

By Clarifruit

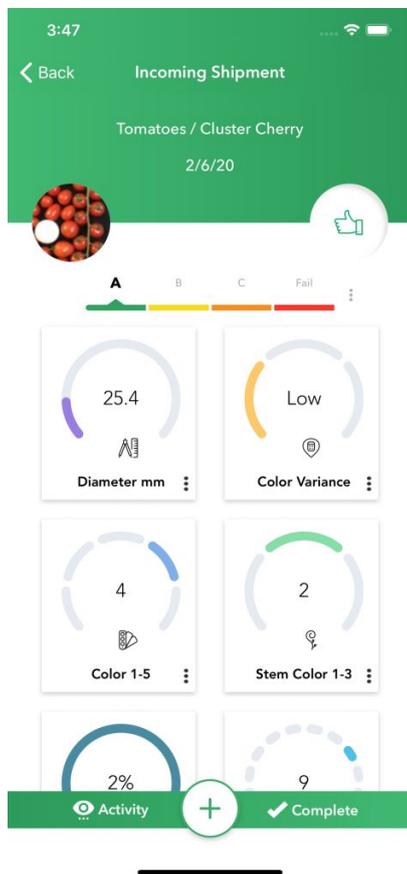
An Israeli-based start-up says it can significantly reduce food waste, cut costs and increase profits with its automatic quality control (QC) and data analytics solutions, which is gaining traction among fruit and vegetable suppliers and retailers alike.

Clarifruit has developed an end-to-end QC platform that includes a mobile app for the inspector and an analytics dashboard for the QC or operations director, which can be used by companies across the fresh produce supply chain to digitize their QC processes and power a faster and more efficient decision-making process.

The company's President, Elad Mardix, explained companies can reap huge benefits by objectively and accurately conducting quality control processes throughout their global operations and receiving the information in real-time.

The mobile app analyzes produce's external attributes by taking a photo with Clarifruit's proprietary computer-vision technology and can also integrate wirelessly with third-party devices that measure internal quality, such as refractometers or durometers.

This information is shared simultaneously with the management & analytics dashboard, allowing supply chain participants to make to make business decisions quickly and better match quality of supply to customer specs.



According to Mardix, testing productivity can be increased three-fold. "Our solutions allow fresh produce companies to reduce rejections and maximize their wallet opportunity," he said.

"Nowadays quality control is still largely performed manually and is subjective, slow, and expensive, with very limited data to arm the decision-makers with. At Clarifruit, we're changing all that."

Automation and big data

Mardix explained that Clarifruit's value proposition is based on two technological pillars - automation and big data.

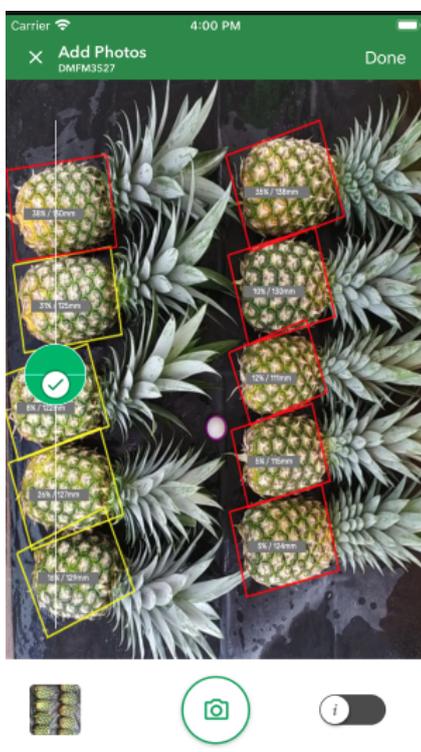
"The first aspect is automating the data collection. It is a very streamlined process which gives the results automatically, both to the inspector as well as to the QC manager via the dashboard," he said.

"Because the entire process is automatic, the inspection is objective and consistent, no matter where it takes place. Just by doing this, we can save companies between 50 to 75 percent of testing time on day one.

"The second aspect is big data. All the data is collected automatically and uploaded to the cloud, including auto-generated reports and notifications, which allows better decisions to be made in real-time."

As an example, he explained that this second aspect is particularly useful for medium or large produce growers, wholesalers or marketing companies that work with different retailers in different markets. By seeing the QC results in real-time, they can decide exactly which fruit should go to where so that it complies with the customers' often-strict requirements.

It is also very useful for retailers, allowing them to compare the quality of the fruit they receive against what was promised, and also helping them to decide which store to send it to. In fact, Mardix explained that over recent months Clarifruit has started working with retailers for the first time, and he expects that in around four years' time retailers would represent the majority of its customers.



In addition, Mardix said that a key benefit of the solution is that growers and suppliers can reduce the number of rejections, which he described as the most painful issue financially in the supply chain.

On the other hand, if there is more than one customer that is a good fit for the supply, the supplier can maximize the dollar opportunity by sending it to whoever will pay the most.

"These benefits are derived from the fact you have a true end-to-end QC platform, which combines the mobile app being used by the inspector in the field, packing house, or at the distribution center, and the management & analytics dashboard by the QC manager," he said. "Only if you have those two components seamlessly integrated, can you actually get these issues resolved."

Clarifruit currently works with more than dozen growers, marketing companies, wholesalers and retailers around the world, including Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Peru, Chile, North America and India.

Huge potential in Latin America

The company's Latin American market manager, Eduardo Zlotnik, said that the solutions it offers are giving fruit exporters a "generational leap" in the QC process.

"All companies in Latin America, small and large, have the problem of subjectivity when assessing the quality of the fruit to be sent to the customer," he said. "We bring growers and exporters a tool that standardizes the QC function and greatly simplifies the task.

"We work step-by-step with companies, helping them to create sustainable business growth and providing good training, local support and customer satisfaction, with local support team on the ground."

He emphasized that the solutions allow growers and exporters to know exactly which product is being sent to customers, which can significantly reduce the amount of money lost due to rejections or price negotiations.

And by using the mobile app for the pre-harvest stage, growers can analyze the evolution of fruit in the field and therefore better plan for the harvest, including logistical and labor aspects.

"Companies understand the need for change, and we can help them make that change and transition from manual to automated quality control," he said.

He also emphasized that Clarifruit has an "extraordinary" team and investors who support the company, helping it to make strides into the Latin American market where other Israeli-based start-ups have often struggled in the past.

"First the language and cultural barriers must be overcome, and once that is achieved, this market has huge potential," he said.