Project Number: 84-J2

Project Title: Measurement of Nut Detachment Forces Before and After Harvest

Project Leader: H. E. Studer 84-J2

Objectives of Research:

Some almond nuts remain on the trees after mechanical harvesting. Apart from the resulting economic loss, these nuts can serve as overwintering sites for the navel orange worm. Follow-up nut removal by means of tree shaking in the winter or manual poling are often practiced. This project seeks to determine why these nuts remain after shake harvest: are they simply bonded very strongly to the tree, or is the problem related to tree response to shaker vibration?

Procedure:

The project was carried out with the cooperation of Mr. Sam Lewis, a grower in Chico, CA., who made available his orchards and a self-propelled pruning tower. Varieties studied were Nonpareil, Merced, Mission, Harvey and Drake. A Hunter L-10 M hand held mechanical force gauge was used to measure the tensile forces required to manually pull almonds from the branches. The pruning tower allowed testing in the upper sections of the trees, although the tops of the trees were generally too high to be accessible.

Detachment forces were measured the day before harvest on several trees (generally 4). Approximately 400 pre-harvest measurements were made for each tree. Post harvest measurements were made immediately after harvest for those nuts which remained on these same trees. (All measurements for any given tree were made within a period of two days). Since the number of nuts left after harvest was small for some varieties, additional trees were included in the after harvest sampling in order to increase the number of post harvest detachment force observations.

The data were collected by 2 people over a period of six weeks between August 27 and October 6. The observations were recorded in one of 4 categories which described the color and condition of the stem and hull. The categories were identified as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Distinguishing features of nut categories.

	Nut c	category	2	Stem colo	r +	Hull c	olor		
	G	BB		G		В	7		
	G	GG		G		G	>	hull	split
	E	3B		В		В			
	8	3C		В		C -		-hull	closed
Results									Green Brown

The data, without regard for stem-hull characteristics, is presented in Figures 1-23, each of which consists of a histogram accompanied by a frequency table. Figure 1 shows the data for Nonpareil trees sampled during the first week, for which nut detachment force was measured both before and after harvest. Figure 2 displays the data for Nonpareil during the first week for which forces were measured on trees only after harvest. Figure 16 presents all of the Nonpareil data where both before and after measurements were

made, and Figure 19 represents all Nonpareil data collected during the season. A similar set of tables is provided for each of the other varieties. Figure 23 presents all of the detachment force data collected for all varieties.

At the top of the frequency table in each of Figures 1-23 is shown a value of N, the number of observations represented by the plots; the mean value of the detachment forces (in pounds); and the variance of these observations. The frequency table lists the percent of total observations in given intervals, usually 0.2 lbs. For example, in Figure 1, out of a total of 1585 measurements made before harvest, 495 or 31.2% were equal to or less than 0.2 lbs and 68.8% of the total observations were greater than 0.2 lbs. The maximum observed value among these 1585 observations was 4.1 lbs, shown at the bottom of the frequency table. The histogram is a graphical representation of the data in the accompanying frequency table.

A summary of numbers of observations, means and variances for each of the tests is shown in Table 2, where each of the data sets is associated with one of the Figures 1-23. The column headed "mean ratio" shows the ratio of the after harvest mean detachment force to the before harvest mean detachment force. The column headed B represents the percentage of the "after harvest" observations that had detachment force values smaller than the mean detachment force of the "before harvest" observations. Each value of B was calculated by linear interpolation in the corresponding "after harvest" frequency table. For example, consider the histogram for the data set "all Nonpareil, before and after", shown in Figure 16. The "before harvest" mean is 0.45 lbs. B is calculated as follows:

$$B = \frac{13.4 (0.45 - 0.40)}{0.6 - 0.4} + (13.0 + 18.5)$$

= 35%

Table 3 displays the mean detachment force values and the number of observations for each of the categories describing the stem-hull characteristics, for each variety measured \underline{both} before and after harvest. Table 4 provides additional summaries of the two Mission data sets. Table 5 provides additional summaries for all data sets in which observations in the GG category were virtually nonexistent.

Discussion:

The data summaries presented in Table 2 show that the mean post harvest detachment force was, without exception, higher than the corresponding pre-harvest mean force. The values of mean ratio range from 1.58 for Harvey to 4.83 for one of the Nonpareil data sets. All values are greater than 2 with the exception of Harvey. Moreover, an inspection of Figures 1-23 shows that the maximum values observed in the "before and after" data sets occurred, with one exception, in the after harvest data sets.

The values of B, also listed in Table 2, show that while the mean post harvest detachment forces may be large, a substantial number of nuts remain on the tree after shaking which have, individually, relatively low detachment force values. For example, the data set "Nonpareil, all data" is characterized by a value of B = 30%, and this value of B is represented by the cross hatched area under the curve in Figure 16.

The "before harvest" and "after harvest" nut populations also have variances (S^2) which are very different as evident in Table 2. As expected, the after harvest nut populations are more spread out. Both populations, however, are highly skewed to the right and very definitely non-normal.

The data in Table 3 shows that, with a single exception, the mean detachment force values associated with each of the nut categories identified in Table 1 are greater for those measured after harvest than for those measured before harvest. It appears that the action of the harvester is selective, and irrespective of nut type, nut detachment is sensitive to nut bonding force. Table 3 also shows that the largest mean detachment force values for the categories listed were generally those exhibited by the BC nut category (brown stem with non-split hull). Table 5 shows that the BC category represented a large percentage of the after-harvest nut population for data sets Nonpareil week 1 and week 3, and also for Merced.

A separate summary of the two Mission data set is shown in Table 4. The nut category GG was rarely represented in the tests except in the "Mission-week 5" data set. The trees in the "Mission-week 6" data set were drier, and most of the nuts were represented by the BB category, with very low nut detachment forces. Very few of the Mission-week 5 observations fell in the BB category. Rather, the observations were primarily represented by GB, with a substantial fraction in GG. The nuts in the GG category have split hulls but drying of the stems and hulls is incomplete. It should also be noted that the mean detachment forces for these "green" GG and GB nuts are comparable to those representing the BC category, this observation applying to both the before and after harvest nut populations.

Conclusions:

This study of almond nut detachment forces has clearly shown that nut removal from the tree at harvest was influenced by the magnitude of the force bonding the nuts to their stems. Nut bonding forces varied over a wide but similar range for all varieties tested, and the mean forces were surprisingly similar where nut conditions were common. The nuts which remained on the trees after harvest were invariably characterized by a higher average bonding force than those of the pre-harvest population. However, a substantial fraction of those nuts remaining on the trees after shaking exhibited bonding forces which were very small. This fact resulted in a substantially higher variance for the "after harvest" measurements. Consequently the values of mean ratio are actually misleading, and tend to underestimate the difficulty of the problem of removing the nuts by shaking.

The results suggest that incomplete nut detachment is due in part to shaker design and operation, but nonuniform tree response to the vibration is also a factor. Moreover, while improvements in nut detachment efficiency may be possible, the existence of nuts with very high bonding forces suggests that the mummy nut problem will not likely be resolved by changes in current shaker design and operation alone.

Table 2. Summary of 1984 almond nut detachment force data. (Force measured in pounds).

		Before Harvest After Harvest						est			
Data set	Week No.	No. Trees	N	Ave. force	S ²	N	Ave. force	_{\$} 2	Mean Ratio	B, %	
Nonpareil, before and after " only after " before and after " only after " before and after " only after	1 1 2 2 3 3	4 8 5 1 4 2	1585 1756 1596 	0.52 0.47 0.36	0.21 0.19 0.10	75 245 446 13 201 70	2.05 1.48 0.95 0.85 1.74 1.78	8.53 4.45 1.42 1.28 2.18 6.76	3.94 2.02 4.83		
Merced, before and after only after	3 3	4 1	1600 	0.42	0.10	244 30	1.57 1.52	2.42 4.70	3.73	17 	
Mission, before and after only after before and after only after	5 5 6 6	3 4 2 2	1234 811 	1.27 0.24	1.04 0.03	343 304 97 110	2.16 2.24 0.60 0.91	1.75 7.14 0.63 1.55	1.70 2.50	 	 4
Harvey, before and after	5	1	405	0.50	0.10	18	0.79	0.28	1.58	39	
Drake, before and after only after	6 6	4 2	1675 	0.43	0.14	159 573	1.35 1.90	1.36 7.20	3.14	24	
All Nonpareil, before and after All Mission, before and after		13 5	4937 2045	0.45 0.87	0.17 0.89	722 440	1.28 1.82	2.34 1.92	2.84 2.09	35 31	
Nonpareil, all data Merced, all data Mission, all data Harvey, all data Drake, all data	 	24 5 11 1 6	4937 1600 2045 405 1675	0.45 0.42 0.87 0.50 0.43	0.17 0.10 0.89 0.10 0.14	1050 274 854 18 732	1.35 1.56 1.85 0.79 1.78	3.12 2.66 3.89 0.28 5.98	3.00 3.71 2.13 1.58 4.13	30 17 30 39 20	ナンプンナ
All varieties, before and after All varieties, all data		27 47	10662 10662	0.52 0.52	0.32 0.32	1583 2928	1.48 1.62	2.17 4.05	2.84 3.11	31 26	

Table 3. Number of observations per tree and mean nut detachment force, $\bar{\chi}$, for each nut category for each variety. (includes only "before and after" data).

		Befo	re Harv	vest		After Harvest					
Data set	Tree	GB	GG	ВВ	BC	GB	GG	ВВ	ВС		
Nonpareil-week 1	1 2 3 4	95 98 108 23	45 1 7 0	242 294 285 372	6 3 2 2	0 2 0 0	0 1 0 0	11 7 2 21	16 5 1 9		
	X	0.7	1.3	0.4	1.7			1.3	3.1		
Nonpareil-week 2	1 2 3 4 5	12 1 2 0 3	0 0 0 0	355 389 373 203 396	3 6 12 0 1	1 0 0 0	0 0 1 0 0	144 113 118 32 12	8 3 8 5 1		
	X	0.3		0.4	2.0			0.9	2.3		
Nonpareil-week 3	1 2 3 4	5 4 1 1	4 0 0 0	386 372 385 390	1 24 14 9	2 1 0 0	3 0 0 0	31 52 6 4	1 12 84 5		
	X	0.3		0.3	1.2			1.1	2.4		
Merced-week 3	1 2 3 4	233 321 288 359	0 0 0 0	162 74 101 40	5 4 9 1	6 5 26 14	0 0 2 0	26 8 59 28	16 4 39 8		
	X	0.4		0.5	0.8	1.1		1.4	2.3		
Mission-week 5	1 2 3	199 314 333	180 80 38	2 7 10	17 3 44	53 63 8	104 61 12	6 12 2	1 7 4		
	X	1.1	1.8	0.4	1.3	2.1	2.3	1.3	2.1		
Mission-week 6	1 2	51 35	0 0	349 373	1 0	0 6	0 38	0 45	0 4		
	X	0.3		0.2	0.2	1.9	0.5	0.6	0.4		
Harvey-week 5	1	3	0	400	2	0	0	10	2		
	X	0.4		0.5	0.8			0.8	1.8		
Drake-week 6	1 2 3 4	18 12 19 19	0 0 0	392 408 400 390	3 1 0 6	5 14 3 0	0 3 0 0	9 45 25 11	1 2 2 7		
	X	.4		. 4	1.1	1.6		1.3	1.4		

Table 4. Summary of nut detachment force observations for each nut category for Mission variety measured in two different orchards at Chico, CA.

			Ве	efore Ha	After Harvest						
Week	Tree	N	GG	GB	ВВ	ВС	N	GG	GB	ВВ	BC
No. 5	No. 1 2 3	398 404 425	180 80 38	199 314 333	2 7 10	17 3 44	164 143 26	104 61 12	53 63 8	6 12 2	1 7 4
Total		1227	298	846	19	64	333	177	124	20	12
% of	total		68.9	24.3	1.5	5.2		53.2	37.0	6.0	3.6
Mean	force,	pounds	1.1	1.8	0.4	1.3		2.3	2.2	1.3	2.1
Overall mean force, pounds			1.	. 3				2	. 2		
6	1 2	401 408	0	51 35	349 373	1 0	0 93	0 38	0 6	0	0 4
Total		809	0	86	722	1	93	38	6	45	4
% of	total		0	10.6	89.2	0.1		40.9	6.5	48.4	4.3
Mean	force,	oounds		0.3	0.2	0.2		0.5	1.9	0.6	0.4
Overall mean force, pounds				. 2				0	.6		

Table 5. Percentage of nuts represented by various nut categories. 1/

Before Harvest

After Harvest

	Delote that vest								Arter Hurvest			
			Nut Category					Nu	у			
Data Set	NG ² /		GB	ВВ	BC	Na ² /		GB	BB	ВС		
Nonpareil-week 1	1530	<u>%</u> 3/	21.2	80.0 0.4	0.9 1.7	74	% X	2.7 0.9	55.4 1.3	41.9 3.1		
Nonpareil-week 2	1756	%	1.0 0.3	97.7 0.4	1.3 2.0	445	<u>%</u> X	0.2 0.4	94.1 0.9	5.6 2.3		
Nonpareil-week 3	1592	%	0.7 0.3	96.3 0.3	3.0 1.2	198	<u>%</u> X	1.5 0.5	47.0 1.1	51.5 2.4		
Merced-week 3	1597	<u>%</u> X	75.2 0.4	23.6 0.5	1.2 0.8	239	<u>%</u> X	21.3	50.6 1.4	28.0 2.3		
Mission-week 6	809	% X	10.6 0.3	89.0 0.2	0.1 0.2	55	<u>%</u>	10.9 1.9	81.8 0.6	7.3 0.4		
Harvey-week 5	405	<u>%</u> X	0.7 0.4	98.8 0.5	0.5 0.8	12	<u>%</u>	0.0	83.4 0.8	16.6 1.8		
Drake-week 6	1668	<u>%</u> X	4.1 0.4	95.3 0.4	0.6 1.1	124	% X	17.7 1.6	72.6 1.3	9.7 1.4		

 $^{^{1/}}$ This table is based on only "before and after" data sets; it does not include Mission-week6; and all GG observations in these data sets was first subtracted out.

 $^{2/}N_G$ = No. observations "before"; N_a = No. observations "after".

 $^{3/\}overline{\chi}$ = mean nut detachment force in the given category.



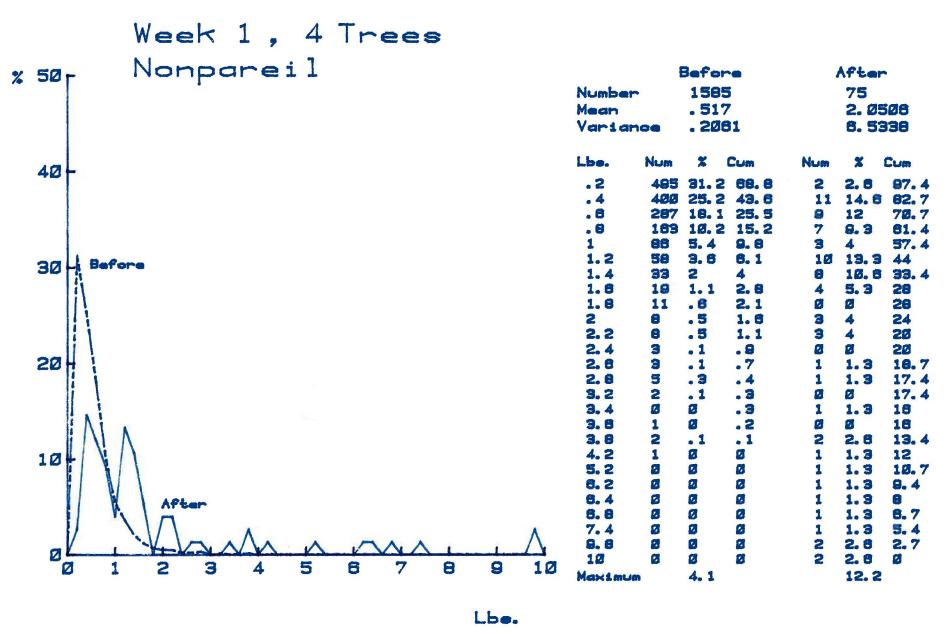


Figure 1. Frequency table and histogram for nut detachment forces in 1bs. measured before and after harvest for Nonpareil almonds on 08/27/84.



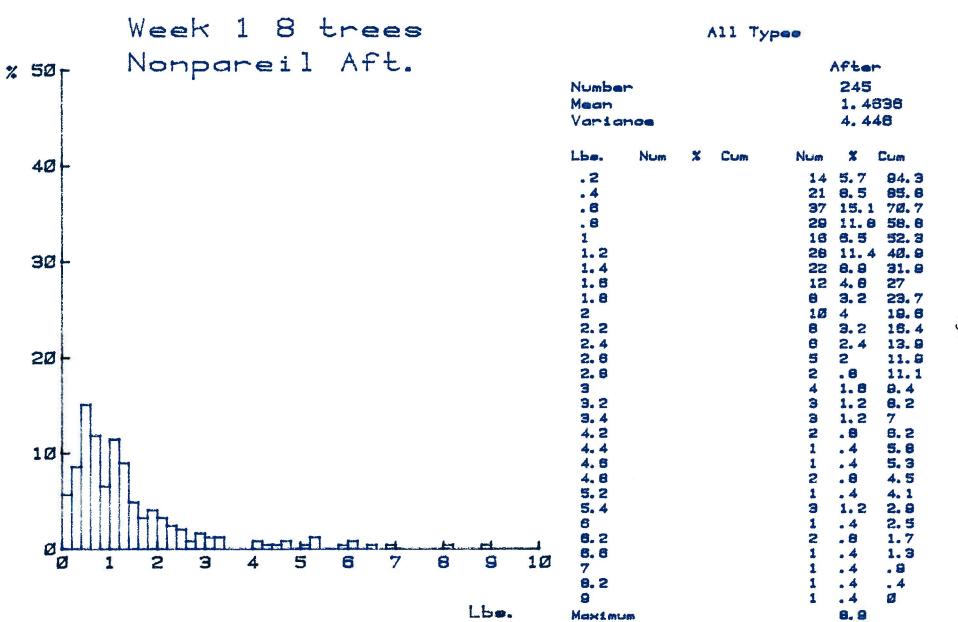


Figure 2. Frequency table and histogram for nut detachment forces in lbs. measured only after harvest for Nonpareil almonds on 08/29/84.



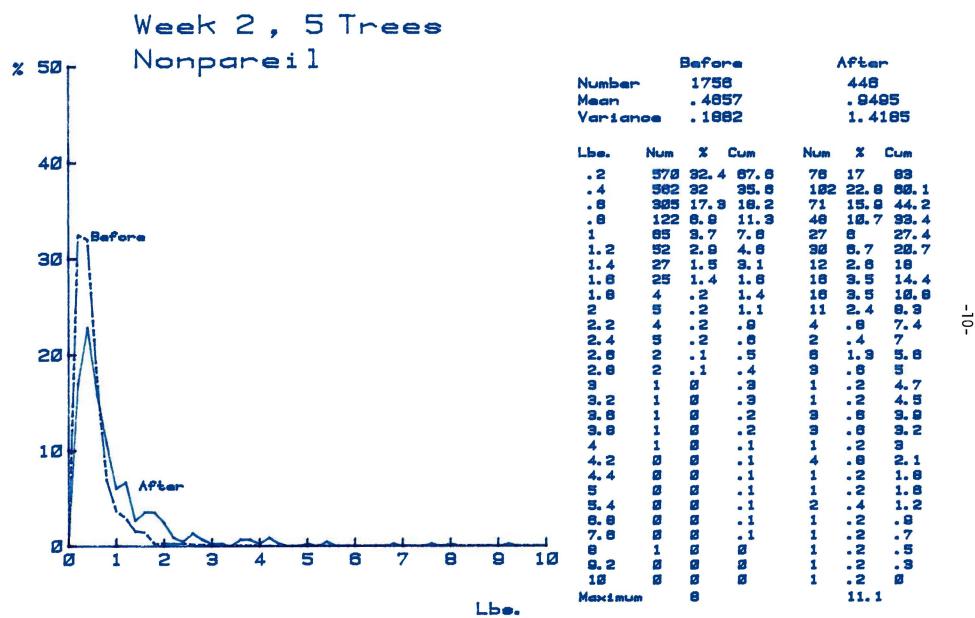


Figure 3. Frequency table and histogram for nut detachment forces in 1bs. measured before and after harvest for Nonpareil almonds on 09/04/84.

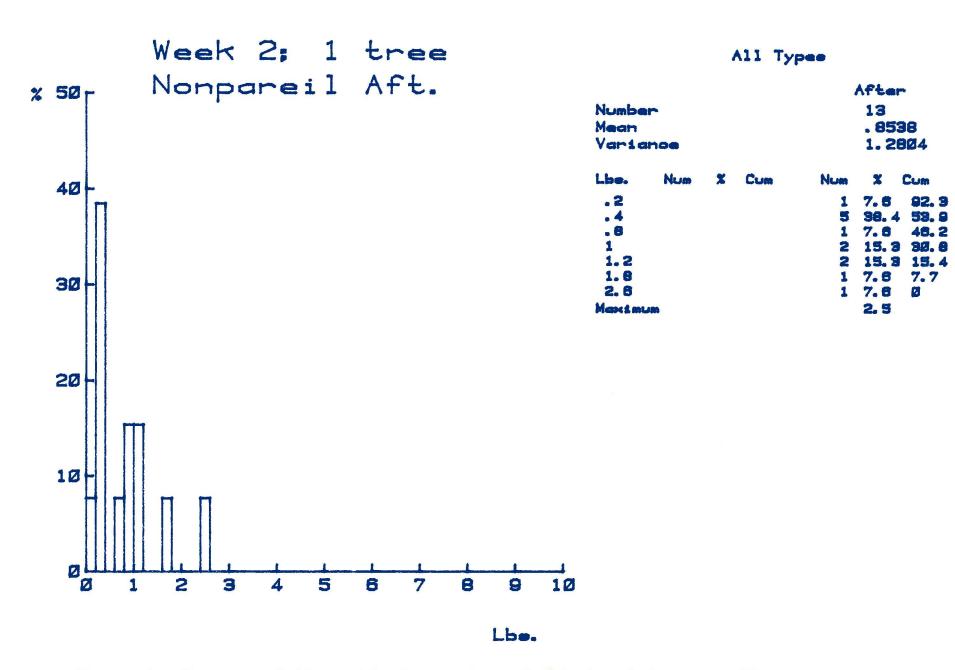


Figure 4. Frequency table and histogram for nut detachment forces in 1bs. measured only after harvest for Nonpareil almonds on 09/05/84.

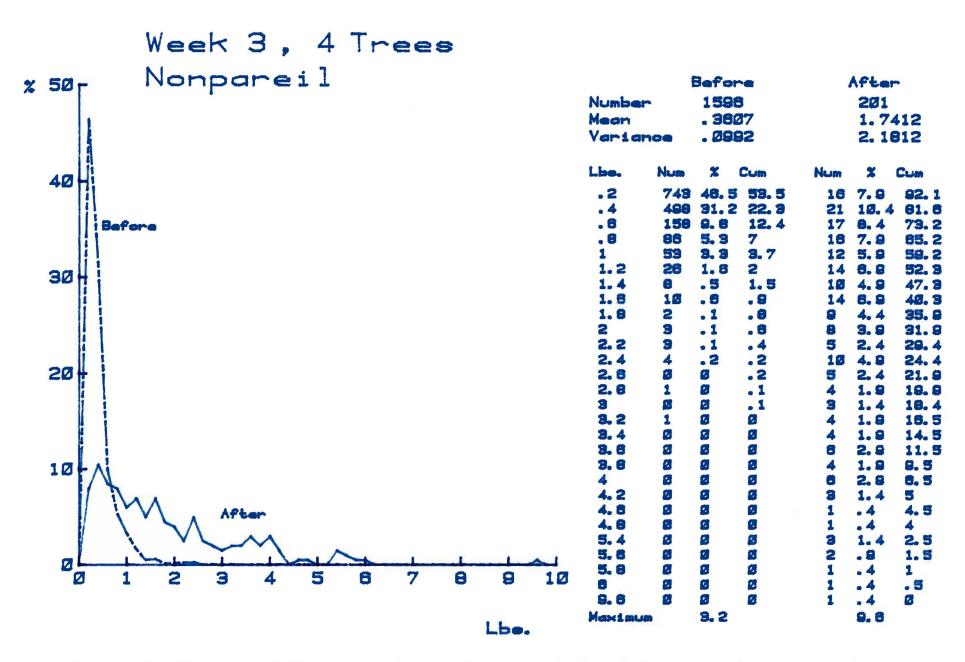


Figure 5. Frequency table and histogram for nut detachment forces in 1bs. measured before and after harvest for Nonpareil almonds on 09/10/84.



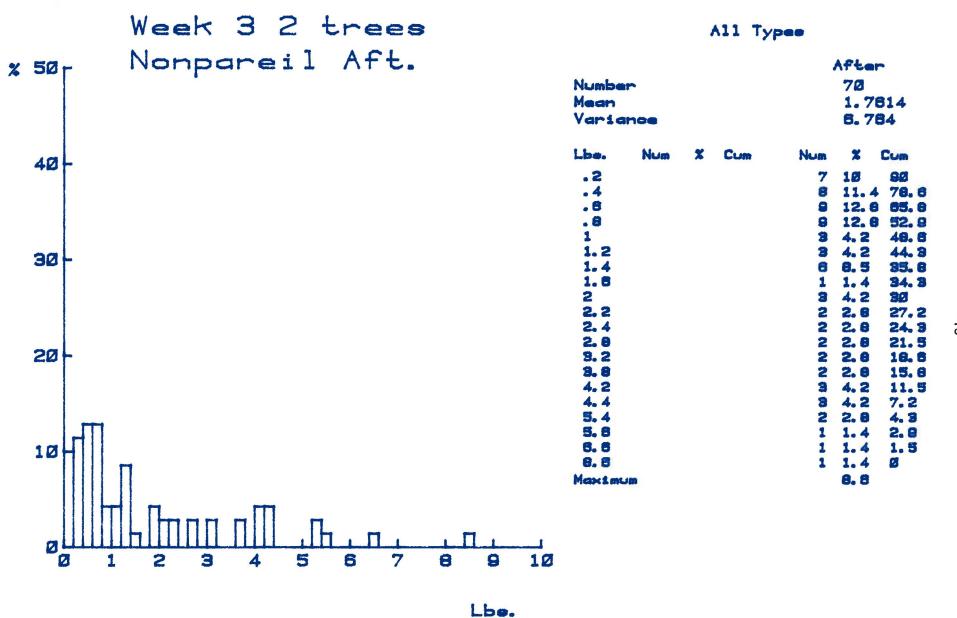


Figure 8. Frequency table and histogram for nut detachment forces in lbs. measured only after harvest for Nonpareil almonds on 09/11/84.



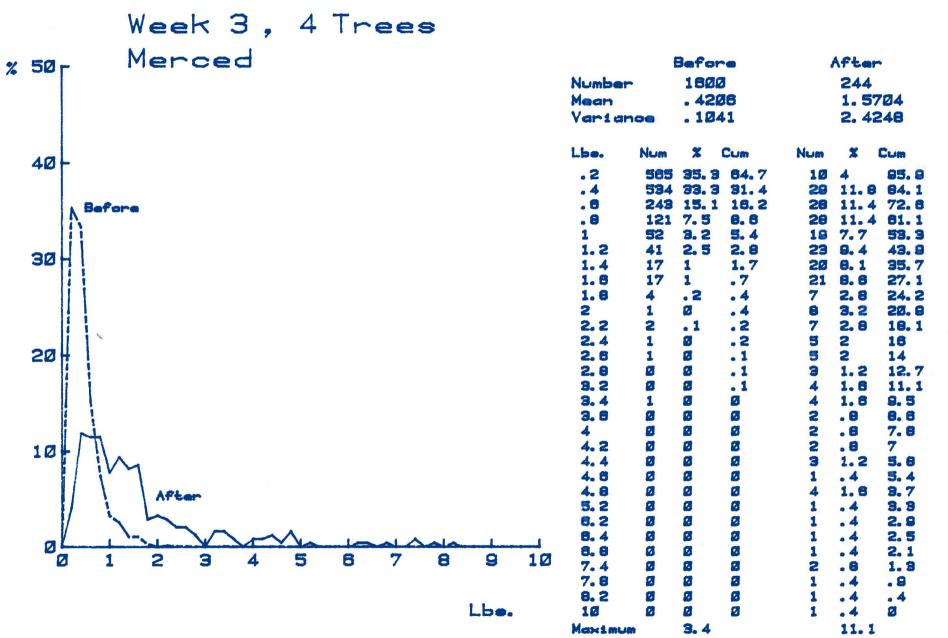


Figure 7. Frequency table and histogram for nut detachment forces in lbs. measured before and after harvest for Merced almonds on 09/12/84.

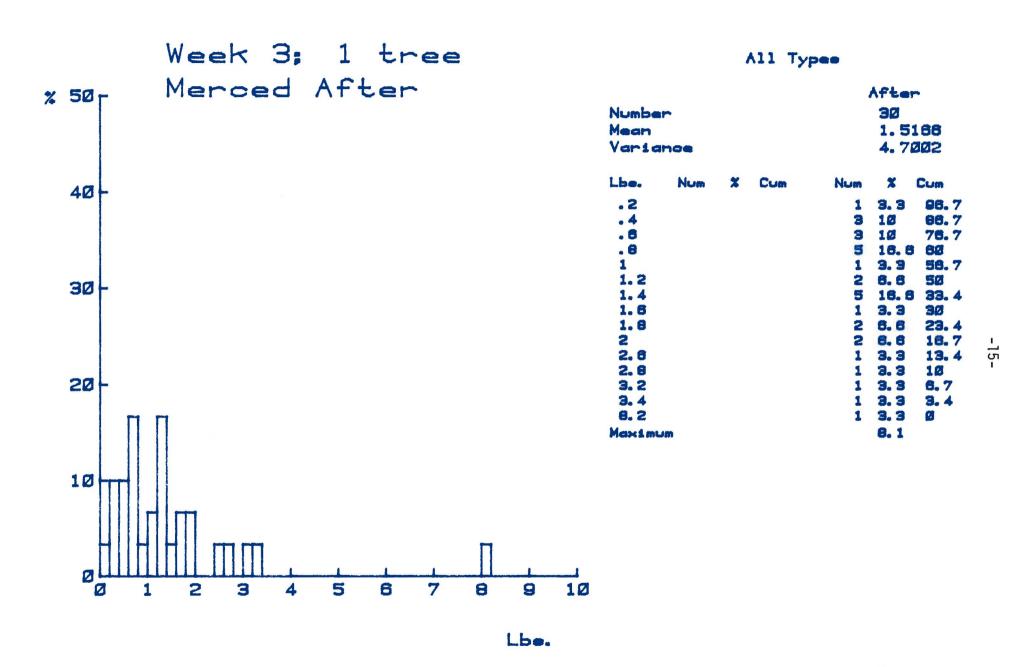


Figure 8. Frequency table and histogram for nut detachment forces in lbs. measured only after harvest for Merced almonds on 09/13/84.



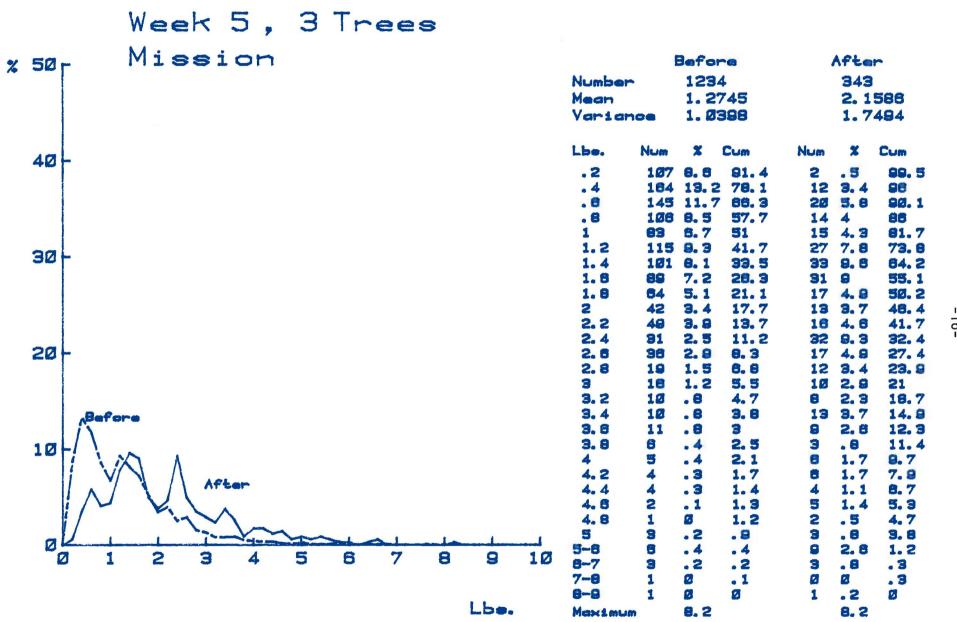


Figure 9. Frequency table and histogram for nut detachment forces in lbs. measured before and after harvest for Mission almonds on 09/25/84.



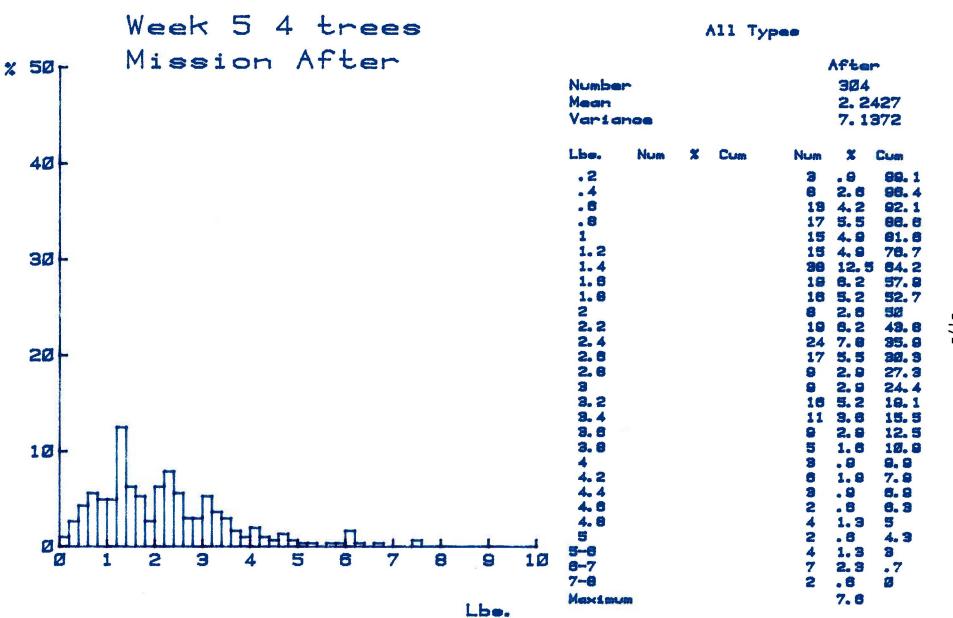


Figure 10. Frequency table and histogram for nut detachment forces in lbs. measured only after harvest for Mission almonds on 09/26/84.

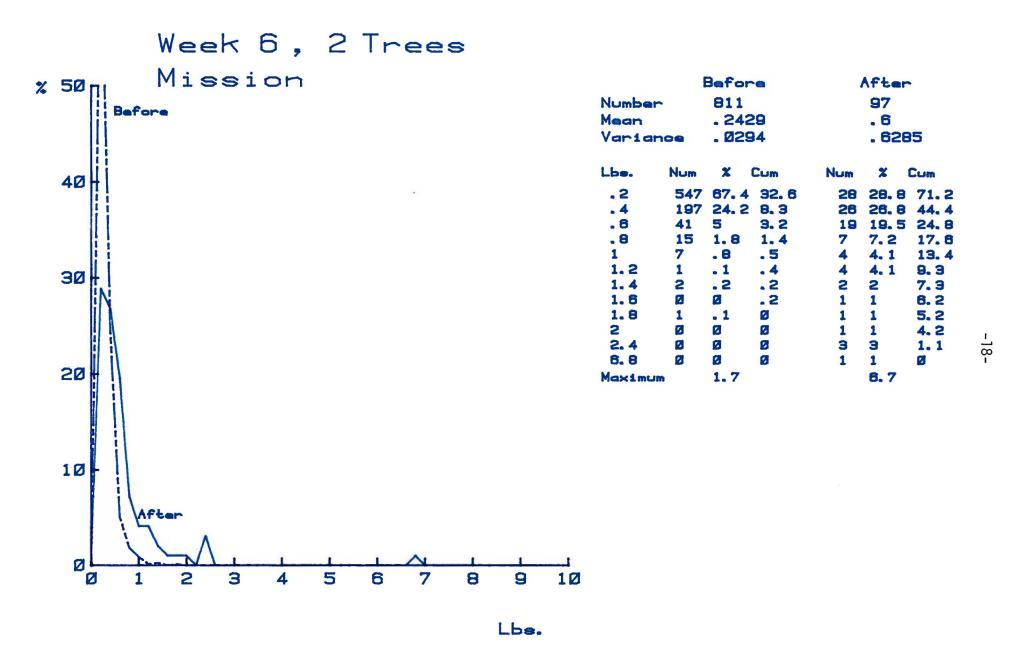


Figure 11. Frequency table and histogram for nut detachment forces in lbs. measured before and after harvest for Mission almonds on 10/02/84.



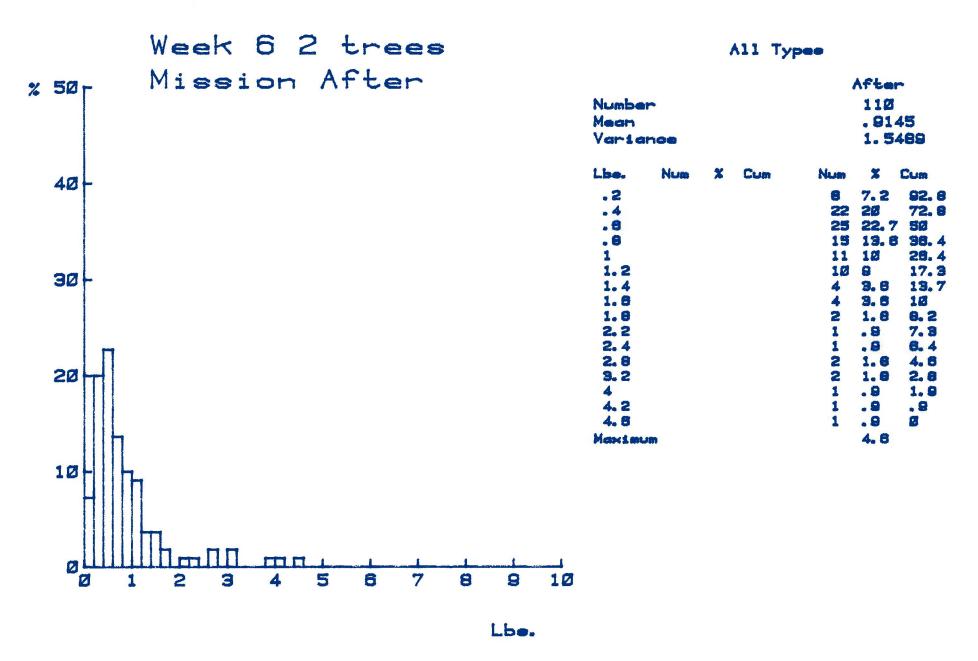


Figure 12. Frequency table and histogram for nut detachment forces in lbs. measured only after harvest for Mission almonds on 10/03/84.



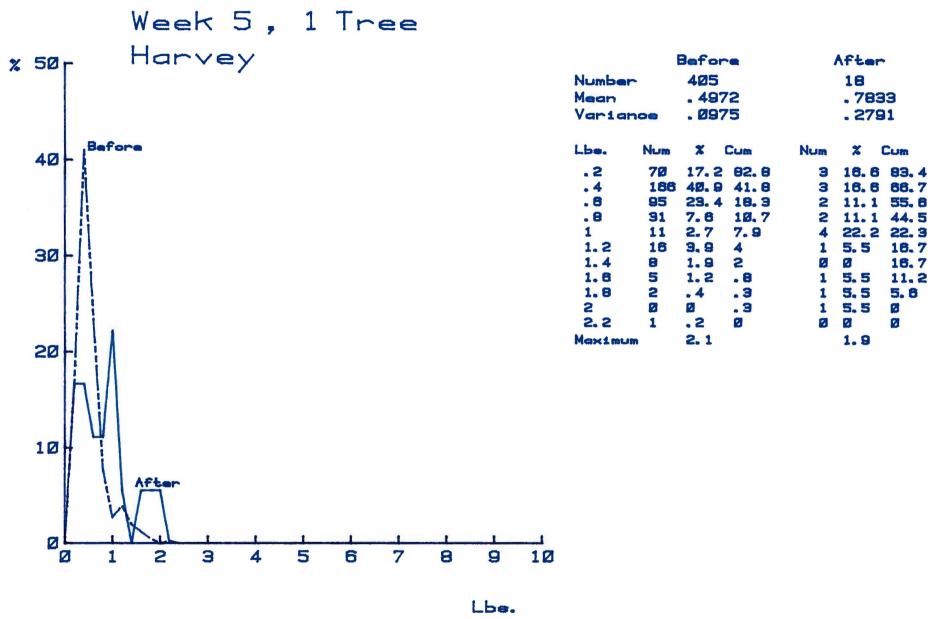


Figure 13. Frequency table and histogram for all nut detachment forces in lbs. measured for Harvey almonds during 1984.

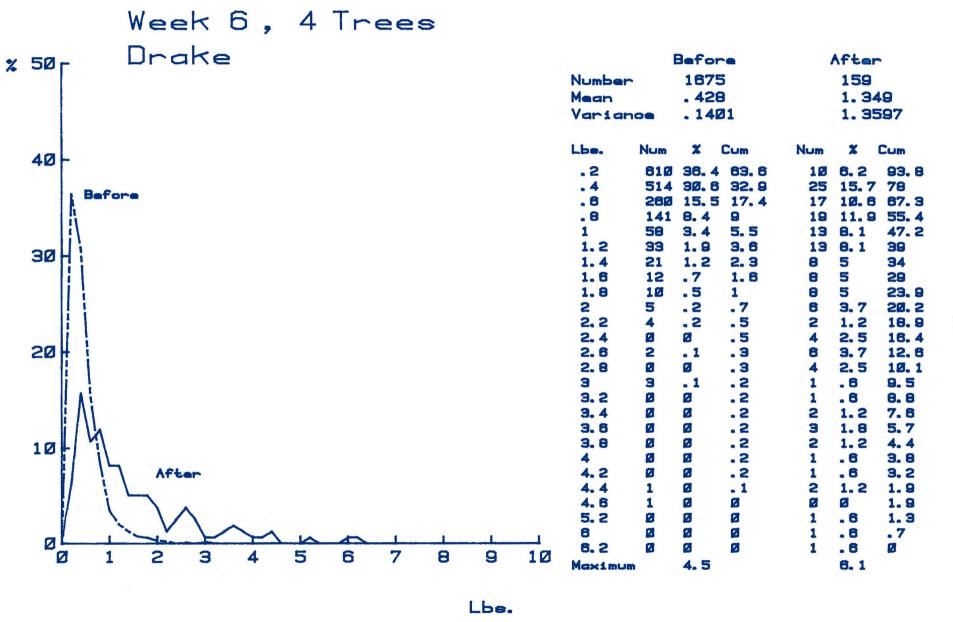


Figure 14. Frequency table and histogram for nut detachment forces in lbs. measured before and after harvest for Drake almonds on 10/04/84.

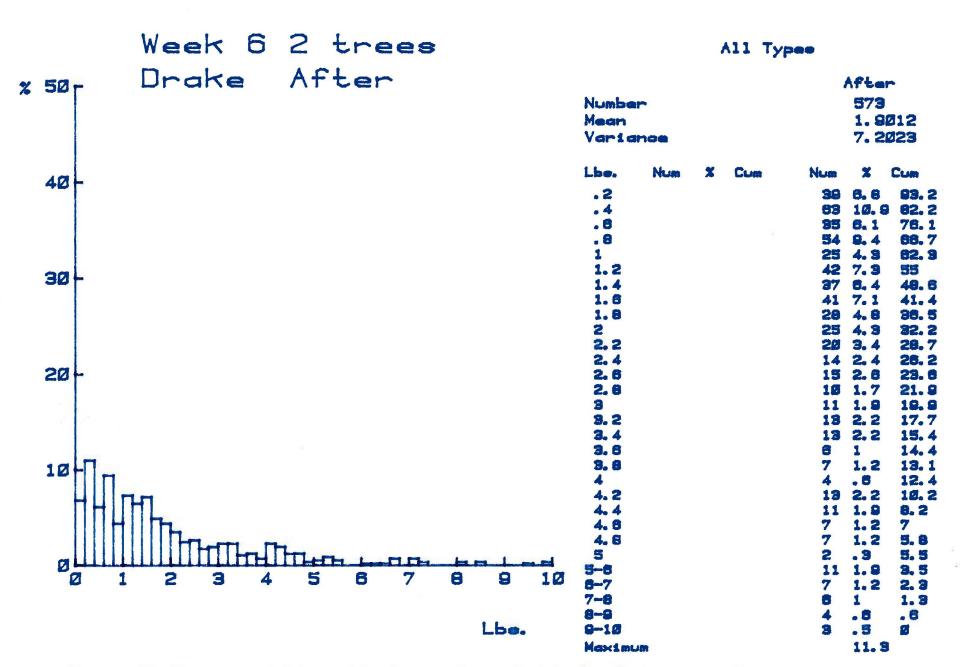


Figure 15. Frequency table and histogram for nut detachment forces in lbs. measured only after harvest for Drake almonds on 10/08/84.



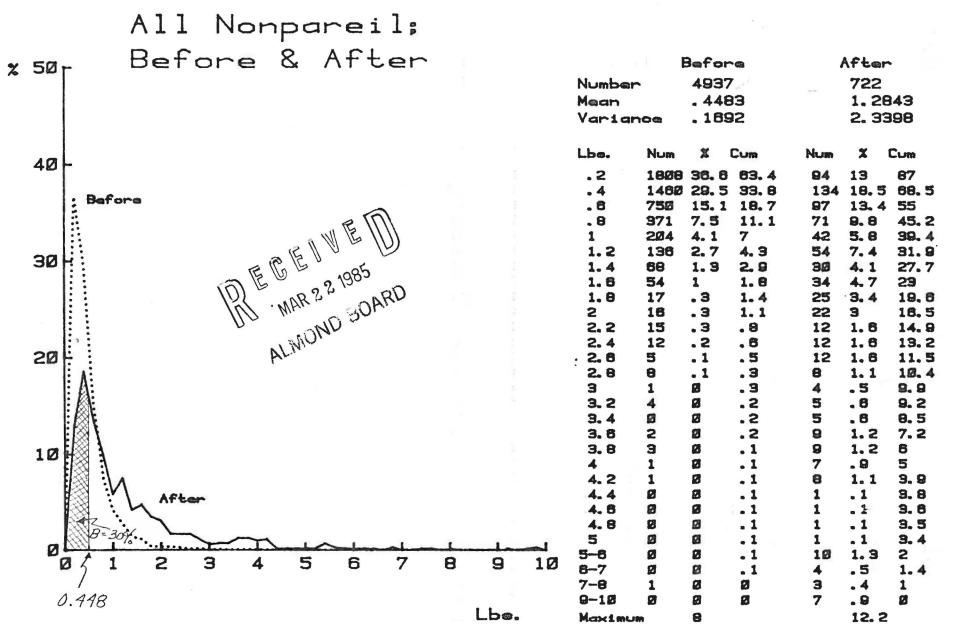


Figure 18. Frequency table and histogram for all nut detachment forces in lbs. measured both before and after harvest for Nonpareil almonds during 1984.



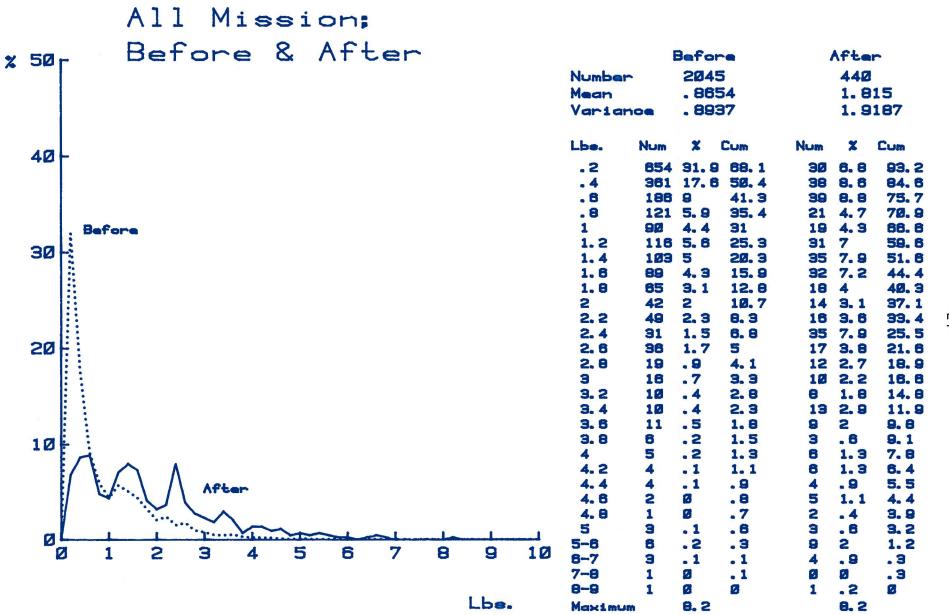


Figure 17. Frequency table and histogram for all nut detachment forces in 1bs. measured both before and after harvest for Mission almonds during 1984.

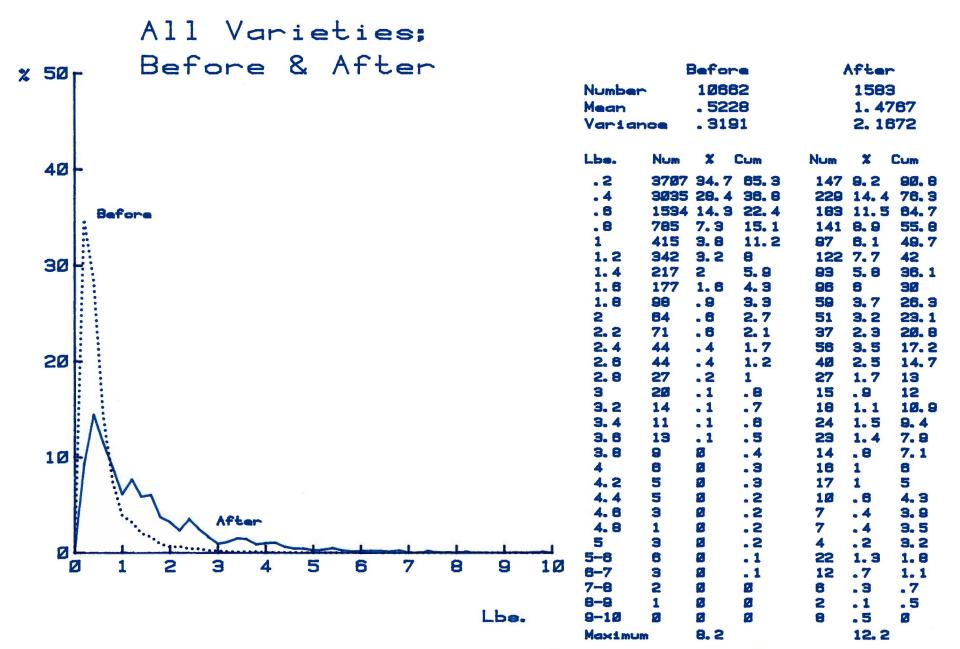


Figure 18. Frequency table and histogram for all nut detachment forces in lbs. measured both before and after harvest for All almonds during 1984.



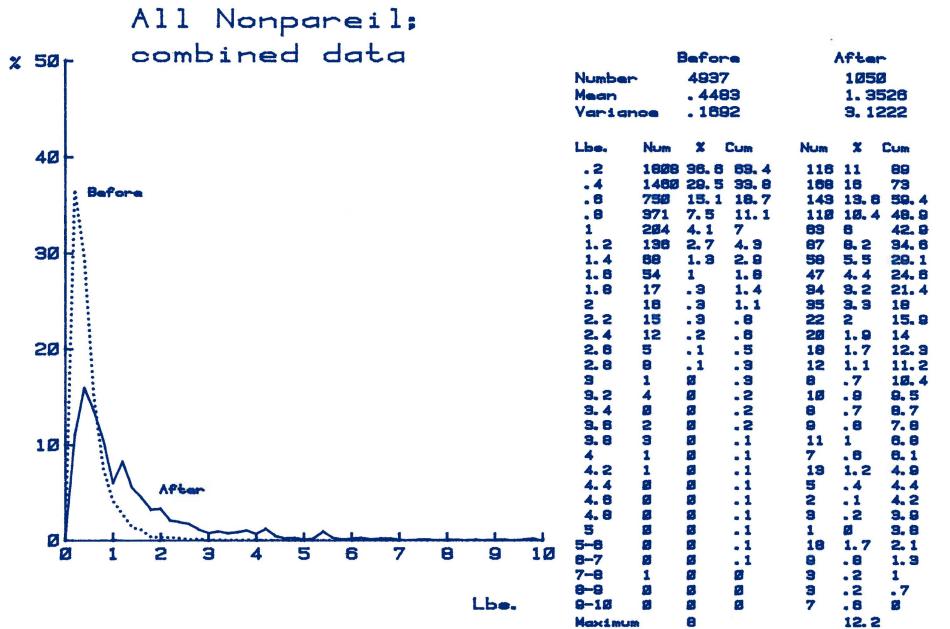


Figure 19. Frequency table and histogram for all nut detachment forces in lbs. measured for Nonpareil almonds during 1984.

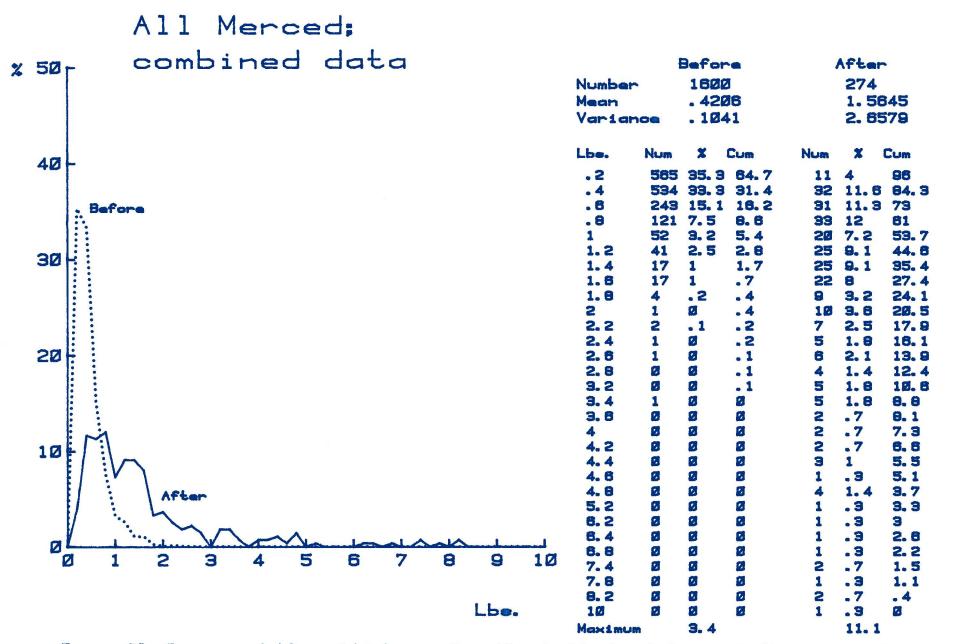


Figure 20. Frequency table and histogram for all nut detachment forces in lbs. measured for Merced almonds during 1984.

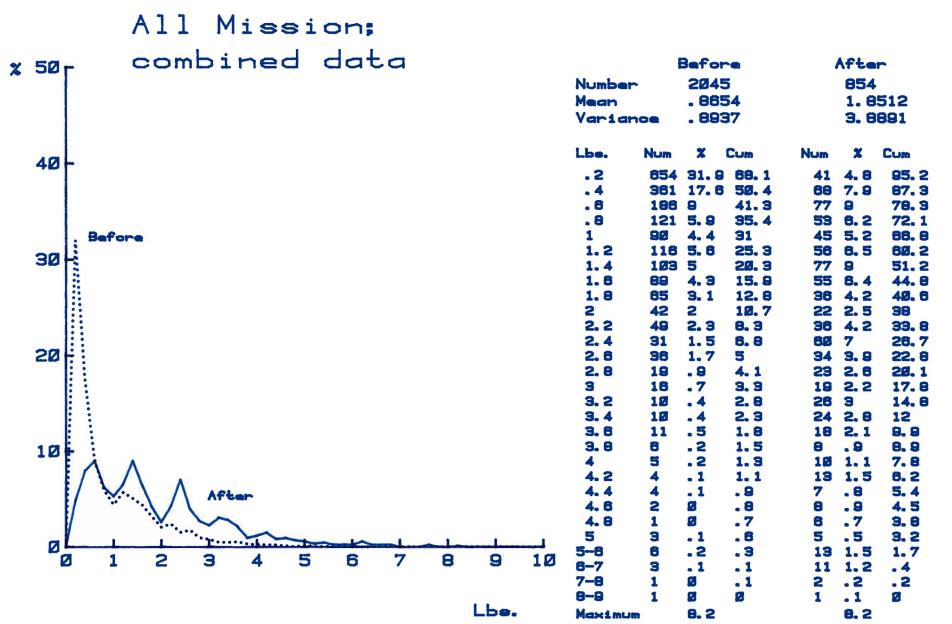


Figure 21. Frequency table and histogram for all nut detachment forces in lbs. measured for Mission almonds during 1984.

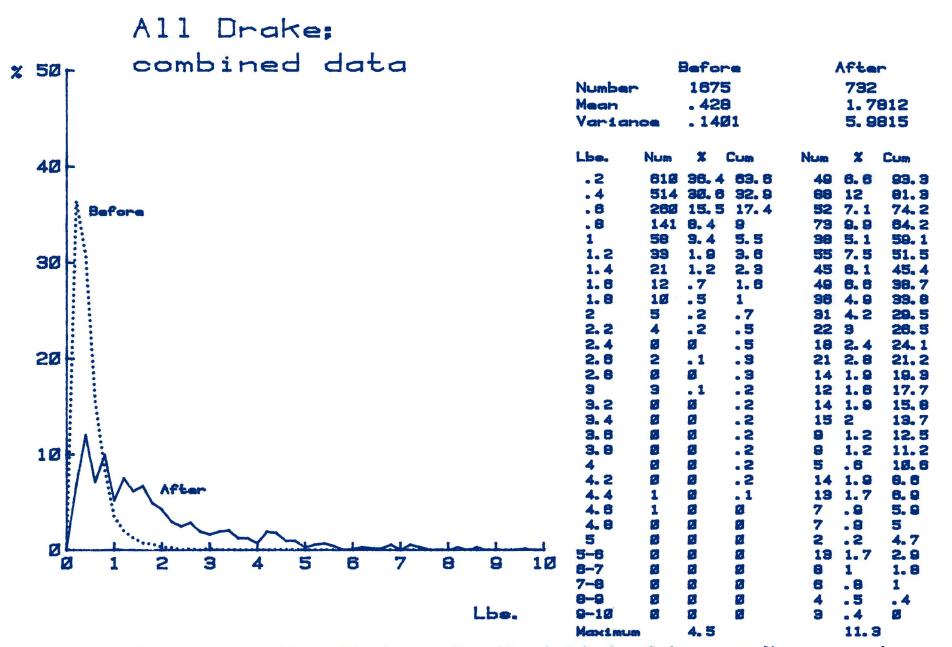


Figure 22. Frequency table and histogram for all nut detachment forces in lbs. measured for Drake almonds during 1984.

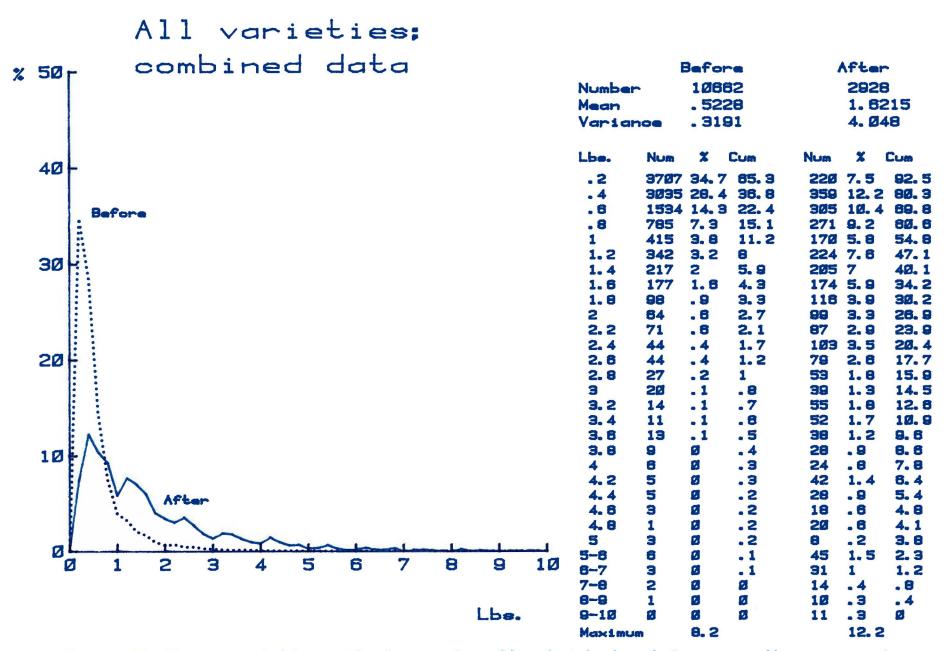


Figure 23. Frequency table and histogram for all nut detachment forces in lbs. measured for All almonds during 1984.