

## Key Takeaways

### “Harvest Sanitation: It’s More Than Hopes and Dreams”

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#### Top 5

- 1) When experiencing or notified of a potential food safety issue, evaluate the potential routes of contamination of your crop/equipment, investigate those potential routes for the presence of the organism of concern, and implement immediate and long-term corrective actions (as well as preventive actions) to minimize the risk and prevent the food safety issue from happening again.
- 2) When designing a harvest sanitation program, there are several challenges to consider, including geography, weather, location, size and structural design of equipment and materials, definitions/metrics for “clean”, and others.
- 3) There are four factors to be considered when designing a sanitation program: the chemistry (active ingredient/antimicrobial agent), contact time, mode of action, and temperature.
- 4) When deciding about methods of sanitizer application in the field, consider how consistently the product can be applied to the surface, the durability of equipment/tools used in its application, the volume and availability of water necessary to apply the product, any other utilities required for application (e.g., batteries), and necessary verification tools.
- 5) Harvest sanitation programs should be verified to ensure they work as intended. Consider incorporating visual inspection, ATP, APC, and pathogen testing in verification activities.

#### Acronym Key:

APC: Aerobic Plate Count

ATP: Adenosine triphosphate

#### Additional Reading

Leaman SM, J Kerr, S Salas, A Malik, TV Suslow, M Wiedmann, and DA Davis (2023). Fresh Produce Harvesting Equipment – A Review of Cleaning and Sanitizing Practices and Related Science. *Food Protection Trends*. <https://doi.org/10.4315/FPT-22-023>

Michigan State University Extension (2018). Harvest Container Cleaning. *AgriFood Safety Minute*. [https://www.foodsafetyclearinghouse.org/sites/default/files/files/014\\_01\\_re\\_reformat.pdf](https://www.foodsafetyclearinghouse.org/sites/default/files/files/014_01_re_reformat.pdf)

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (2022). Outbreak Investigation of *Listeria monocytogenes*: Dole Packaged Salad (December 2021). <https://www.fda.gov/food/outbreaks-foodborne-illness/outbreak-investigation-listeria-monocytogenes-dole-packaged-salad-december-2021>

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