statistics show that about one-third of globally transported perishable products are annually wasted due to damage. If fresh products guide the choice of where consumers ship – meaning the most important criterion when



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selecting a retailer is the quality of fresh products – it is imperative to get logistics right not only from a consumer perspective but to reduce waste and drive down cost.

According to Chetty, real-time remote monitoring of product temperatures, air temperatures, and humidity is becoming a necessity to manage the cold chain. These recorders are globally available to monitor the cold chain effectively. Container shipping lines are also offering a solution for remotely monitoring refrigerated containers.

This solution provides 24/7 visibility of the product’s temperatures. Based on good temperature management, food shippers can make marketing decisions to prevent food loss and waste.



Lucien Jansen

According to Lucien Jansen, CEO of South Africa’s Perishable Products Export Control Board (PPECB), the aim is to ensure that produce enters the cold chain as soon as possible to ensure that it is well preserved and its shelf life extended.

Furthermore, the cold chain must be maintained for the duration of the journey, and production must be kept at optimum temperatures for the specific product type. Chetty explains ...

“A well-synchronised supply chain will assist in ensuring timeous delivery of fresh products, especially during the high demand periods such as Christmas, New Year, Eid, Chinese New Year and Easter.”

“Supermarkets adhere to several certifications and standards to ensure the quality and safety of their produce.”



One-of-a-kind glimpse of Mærsk Taikung. Captured by @the_bluue_sailor. www.maersk.com/

“Producers normally gain higher returns when their produce is delivered to the markets during these holidays. The delivery of their products after such holidays normally receives lower returns. Therefore, the delivery of perishable products must meet its time frames because of the fluctuation in prices due to supply and demand.”

Naidoo also highlights the importance of standards. “Supermarkets adhere to several certifications and standards to ensure the quality and safety of their produce. These include the retail standards, Global G.A.P. for good agricultural practices, ISO 22000 for food safety management, and HACCP for hazard analysis and critical control points. Compliance with these standards assures customers that the products meet high safety and quality benchmarks,” he says.



ISO 22000 provides a comprehensive food safety management system framework, integrating risk management, continuous improvement, and stakeholder communication. It mandates systematic identification and control of food safety hazards, continuous monitoring, regular audits, and thorough documentation. These practices enhance traceability and transparency, ensuring food products are safe and meet high standards, thereby building consumer trust.

HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) focuses on identifying, evaluating, and controlling hazards in the food production process. It involves assessing potential risks, identifying critical control points (CCPs), and implementing control measures. Continuous monitoring and verification ensure the effectiveness of these



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measures, with immediate corrective actions taken if deviations occur. Detailed documentation provides a traceable record of food safety practices.

By implementing ISO 22000 or HACCP, retailers effectively manage food safety risks, ensure high-quality products, and comply with legal standards. This commitment to food safety protects consumers and promotes transparency and accountability, resulting in increased customer confidence and loyalty, as consumers trust the safety and quality of their purchases.

Optimal packaging for sustainability

According to Chetty, the CCA has signed a memorandum of understanding with the PPECB to collaborate on perishable research trials.

“These trials include monitoring the temperature management from the production on the farm to the destination. Included in these trials is research on proper packaging. Packaging with proper ventilation holes for fruit and vegetables is imperative for effective cooling. For example, the CCA has found that ...

“ One type of packaging may not be effective for airfreight, and a combination of solutions will improve the maintenance of the cold chain within airfreight. Aircraft do not have the capability to maintain a temperature of 0°C – 2°C for berries. However, combining thermal blanks and gel packs will improve the temperature management of products that require a low-temperature range. ”

Post harvest supply chain.
www.pngegg.com.
Inset: www.clarifruit.com



There is also a significant shift nowadays, with more retailers promoting sustainable packaging solutions that reduce environmental impact. This includes encouraging biodegradable materials, recyclable packaging, and innovative designs that minimise packaging waste.

“We also see increasing adoption of ISO 14001, the international standard for environmental management systems that helps the retail industry promote sustainable packaging and reduce waste. By implementing ISO 14001, retailers can systematically identify and manage environmental

impacts, including waste reduction and sustainable packaging initiatives,” says Naidoo.

“The standard encourages continuous improvement and compliance with environmental regulations. It also fosters resource efficiency and the use of eco-friendly materials.

“Through ISO 14001, retailers can enhance their environmental performance, minimise waste, and promote sustainable practices, thereby contributing to environmental sustainability and meeting the growing consumer demand for eco-friendly products.”

IT IS ALL HAPPENING AT THE IFPA SOUTHERN AFRICA CONFERENCE

We are thrilled to announce an exciting programme for the International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA) Southern Africa Conference on **5 and 6 August 2024 at Century City, Cape Town**. Our goal is to make this event engaging, inclusive, and accessible for the entire fresh produce supply chain.

To kick off the conference, we are hosting a special **Welcome Event** on the evening of 5 August. This event is open to both members and non-members. It will coincide with the grand opening of the trade floor, giving you an early look at the exhibitions and a chance to meet the exhibitors, reconnect with industry friends and make new contacts.

This event has been streamlined into a dynamic one-day format on 6 August, while maintaining the same number of educational sessions you expect. Starting with the **Women's Fresh Perspectives Session** at 09h40, the programme will be followed by **education sessions** which will tackle thought-provoking industry issues, market trends, and inspirational ideas. This means you can maximise your learning and networking opportunities, within a more concentrated timeframe.

The new programme structure is designed to enhance your conference experience, making it more convenient and enriching.

For more details and to register go to www.freshproduce.com/24SAC or contact Jane Strijdom, Southern Africa Country Manager, at e-mail jstrijdom@freshproduce.com



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Strategic planning delivers success

Never before has business intelligence been as important as now. It delivers the much-needed capability that enables organisations to make better decisions, take informed actions, and implement more effective business processes. Industries have commenced consolidating up-to-date data for better decision-making.

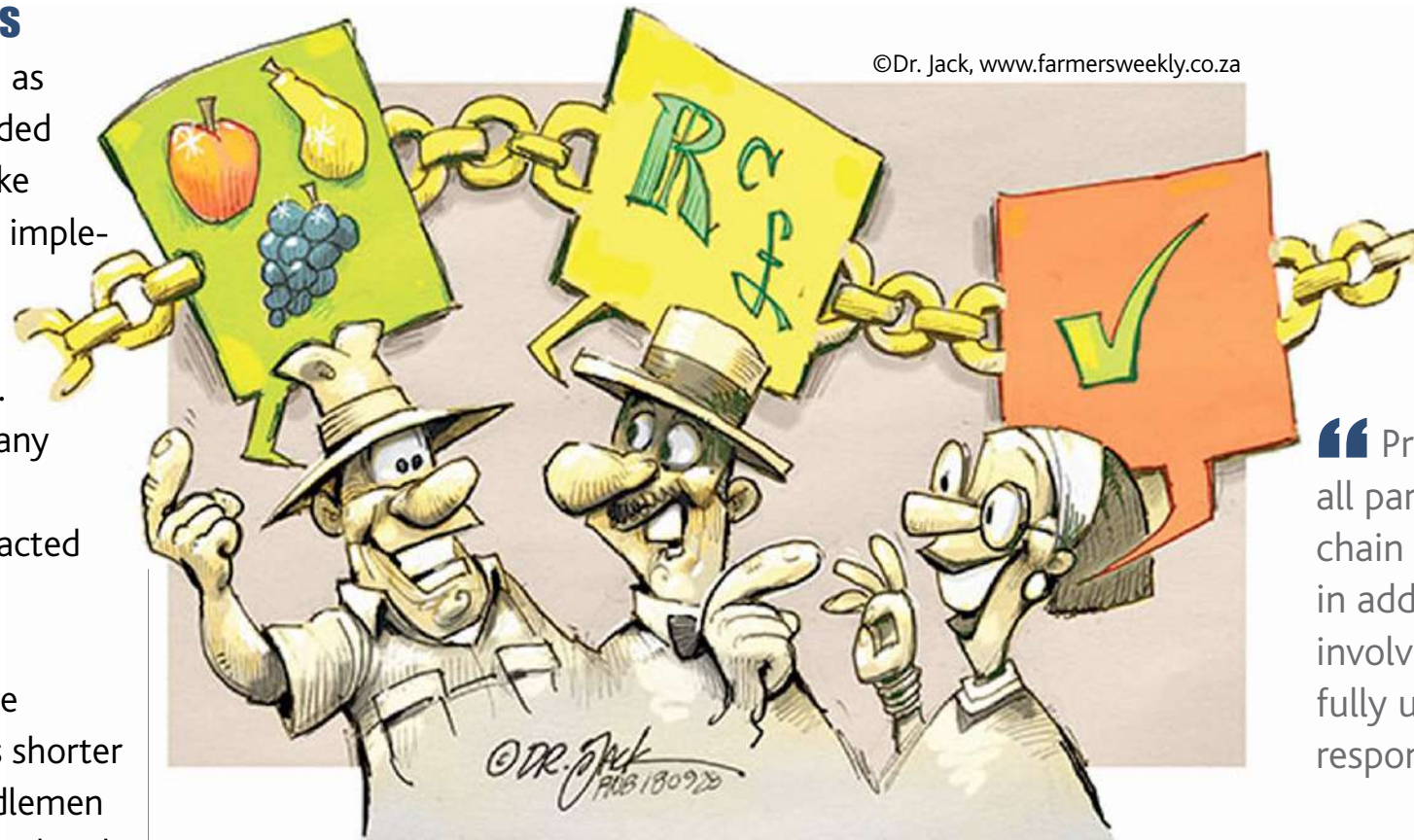
According to international shipping company Maersk, ongoing price rises and subsequent demand fluctuations have significantly impacted supply chains, affecting both producers and retailers.

In some parts of the world, there is a move towards near-shoring, making supply chains shorter and more transparent. Whilst reducing middlemen and diversifying sourcing strategies can help absorb the economic impacts of global disruptions, having an extensive and interconnected network is critical to assist companies and deliver the correct goods at the right time.

Specifically, having access to a broad warehouse and fulfilment network presents an opportunity to minimise the distance between final production and the end consumer, according to Maersk.

Furthermore, understanding the precise demand for perishable goods is another critical factor in optimising inventory management and mitigating financial losses. Still, it is just as important to plan appropriately and that much can be achieved with the proper logistics setup.

"Retailers need flexibility and resilience, not just during transportation, but throughout all



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“Proper planning by all parties in the logistical chain is essential. This is in addition to every party involved in the supply chain fully understanding their responsibility.”

sourcing, production and design phases. End-to-end solutions are invaluable for keeping supply chains efficient and protecting margins. Multimodal options combine various transportation modes and offer the flexibility to choose the most suitable and time-sensitive transport methods for perishable products. This adaptability not only helps in optimising transit times, but also ensures goods reach their destinations in the best possible condition while reducing the risk of disruptions,” reads a Maersk report on supply adaption for the perishable sector.

Therefore, market players must challenge themselves to reduce waste and conserve resources, while minimising the impact on the environment and satisfying demand. Jansen says ...

Confronting challenges directly

“The infrastructure, equipment and logistical challenges with roads, rail, ports, equipment, shortage of containers and cold storage facilities, as well as demand in electricity, are the biggest challenges within South Africa,” says Chetty. “The lack of infrastructure and the adequacy of equipment within the South African ports system alone hurts shipping and cost.”

Loadshedding, in particular, remains a significant concern for the agricultural sector at large in South Africa.

According to consultancy and advisory firm BDO South Africa, retailers must implement energy-efficient practices, investing in backup power solutions to ensure cold chains are not

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broken when the power goes out. While running generators can be pricey, the cost of spoiled produce is no bargain either.

Experts agree that it comes down to adopting intelligent solutions to address challenges such as electricity supply and ensure that operations remain optimal.

Already, the increased use of technology, data analysis, and automation can be incorporated to optimise logistics despite the many local challenges experienced.

“Customers must be assured that the cold chain was maintained and the products they receive comply with the food safety standards,” says Chetty. “Technology plays a role in ensuring this. For example, electronic documentation, certification, and electronic temperature management records enable authorities to approve consignments before landing at their destinations. This improves relationships between authorities, builds trust, and improves overall efficiencies.”

Jansen says solutions to ensure freshness can also be as simple as inserting temperature probes into cargo to monitor the cold chain and ensure that the product is kept at an optimum temperature. “Of course, these probes are advanced and can often be monitored remotely during the journey.”

Retailers are advised that monitoring systems for their products encompass not only the real-time location, but also the condition of goods. This is of paramount importance, especially for perishable items that constantly require refrigeration.



Thinus Neethling

Thinus Neethling, Petit Forestier Western Cape branch manager, advises that service providers are also chosen with utmost care, delivering quality and efficiency at all times. He says ...

“ At Petit Forestier, we play a role in preserving the freshness of products by using vehicles that are at all times under a full maintenance plan with the client and ensuring fridge and chassis services are done proactively, ensuring that the client has fewer breakdowns on both – delivering the product at the perfect temperature, with the inclusion of a 24/7 roadside assistance for the client, so that if something goes wrong, the problem is fixed without the product being spoiled. ”



<https://fresh4cast.com/>

Just as necessary, says Chetty, is providing transparency to customers on the products they are buying in-store. “The labels on products should have all the details about the product, including a description of the product, details of origin and temperature requirements. The CCA has been working closely with the industry regarding the labelling requirements for products moved via airfreight.”

<https://proagri.co.za/>



Adds Jansen, “Another way to ensure the safety of food product from farm to fork is to ensure relevant audits are taking place. This guarantees that food safety standards are adhered to at all times. These audits also touch on the responsible use of pesticides and good agricultural practices, amongst other things.”





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predictive analytics, and efficient transportation networks further ensures that fresh products are delivered promptly. Streamlining processes and enhancing coordination across the supply chain are key to achieving efficiency.

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Keeping a finger on the pulse

Naidoo says it all comes down to good cold chain management, a practice that remains crucial in maintaining the freshness and quality of perishable products. "One has to ensure that temperature is controlled from the point of harvest to the final retail destination, ensuring that produce remains fresh and safe for consumption. Effective cold chain management minimises spoilage, extends shelf life, and reduces food waste."

He says optimising supply chains by leveraging technology, improving logistics, and fostering strong relationships with suppliers can achieve much. Implementing real-time tracking systems,

Naidoo stresses that ensuring food safety – and freshness, for that matter – from farm to fork involves a comprehensive approach that includes ...

- Good Agricultural Practices such as soil management water quality, pesticide/fertiliser guideline adherence, adhering to strict hygiene and sanitation standards.
- Post Harvest Handling, including cleaning, sanitation and temperature control to slow microbial growth and preserve freshness.
- Transportation that uses refrigerated vehicles to transport perishable goods to minimise spoilage and extend shelf life, ensuring vehicles are clean to avoid potential contamination.

- Process and Packing that involves Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) are crucial and encompass clean facilities, worker hygiene and the use of packaging materials that protect produce from contamination and damage.
- Retail and Food Service must ensure that they display fresh produce in clean, refrigerated units to maintain appropriate temperatures, as well as Practice FIFO (First In, First Out) to ensure older stock is used first.
- Traceability Systems that maintain detailed records at every stage of the supply chain to trace the source of any contamination quickly.
- Regulatory compliance with regular internal and external audits, as well as compliance with local and international food safety regulations.



The intricately beautiful and delicate wheat flower.

Photo by Jason Brian Sparrow.
www.farmersweekly.co.za

"Ensuring food safety from farm to fork requires a coordinated effort across the entire supply chain," he says. "By implementing good agricultural practices, maintaining hygiene and sanitation, using proper storage and transportation methods, adhering to regulatory standards, and educating consumers, we can minimise the risk of foodborne illnesses and provide safe, high-quality produce."



Technology remains the game-changer

Technology will continue to play a pivotal role in enhancing traceability and transparency in supply chains. Already blockchain technology (transparent and tamper-proof tracking of produce from farm to fork) along with Internet of Things (IoT) sensors (real-time monitoring of temperature) and the implementation of electronic documents systems, have brought much change to the cold chains, allowing for real-time monitoring and recording of product journeys and the retrieval of detailed electronic records at every stage of the supply chain. This level of transparency builds consumer trust and ensures accountability at every stage of the supply chain.



<https://medium.com/>

"These technologies provide significant benefits by ensuring food safety through stringent moni-

toring and control measures. They enhance quality assurance by providing detailed insights into the conditions and handling of products.

"Moreover, the transparency offered by these technologies fosters consumer trust, as customers can verify the origins and journey of their food products, leading to greater confidence in their purchases," concludes Naidoo. **SR**



Catherine Larkin is a communication and marketing professional, specialising in Logistics, Transport and Supply Chain. Her company, CVLC Communication, is a corporate public relations, communication, marketing and events consultancy. Its services range from full secretariat support, project management and administration.

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Preparation time: 10 minutes
Cooking time: 45 minutes



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GOLDI, COUNTY FAIR, FESTIVE or MOUNTAIN VALLEY Chicken Drumsticks

INGREDIENTS

4 garlic cloves, minced	1 tsp salt
2 tbsp canola oil	1/3 cup hot sauce
1/4 cup apple cider vinegar	3 tbsp brown sugar
1 tbsp paprika	1kg chicken drumsticks

STICKY DRUMSTICKS

These drumsticks are slightly sweet and slightly sour, and pop with spicy flavour.

Method:

- Preheat the oven to 200°
- Mix the garlic, oil, vinegar, paprika, salt, hot sauce, and sugar in a small bowl.
- Make three incisions on each drumstick and cover with the hot-sauce mixture.
- Leave to marinate for at least 3 hours.
- Place in a roasting pan and pop into the oven for 30 minutes.



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Cooking time: 45 minutes

GOLDI, COUNTY FAIR, FESTIVE or MOUNTAIN VALLEY BRAAI PACK

INGREDIENTS

Chicken:

1 x chicken braai pack
250ml yoghurt
½ onion, roughly chopped
4 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
1 thumb ginger, roughly chopped
45ml garam masala
30ml turmeric
30ml ground coriander
30ml ground cumin
30ml chilli flakes
30ml sugar
1 x 400g tin chopped tomatoes
5ml salt
5ml black pepper

INGREDIENTS

Salad:

3 carrots, julienned
1kg cherry tomatoes, halved
20g coriander leaves, roughly chopped
2 spring onion, finely sliced
1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
30g pumpkin seeds, toasted
15ml olive oil
15ml balsamic vinegar



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Tasty & Delicious

GRILLED BUTTER CHICKEN WITH CARROT AND TOMATO SALAD

The yoghurt in the sauce makes for juicy, succulent braai chicken.

Method:

Keep the chicken pieces aside. Blend the rest of the ingredients until smooth.

Toss the chicken pieces through the sauce and leave in the fridge to marinate overnight.

Remove the chicken from the sauce, discarding any excess sauce.

Cook the chicken over a medium heat on the braai, getting lots of caramelised colour.

Turn regularly until cooked through. This takes about 40 minutes. Take care not to char the chicken too much.

Salad:

Toss all the ingredients together until combined.

Serve the fresh salad with the crispy, warm chicken.



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