Hopper Selection Checklist

Use these questions to match hopper design, capacity and handling to your production process.

1. Use & Environment

- [ ] What problem are you trying to solve with your current containers?
- [ ] Will the hopper be used indoors, outdoors or both?
- [ ] Will it support field harvesting or field processing?
- [ ] Will it move between outdoor and indoor production areas?
- [ ] Will it face sun, rain, moisture, dirt or temperature changes?
- [ ] Will it operate on concrete, gravel, soil or other surfaces?
- [ ] Does it need to handle seasonal or year-round use?

2. Product & Load

- [ ] Is the product food or beverage related?
- [ ] Will the material be hot, cold or ambient temperature?
- [ ] What is the maximum expected weight of a full load?
- [ ] Does the product release juice, water, oils or other liquids?
- [ ] Does material tend to stick to container walls or corners?
- [ ] Do you need drainage or liquid containment?

3. Cleaning & Sanitation

- [ ] Will you use pressure washing, hot water or both?
- [ ] What detergents or sanitizers are used?
- [ ] Do you need smooth surfaces for visual inspection?
- [ ] Are there sanitation or food-contact requirements?
- [ ] How quickly must containers return to production after cleaning?
- [ ] Are seams, joints or hard-to-reach corners creating cleaning challenges?

4. Production Volume

- [ ] How much material moves through the operation each hour or shift?
- [ ] What is your normal batch size?
- [ ] How many bins are typically in production at one time?
- [ ] How many are being cleaned, transported or stored?
- [ ] Does production change during harvest or peak seasons?
- [ ] Are you planning for additional production capacity?
- [ ] How many cycles will each container see per day?

5. Handling & Equipment

- [ ] Will heavy product be dropped into the hopper?
- [ ] Will forklifts move it frequently?
- [ ] Will it be dumped or rotated mechanically?
- [ ] Will it travel between facilities?
- [ ] Will employees reposition empty containers manually?
- [ ] Confirm fork openings and forklift capacity.
- [ ] Confirm maximum loaded weight and dumper/tipper dimensions.
- [ ] Confirm conveyor clearances, truck/trailer dimensions and loading dock needs.
- [ ] Confirm turning radius and aisle width.

6. Stacking & Storage

- [ ] How many containers need to stack vertically?
- [ ] Does your facility have height restrictions?
- [ ] Will bins stack inside coolers or warehouses?
- [ ] Do empty bins need to nest or stack efficiently?
- [ ] Will stacked bins travel by truck or trailer?

7. Facility Fit

- [ ] What are the maximum length, width and height that fit your production area?
- [ ] Does the hopper need to pass through doorways?
- [ ] Does it need to fit beneath equipment?
- [ ] Will it move through narrow production aisles?
- [ ] Does it need to fit into a cooler or refrigerated area?
- [ ] Will it work alongside conveyors or processing equipment?
- [ ] Will it fit existing wash areas?

8. Future Needs & Product Protection

- [ ] Does the product need protection from outside contamination?
- [ ] Does it require a lid, cover or ventilation?
- [ ] Could batch sizes or storage needs change?
- [ ] Are you adding new processing or material-handling equipment?
- [ ] Could sanitation requirements become more demanding?
- [ ] Would standardized bins make future expansion easier?
- [ ] How important is long service life?

Final check: Capacity and outside dimensions should work together with sanitation, handling equipment and the way material moves through your facility.