

Wash Water Sanitation and Validation

Workshop from CPS US 22 Jan 2013

Key Messages

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- We cannot completely decontaminate fresh produce with chlorine, ozone, irradiation, peroxyacetic acid or anything else. *Listeria*, *Salmonella* and *E.coli* can remain attached to rough or cut product surfaces.
- Washing should be viewed as potential to contaminate produce. One contaminated product in the wash water can transfer bacteria and viruses to the whole batch.
- We use wash water sanitizers to prevent cross contamination, they cannot reverse contamination.
- Damaged products harbour pathogens, resulting in rapid microbial growth after washing.
- Water can infiltrate fruit and vegetables. Product pulp must be at least 6°C warmer than water temperature to prevent infiltration.
- Biofilms a problem - not many sanitizers effectively penetrate them. 90-99% of the bacteria will come off in the first wash water, therefore it is the first wash where effective water sanitation is most important.
- There is no “best” sanitiser – It is the one that works for your product under your conditions.
- Validation of your system demonstrates that your sanitizer, in your system, under your conditions, can effectively prevent cross contamination by microorganisms.
- Verification of your system is the ongoing measurements and controls to assure that the system is being managed according to the validated plan, and therefore under control at all times.
- Understand your sanitiser chemistry - several variables affect the performance of your sanitizer e.g. organic load, pH, temperature, ORP etc. To properly manage the system make sure you understand those variables.
- Who is verifying your system? Poor precision results from poor technique. Invest in training of staff.

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