Time of Harvesting and Drying

Harvest Quality - G. C. Martin, G. S. Sibbett, D. E. Ramos

Payne and Hartley were harvested at the optimum time and then at a later date. Nuts were allowed to remain in the shade and in the sun for 3, 6, 9, 24, 48, and 72 hours before drying. By 3 hours in the sun when kernel temperatures were sufficiently high, there was a significant reduction in the number of light kernels. Walnuts harvested in cooler temperatures, of course, result in less kernel damage. Essentially no quality loss when nuts remain in the cool shade. Late harvest for either Payne or Hartley resulted in reduced quality. Many more stained shells were evident from walnuts which remained in the sun. Kernels warm up and cool down faster without hulls.

Harvest Time vs Quality - L. C. Hendricks

Ashley walnuts were shook on September 11, 1972 and allowed to lie on the ground for 96 hours. During this time samples were taken at 1, 6, 24, 48, 72 and 96 hours. One-half of these sample trees were windrowed and one-half of the nuts were allowed to lie where they fell. There was very little difference in quality as rated in percent light kernels between the windrowed and the unwindrowed samples. At 72 and 96 hours the percent light dropped approximately 3% from 32% to 29% light. Percent edible kernels remained at approximately 41% until 72 hours at which time dropped to 39%. The price per pound remained at approximately 25¢ per pound until 72 hours, at which time it dropped approximately 1 to 1-1/2 cent at 72 and 96 hours.

The second set of trees was harvested on 10/3/72. The quality of this set of trees also dropped after 48 to 72 hours on the ground. However the percent edible kernel in this case began at 38% and dropped to approximately 36% at 96 hours. Percent light kernels began at 25% and dropped very slightly at 96 hours. The price per pound on this set started at approximately 23¢ and dropped to approximately 21-1/2¢ after being on the ground 96 hours.

The summer of 1972 was quite mild and temperatures during harvest remained at a high of approximately 80°F. Therefore degradation of quality was most severe during the time interval that these nuts were in the windrow or remaining on the ground in the sun. There was a much greater drop in quality by harvesting in early October rather than in the first or second week in September. Early, prompt harvest returned a top price of 25¢ per pound as compared to late delayed harvest which averaged approximately 21-1/2¢ per pound.