

BUYER HANDBOOK

Farm & Ranch Container Buyer Handbook

A conversion-ready field reference for choosing size, condition, site and delivered scope without skipping exact-plan verification.

THE VERIFICATION GATES

01

Product label

Controls pesticide, fertilizer, medicine and other labeled-product storage.

02

Site and carrier

Confirm ground, access, unload method, utilities and final orientation.

03

Local authority

Confirms permits, setbacks, fire access and environmental rules.

04

Qualified design

Controls structural cuts, foundations, electrical work and occupied use.

Planning resource only. Verify the exact container, contents, delivery route, site and current requirements before purchase, loading, modification or use.

START WITH THE OPERATING PROBLEM

Farm container answers built around real work, real ground and real contents.

Plan the unit, delivery, storage routine and product boundaries before the truck enters the property.

NOMINAL SIZE COMPARISON

----- 2X nominal length

20FT | 160 SQ FT

40FT | 320 SQ FT

Standard exterior height: 8FT 6IN | High Cube exterior height: 9FT 6IN

Exact interior and door dimensions vary. Verify the exact unit.

Do not let nominal volume decide alone.

DECISION	VERIFY	WHY IT MATTERS
Contents	Dimensions, weight, sensitivity and compatibility	Controls size, layout and environmental needs
Site	Route, ground, drainage and working clearance	Controls delivery and daily usability
Operation	Access, retrieval, inspection and security	Controls whether storage saves time
Approval	Confirms permits, setbacks, fire access and environmental rules.	Controls what is permitted for the exact plan

Four buying decisions before delivery.

01 | Farm buying guide

Start with the largest item, retrieval pattern and exact delivery position. Then compare the complete delivered scope for the exact unit.

FIELD NOTE Write down what must fit, how often it moves and who needs access before requesting inventory.

02 | 20FT vs 40FT

A 20FT unit is easier to place on constrained ground. A 40FT unit doubles nominal floor area, but only helps when the route and daily retrieval plan support it.

FIELD NOTE Measure the equipment and the short-end door opening on the exact unit. Nominal length alone does not prove fit.

03 | New vs used

Use condition criteria tied to the contents. Inspect doors, seals, roof, floor, corrosion and prior use rather than relying on a broad grade name.

FIELD NOTE Ask for current photos or inspection details for the exact unit when condition matters.

04 | Delivered price scope

Confirm the exact unit or grade, freight, unload method, delivery ZIP, access assumptions and any modification work in one written scope.

FIELD NOTE A low depot number can become expensive when freight, redelivery or site work is omitted.

Four site & delivery decisions before delivery.

01 | Site selection

Shortlist level, well-drained positions beside the work zone, then let the carrier and property decision-maker verify the final approach and unload area.

FIELD NOTE Do not trade a convenient location for blocked equipment movement, buried utilities or chronic runoff.

02 | Ground preparation

The correct support depends on soil, load, drainage and local requirements. Keep the unit level at the structural bearing points and verify the plan for the actual site.

FIELD NOTE Never copy a generic block layout without considering loaded weight, frost, runoff and the exact container.

03 | Rural delivery access

Send the carrier clear photos, measurements and the preferred final orientation. The carrier must approve the route, unload method and safe work zone.

FIELD NOTE Walk the full truck path, not only the final container footprint.

04 | Drainage and doors

Orient the doors around traffic, prevailing runoff and retrieval needs while keeping the base level enough for the door gear to operate correctly.

FIELD NOTE A small site slope may become a water or door problem after heavy rain or settlement.

Four equipment decisions before delivery.

01 | Tool storage layout

Keep a clear center aisle, heavy items low, frequently used tools near the doors and long items restrained on purpose-built racks.

FIELD NOTE Design around gloved retrieval and muddy return, not a showroom photograph.

02 | Attachment fit check

Verify the exact attachment dimensions, container door opening, interior, ramp or lifting method, point loads and safe access with qualified parties.

FIELD NOTE A nominal capacity statement does not prove an implement can enter, turn or sit safely.

03 | Fencing supplies

Separate long stock from small hardware, restrain rolls, keep heavy materials low and preserve a clear retrieval lane.

FIELD NOTE Do not lean unstable posts or heavy coils where opening the doors can release them.

04 | Seasonal rotation

Map the retrieval calendar before loading. Put the next-season group near access and record what moved to the rear.

FIELD NOTE A packed container can hide the exact equipment needed during a narrow weather window.

Four feed & supplies decisions before delivery.

01 | Feed and seed screening

A plain container is not automatically suitable for feed or seed. Confirm product instructions, packaging, humidity and pest controls, and keep incompatible products separate.

FIELD NOTE Never store pesticides or other chemicals with food, feed, seed or medical supplies.

02 | Bagged inputs

Use intact packaging, dunnage or approved racking, airflow appropriate to the product and routine inspection. Correct the water source instead of only adding absorbent material.

FIELD NOTE Moisture performance depends on climate, loading pattern and the exact contents.

03 | Rodent control

Inspect door seals and penetrations, clean spills promptly, use pest-resistant packaging where appropriate and follow the farm pest-control plan.

FIELD NOTE A container is not rodent-proof when doors, vents, floor damage or open packaging create access.

04 | Ventilation and moisture

Start by controlling leaks, ground moisture and wet contents. Then select ventilation, dehumidification or conditioning based on measured conditions and product requirements.

FIELD NOTE More ventilation is not always better in hot, humid air. Measure before modifying.

Four product boundaries decisions before delivery.

01 | Pesticide boundaries

Keep pesticides in original labeled containers, follow each label, separate them from food, feed and medical supplies, and use a locked, ventilated, flood-protected area approved for the products.

FIELD NOTE

This guide is only a screening gate. The label and current federal, state and local rules control.

02 | Fertilizer separation

Use the product label and safety data sheet, keep incompatible materials separate and obtain qualified review for ventilation, containment and fire protection.

FIELD NOTE

Do not treat all fertilizers as one storage category or mix them with pesticides, fuels or feed.

03 | Fuel and battery safety

Do not assume a standard container is approved for fuels, charging or hazardous materials. Follow the SDS, manufacturer instructions and applicable fire, electrical and environmental rules.

FIELD NOTE

Never run engines inside the container or improvise electrical charging in an unapproved space.

04 | Livestock supplies

Zone supplies by hygiene and compatibility, follow label temperature requirements and keep medicines, pesticides and feed separated as required.

FIELD NOTE

The most convenient shelf is not always the safe or compliant shelf.

Four security decisions before delivery.

01 | Locks and lockboxes

Use compatible commercial-grade hardware protected by a lockbox when appropriate, then add placement, lighting and access control.

FIELD NOTE A strong padlock cannot compensate for weak hasps, exposed hinges or uncontrolled keys.

02 | Lighting and cameras

Light the doors without blinding the camera, test coverage after dark and preserve a clear view of people and vehicles approaching the unit.

FIELD NOTE A camera pointed at glare, vegetation or an unlit face does not provide useful evidence.

03 | Key control

Limit keys or codes to defined users, record changes and use a repeatable end-of-day check for doors, inventory and unusual conditions.

FIELD NOTE Shared keys without ownership make losses and missed locks difficult to investigate.

04 | Storm preparation

Secure the site according to qualified local guidance, close and lock the unit, clear drainage and move loose exterior items without entering unsafe conditions.

FIELD NOTE A shipping container is not automatically a storm shelter or engineered safe room.

Four approvals decisions before delivery.

01 | Permits and setbacks

Ask the local authority and property decision-maker about duration, setbacks, screening, foundation, utilities and intended contents before delivery.

FIELD NOTE Agricultural use does not create a universal permit exemption.

02 | Fire access

Confirm clearances and fire access with the authority having jurisdiction, especially when contents or nearby structures increase fire load.

FIELD NOTE Do not place a unit where open doors, parked equipment or deliveries narrow an emergency route.

03 | Insurance and inventory

Ask the insurer how the container and contents are covered, photograph serials and high-value items, and keep the inventory record somewhere else.

FIELD NOTE Ownership of the container does not guarantee coverage for every stored item or cause of loss.

04 | Modification safety

Use qualified professionals, verify permits and preserve structural, fire, ventilation and egress requirements for the intended use.

FIELD NOTE Do not cut sidewalls, add wiring or create occupied space from an online sketch.

Four operations decisions before delivery.

01 | Daily retrieval zones

Put daily items nearest safe access, reserve the rear for controlled or infrequent stock and keep a marked clear aisle.

FIELD NOTE

Review the layout when the work phase changes instead of letting old zones become permanent clutter.

02 | Weekly inspection

Use a named owner and a short repeatable checklist for roof, seals, floor, supports, drainage, locks, contents and housekeeping.

FIELD NOTE

Record exceptions and the correction date so inspection becomes action.

03 | Multi-container layout

Lay out the full yard with measured routes, working aisles and future deliveries, then confirm it with the carrier and local decision-makers.

FIELD NOTE

Two individually sensible placements can create a bad yard when their doors and traffic conflict.

04 | Move and resale

Use a qualified carrier, disclose modifications and contents, and never assume a unit can be moved loaded without a specific transport plan.

FIELD NOTE

Loaded moves change weight, securement, lifting and legal requirements.

PRIMARY REFERENCES AND LIMITS

Traceable boundaries, not borrowed certainty.

Use the current version of every source and confirm the exact rule with the authority or qualified party that controls the decision.

Hapag-Lloyd container specification

https://static-cf.hapag-lloyd.com/content/dam/website/downloads/press_and_media/publications/15211_Container_Specification_engl_Gesamt_web.pdf

OSHA 1910.176 material handling and storage

<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.176>

EPA storing pesticides safely

<https://www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol/storing-pesticides-safely>

EPA pesticide containers, containment, storage and disposal

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-worker-safety/containers-containment-storage-and-disposal-pesticides>

GENERAL LIMIT

Container specifications vary by manufacturer, type, age and exact unit. Site, contents, climate, carrier equipment and local requirements also vary. This document is a planning aid and does not authorize the exact purchase, site, load, modification or use.