



# French bean harvesting and post-harvest

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## Harvest

Harvest frequency will be adjusted to the type of bean exported. Extra fine beans (Kenya) are picked every day. It is advised that Bobby beans should be picked every three or four days and filet beans every two days. These intervals should be maintained throughout production so as not to penalise commercial performance by large amounts of sorting rejects. The pods are picked by hand, with the stalks. Particular care is needed to conserve the quality of the harvest:

- harvest boxes should not be over-filled (to avoid any risk of crushing);
- freshness should be conserved by not leaving produce in the sun;
- the produce should be placed in a cold store as soon as possible—even before sorting if the latter is delayed.

Picking is best carried out in the morning but not aware of the specific quality requirements of

if the plants are too wet. The pickers must be made these beans.

## Packing

Packing operations result in boxes of produce that must be in conformity with the EU quality standard for French beans (standard EC 912/2001). For this, the produce must be sorted after picking in order to:

- remove pods that are broken, perforated, twisted, etc.;
- remove plant debris (leaves and stalks);
- grade the beans by size.



Each box packed for the export market must display the product characteristics, that is to say category, size and all the regulation information (origin, name of producer/exporter, etc.).

Beans 'en filet' ('needle beans') European standard	
Pod width	Size
not exceeding 6 mm	very fine
not exceeding 9 mm	fine
not exceeding 12 mm	average

## Storage

Whatever the transport method chosen (air or sea), it is essential that produce is placed in cold store as soon as it has been packed. Minimum storage temperature is about 4°C and this makes it possible to store French beans for about a week. This pattern is applied for exports by sea, especially from Senegal. For shorter marketing channels (air freight) and for fine grade beans, storage temperature should be close to 10 to 12°C.

In addition to the question of temperature, the storage atmosphere for packed products should have relative humidity of around 80% for storage at 4°C and some 90 to 95% for storage at about 10°C. Excessive humidity can cause changes in pods and the appearance of moulds. This is especially important for produce transported in refrigerated containers (Senegal). Packed produce is stored in cold rooms with moderate ventilation to avoid the drying of the pods. It is important not to break the cold chain when the produce has reached its destination in order to conserve the quality of the beans.

