

FARM NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Doc.No. **2.62**

Title: **Policy for Field Harvest Procedures for Winter Squash and Pumpkin**

Effective Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_ GAP Coordinator, Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Pumpkin and winter squash should be cut one to two weeks prior to marketing. (Curing may average up to 10 days.)
2. Ideal day temperatures for maturity are 80-85 degrees. Night temperatures should not drop below 60 degrees.
3. Pumpkins are considered mature when they have a deep orange color and hardened rind. (As long as pumpkins have started to turn color, they will ripen off the vine.) Winter squash will have very hard skins that cannot be punctured with your thumb nail. They will also have a dull-looking surface. (Note: A 10 day curing period between harvest and packing will improve keeping quality when packed. This can be accomplished by cutting from the vines and leaving in the field.)
4. Cut fruit off the vine with pruning shears (Do not pull or twist stems). Leave a 3 to 4 inch handle on the pumpkins and 1 inch stem on the winter squash. Handle Carefully. Do not carry fruit by their stems.
5. OPTIONAL: Pumpkin handles remain healthier if they are sprayed with a 100-200ppm application of chlorine/water (1 tablespoon of 5.25% chlorine bleach per gallon of water= 200 ppm). Do this after cutting and allow to dry before binning.
6. Pumpkins should be clean, solid, free from cuts and bruises, and have the color characteristic of the variety. The stem should be solid and cut off 3-4 in. long. Grade for uniform size and quality. Pack bulk by the count or weight. Temperature: 50-55 F Relative humidity: 70-75%
7. Be careful to avoid chilling injury to winter squash. Remove from the field if temperatures go below 50 degrees. If winter squash are subjected to chilling, these should be marketed first. They should not be used for long term storage.
8. Winter squash will be washed/dipped in a solution of 100-200 ppm chlorine/water then rinsed with potable water. Allow squash to dry before packing into boxes. Winter squash should be mature, well-formed, hard-shelled and heavy for their size. Grade for size and quality according to buyer specification. Pack in 1 1/9 bu. box. Temperature: 50-55 F Relative humidity: 50-75% Cooling: Room cooling.