# Improvement of 'Sweetheart' Cherry Quality by Modified Atmosphere Packaging (MAP)

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**Abstract**

**Sweet cherries are highly perishable, since they undergo rapid deterioration after harvest, including dehydration, softening, and decay. In order to improve *Prunus avium* L. cv. Sweetheart marketability, passive modified atmosphere packaging (MAP) was used. Thus, fruit packed in polyethylene film bags were stored at 2 ºC for 6, 13 and 20 days and quality parameters were assessed, namely weight loss, colour (L*, C* and h), firmness, soluble solids content (SSC), titratable acidity (TA), total phenols and epiphytic moulds and yeasts counts. As control, fruit were stored without packaging. Results showed that colour, SSC, TA, total phenols, and acceptability index (SSC/TA) were unaffected by the postharvest treatment. Moreover, MAP reduced weight loss and increased fruit firmness, with no effect on moulds and yeasts counts.**