

Workshop Title:

Building the best wash station

Speakers:

Av Singh

Executive Summary:

This was a Farmer-to-Farmer discussion hosted by Av Singh. The group discussed question and thoughts that they had regarding optimizing a wash station. In the later part of the discussion we looked at photos of wash stations on various farms and discussed the aspects that people liked about them.

Main Notes:

Av asked the group what questions or topics the group had. We then proceeded to get various opinions and examples from the group on some of those questions. We didn't have time to touch on the entire question on the list.

* Cost of stainless steel.

* How to wash Radishes

Bunch and the spray for market.

* Workflow

Sunlight considerations to keep heat out of the produce.

Bread trays on a table.

Barrel washer. If washed too long, they get some skin damage.

Batch Washer.

Dry washer

Limiting step (bottleneck): depends on the crop.

Color-coding on bins. Specific bins go to field and thus get dirtier. Get washed regularly. Ones that go only to cooler get washed less frequently.

- * Food Safety

- * Containers for food safety

Weekly washing of plastic containers with a pressure washer to clean bins. Less frequently in cooler weather.

Pump sprayer with sanitizer on hand to sterilize if needed.

One farmer said that a bin washing machine was on the to-do. He is currently is a lot of resources dedicated to washing bins.

- * Big volumes of greens efficiently

- * Washing in field vs. all at washing station

- * How much to wash

- * Cooling to get out field heat

- * Drying after washing

- * Wastewater

Run off water to the compost pile that is below wash station.

- * Drainage

Gravel vs. cement

Summer vs. winter is very different circumstances

Slope that drains away

One farmer washes on bark mulch. Doesn't allow carts to roll but keeps walking space clean and keeps the mud down.

Washes on an old bedspring as a washing table. This allows the water to wash away.

Using lots of water is important.

CFIA is in the works of regulations. Might not be a great time to invest heavily in a system that might be disallowed with coming regulations.

* Storage bins perforated or not.

Perforated bags.

Rubbermaid's with a couple holes in the bottom for airflow.

Depends on the crop and if needs airflow. Ex: sweet potatoes need some airflow, cabbage needs lots, etc.

Pallet wrap on bins for some crops.

Some bins need lids, others do not. Crop dependant.

* Misc. comments

Cement slab

Size of bin is important for ergonomics

Food grade plastic Rubbermaid containers might not be food grade plastic.

hose. Seems to be a preference for hose as long as there is adequate water flow.

* Features of wash stations that members of the group have seen that they liked.

Hanging hoses from the ceiling.

Grating on the floor. Drain that runs out to a ditch.

Pallets for stacking washed produce. Moved with a pallet jigger into fridge, etc.

Rubber mats on the floor for comfort and non-slipping.

Workflow: Bring food from field > dump on table > wash > repack clean produce into the same container > bring to market.

Same person harvesting and washing to increase accountability for the products they are handling. Compared to dedicated washers, etc. Some vary based on teams. There is sometimes not enough space for multiple people in the same wash station.

Former dairy barn that is now converged to a wash station. Manure gutter deals with wastewater efficiently.

Hanging hoses are seen in many washing stations.

Quick-connect gives a pivot point to hoses so they do not get twisted over time.

After initial spray produce gets put into water tank. Otherwise residual dirt from leaves will end up on all produce in the end.

Pop-up canopy (Garage in a box) as shelter in outdoor wash station.

Washing greens in bathtubs.

Hand spinner vs. machine spinner. See Excelsior farm video for using a washing machine as a salad spinner.

Washing machine. Put greens into laundry bags to keep from getting damaged. Run the spin cycle to dry greens.

Bicycle-powered hook-up to run an orange salad spinner has been done.

Gravel on ground around wash station. Not ideal in farmer's opinion.

Frost-free hydrant for water needs in the winter. Allows water to return down pipe and not get frozen.

Linear flow.

Dollies with wheels to move produce.

Wash table slightly slanted so that produce can be easily moved into bins.

Larger drainage pipe.

Scale and bag station.

Metallic knife holder in station.

Colander too scoop pieces of greens out of washtub.