

Cauliflower

Post Harvest Technology

Grading

Damaged or diseased leaves should be removed during grading. Curds with insect damage and other defects should be discarded. The curds are graded based on their size and colour.

Packaging

Normally the produce is sent to the market loose or sometimes it is packed in gunny bags. However, it is advisable to pack it in bamboo or wooden baskets to reduce damage in transit. When packing is done in gunny bags, the inner leaves covering the curd surface are left intact and rest of outer leaves is removed. When curds are transported loose, most of the leaves with top portion are retained and a few outer whorls along with damaged leaves are cut off.

Storage

After harvesting and grading the heads are immediately dispatched to nearby markets.

For storage upto 3 weeks, the optimum temperature of storing cauliflower crop is 0°C with a relative humidity of 95%. Storage of cauliflower is generally not recommended for more than 3 weeks. Wilting, browning, yellowing of leaves and decay are likely to increase if stored above 5°C. Slightly immature and compact heads keep better than more mature ones. Cauliflower is very sensitive to temperature fluctuations during storage and such fluctuation causes darkening of curds. Exposure to ethylene during storage will cause more rapid leaf yellowing and abscission.

Controlled atmosphere (CA) is not recommended because it induces off odours and flavours, which can be detected only in the cooked products.

Cool Chain

Cool chain is essential during the transport of export quality commodity all the way from the farm to the customer. This helps in maintaining the temperature inside the box at the same low level as in the cold storage.

The various stages of the cool chain are:

1. Coldstore at the farm.
2. Refrigerated truck from farm to the airport
3. Coldstore at the airport.
4. Building up of the pallet in a coldstore at the airport.
5. Loading the aircrafts directly from the coldstore in a short time.
6. Cargo aircraft maintains coldstore temperature in hold.
7. Off loading direct into a coldstore in the receiving country.
8. Refrigerated truck to the customers.