



# Manual handling solutions for the vegetable industry No. 5



## Bulk bins and large crates – packing and unpacking vegetables in the packing shed

### What is the activity?

Manually packing and unpacking vegetables into and out of bulk bins and large crates in a packing shed.

### What are the risks?

Packing or retrieving vegetables from bins or crates often requires awkward postures, i.e. forward bending, twisting and reaching; increasing the risk of musculoskeletal injuries of the shoulder and lower back. Work can be repetitive and high paced over a whole shift.

Injuries can occur suddenly if the vegetable is heavy and posture is awkward, or over a longer period of time through wear and tear.

Work can often be undertaken in cold and hot weather; on wet, slippery floors and in cramped conditions.

### What is the solution?

The risk of musculoskeletal injuries can be reduced by having drop-down or removable panels on deep bins or crates. Shallow bins or crates may also be used.

In the packing shed, bins and crates can be elevated or angled toward the worker to reduce bending and reaching. This can be achieved by inserting fixed supports under the bin or crate before packing, and after the bin or crate has been partially emptied when unpacking. When elevated, the base of the bin or crate with fold down or removable sides should be between knee and waist height.

Alternatively, bins or crates may be placed on adjustable rotating pallet lifters, or bins with spring-loaded bases could be used.

### Systems of work

In the packing shed the bulk bin or large crate should be located in a position that allows adequate space for the worker to place or retrieve vegetables without twisting.

If the bin needs to be placed directly behind the worker it is recommended that the bulk bin or large crate be located at least 1.2 metres away from:

- Vegetables to be packed into it
- Conveyors or tables that vegetables will be placed on after being removed.

Workers will then be able to turn and step with the vegetables in hand without twisting.

If the bin is placed directly next to the table or conveyor, the worker may be able to pack or unpack without significant twisting.

Bins and crates are usually moved by forklift, therefore a traffic management system will need to be implemented to ensure forklifts or their loads do not come in contact with pedestrians and workers.



The layout of the packing shed and work areas should be designed so that workers can do their tasks without bumping into one another.

Drainage should be adequate to reduce or eliminate water in the work areas.

Food safety standards should always be considered in relation to solutions used.

### The activity



### A solution

