

# Handling Guidelines For **NEW ZEALAND** **LIVE GREENSHELL MUSSELS**

The following guidelines are for use by anyone carrying out the sale of live mussels. The aim is to present useful ways of handling live mussels so that customers get the best mussels that taste fresh and have a longer shelf life.

## Mussels must be kept **cool** and handled carefully to ensure the best quality

On licensed mussel farms, the water is checked and must meet strict standards before mussels are harvested. Following harvesting, mussels can still become contaminated if not properly handled. If the temperature of the mussels remain high, bacteria present in and on the mussel can grow quickly – even more quickly when the mussels are dead or broken. These bacteria may be pathogens that could cause food poisoning, or they may be spoilage bacteria that will affect the flavour and odour (freshness) of the mussels.



### Checks on mussels

The following checks should be made when you receive mussels:



#### Truck or vehicle should

- Be visually clean
- Provide a non porous surface for mussels to be stored on
- Keep the mussels protected from any possible contaminants.

#### Internal temperature of mussels

- Once delivered mussels must be placed in chilled conditions without delay and no later than 2 hours after delivery
- Chilled conditions can be either refrigerated transport or a storage chiller and should be operating at a temperature between 6 and 10°C
- Once placed in chilled conditions the internal temperature of mussels should be on a downward trend towards 10°C
- If mussels are received any later than 24 hours after harvest they should be at an internal temperature of 16°C or less. Mussels should be placed into chilled conditions no later than 20 hours after harvest.

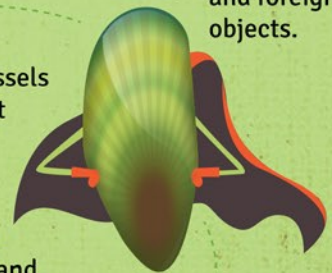


#### Condition of mussels

- Must be alive

Note:

1. Alive and healthy mussels may be slightly open but will close slowly when tapped or jiggled.
2. Dead mussels gape widely and do not close when jiggled or tapped and must be discarded. These may also appear dry inside and/or have a distinct “off” smell.
3. In some instances mussels colder than 6°C may gape due to shock, not because they are dead. They will be unresponsive to tapping. Allow the mussels to warm up to at least 6°C before placing into a chilled display unit or discarding any mussels for not opening.



- Clean - free of mud, contaminants and foreign objects.

- No broken shells.

#### Contamination

- Bags or containers must be free from foreign matter (stones, glass, rubbish etc)
- Mussels must not be in contact with any physical or chemical substance that can compromise their purity.

#### Labelling

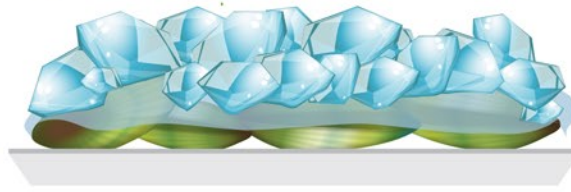
- Harvest declaration or other documentation detailing as a minimum the marine farm number, harvester and date of harvest will accompany the mussels
- Further information will be available from the supplier.

## Storage of mussels, if not in mussel specific unit

A layer of melting ice on top of the mussels will keep the mussels cool and prevents drying. Ice should not touch the mussels. A layer of clean non-porous material (such as plastic) can be used to separate ice and mussels.

In cold rooms and chillers a low air flow is best to keep the mussels alive and moist. High air flow can dry and kill mussels. It is best to keep the mussels in their sack or in clean containers.

Live mussels must not be stored or kept moist in fresh water or ice or they will die.



For maximum quality and enjoyment it is best to ensure that mussels are purchased and consumed within 5 days of harvest.

Live mussels must continue to be held in cool, moist conditions. Storage temperatures should be no lower than 6°C and no higher than 10°C. If correctly handled and kept under these conditions mussels will maintain quality for up to 7 days from harvest.

Mussels should be handled carefully to prevent the shells breaking. Damaged mussels die quickly.

The container in which the mussels are held should be free draining, to prevent melted water and liquid released from the mussels from collecting.

Containers should be stored off the floor to minimise contamination and assist with circulation.

## Display for sale

- Before loading a display unit, check to make sure that it is clean and working correctly.
- At the time of loading and regularly during the day, the mussels should be checked for any that are broken or dead.

Dead and broken mussels must be removed as they can cause serious contamination of live mussels in display units

- Operation and maintenance of the display unit should follow the manufacturer's instructions. Particular attention should be paid to maintaining water quality (ie regular changes) and correct salinity (33 parts per thousand or 3.3%).

### DO NOT use fresh water as it will kill the mussels

- The mussel temperature should be 6-10°C. The temperature of the water or mussels should be checked frequently and recorded (at least 2 times daily).

For more information on New Zealand Greenshell Mussels visit:

**WWW.PURENZMUSSELS.COM**

Scan this code to check out the Greenshell Mussel recipe collection booklet

There are stickers available for live mussel storage units that allow customers to easily access the Greenshell Mussel recipe collection booklet.



Designed to fit various mussel units

size: 7.5cm h x 40cm w



Water and UV resistant

Printed on a vinyl material so easily applied to perspex or stainless

To order these stickers please email: [info@nurturedseafood.com](mailto:info@nurturedseafood.com)

