SELF-SCORING WORKBOOK

# Processing Resilience Assessment

How vulnerable is your farm to a single-processor collapse? Find your Resilience Score in 10 minutes.

**For family farms and small food processors**

Why this matters now

## The growers who survived lost the least because they had options.

In 2026, Del Monte Foods closed its Modesto and Hughson canneries for good. 420,000 peach trees ripped out. 3,000 acres of orchards gone. Over $550 million in canceled grower contracts. Thousands of California farm families left wondering what comes next.

The growers who survived with the least damage had one thing in common: they were not fully dependent on a single processing channel. They had options. Their own equipment, diversified buyers, or a co-packing relationship they could flex.

The question is: what about you? If your primary processor shut down tomorrow, how fast could you pivot? This self-assessment gives a clear picture of your processing resilience, and a roadmap for strengthening it.

### How to use this workbook

Answer all ten questions by circling one option per question (each is worth 1, 3 or 5 points). Add the ten values for your total, then find your band on the scoring page. Work in pencil: re-score every season, because resilience changes as contracts, equipment and labor change.

**Part one: the ten questions**

# Circle one answer per question. The points are in the brackets.

### 01 How many buyers/processors do you currently sell your raw product to?

**A.** Just one. A long-term contract with a single processor or cannery. (1)

**B.** Two. Split between a primary buyer and a secondary outlet. (3)

**C.** Three or more. Multiple processors, co-packers, or direct channels. (5)

Your score for this question: _____

### 02 If your primary processor closed tomorrow, how long would it take you to find an alternative outlet for your crop?

**A.** More than one growing season. No other processors nearby with capacity. (1)

**B.** One growing season. We could find someone, but it would be tight. (3)

**C.** We already have alternatives lined up. We could redirect within weeks. (5)

Your score for this question: _____

### 03 Do you own any on-farm processing equipment (washing, sorting, slicing, drying, packaging, etc.)?

**A.** No. We send everything raw to a processor. (1)

**B.** Yes, basic equipment. Some washing or sorting, but not full processing. (3)

**C.** Yes, we own a processing line. We can wash, cut, dry and/or package our own product. (5)

Your score for this question: _____

### 04 What percentage of your annual revenue comes from a single product form (canned, fresh, frozen)?

**A.** 80 to 100 percent. All-in on one format. (1)

**B.** 50 to 79 percent. One format dominates but there is some diversity. (3)

**C.** Less than 50 percent. Multiple formats: fresh, frozen, dehydrated, value-added. (5)

Your score for this question: _____

### 05 How much of your processing capacity (equipment or labor) sits idle during the off-season?

**A.** More than 6 months. Equipment only runs at harvest. (1)

**B.** 3 to 6 months. Defined season but some idle time. (3)

**C.** Less than 3 months. The line runs year-round across crops or products. (5)

Your score for this question: _____

### 06 How would you rate your traceability and food safety documentation readiness?

**A.** No formal traceability. We rely on our processor. (1)

**B.** Basic records: lot codes, harvest dates, not FSMA 204-ready. (3)

**C.** Fully documented. We meet or exceed FSMA traceability requirements today. (5)

Your score for this question: _____

### 07 If labor costs rose 20 percent next year, how would that affect your processing operation?

**A.** We would have to cut production. We are already labor-constrained. (1)

**B.** We would absorb some of it, but it would hurt margins. (3)

**C.** Minimal impact. Automation or flexible labor arrangements. (5)

Your score for this question: _____

### 08 How much control do you have over your product's final form (cut size, packaging, branding, shelf-life specs)?

**A.** None. The processor decides everything. (1)

**B.** Some. We can request specs, but the processor controls the outcome. (3)

**C.** Full control. We process and package to our own specifications. (5)

Your score for this question: _____

### 09 Have you mapped your processing line (field to final package) to identify bottlenecks or capacity mismatches?

**A.** No. We have not looked at it systematically. (1)

**B.** Rough idea, but no formal map. (3)

**C.** Yes. Documented flow, and we know exactly where our bottlenecks are. (5)

Your score for this question: _____

### 10 If you wanted to add a new product form (fresh to frozen, canned to dehydrated), how feasible would that be with your current setup?

**A.** Not feasible. It would need entirely new equipment and infrastructure. (1)

**B.** Possible but expensive. Retrofit or add major pieces. (3)

**C.** Very feasible. Equipment is modular and handles multiple product forms. (5)

Your score for this question: _____

**Part two: your total**

## Add the ten answers and read your band.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Total Resilience Score** | sum of all ten answers, between 10 and 50 | _____ **/ 50** |

**10 TO 19 POINTS**
**Low Resilience / High Risk**

You are heavily dependent on a single processor or channel. Your priority action is to start exploring on-farm processing and diversify your buyer base immediately. Even a small investment in basic wash and sort equipment gives you flexibility.

**20 TO 34 POINTS**
**Medium Resilience / Moderate Risk**

You have some diversification and basic capabilities, but you are still vulnerable. Your priority action is to identify the biggest bottleneck and invest in one piece of equipment or one new channel with the most flexibility for the least capital.

**35 TO 50 POINTS**
**High Resilience / Low Risk**

You are well diversified, with multiple outlets, owned equipment and flexible processing. Your priority action is to optimize the existing line and explore value-added products to maximize margin on existing capacity.

**Your next step**

## You did not build your farm to be at someone else’s mercy.

Whether you scored a 12 or a 42, the goal is the same: build a processing operation that gives you options, protects your margins and secures your farm’s future.

At Buettner Processing Solutions we help family farms and small food manufacturers design and build processing lines that are resilient by design, starting with your end goal and working backward to match the right equipment, from harvest through packaging, to your volume, crop and budget.

**Book a free 30-minute Processing Resilience Call**

We review your assessment, discuss your biggest gaps and outline a path forward.

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