

## Harvest Fact Sheet



Harvest is the first time that people have significant contact with berries. This contact provides a risk of contamination, and steps must be taken to minimize the risk. Whether hand-picked or machine harvested, all surfaces that contact berries must be properly cleaned, and workers handling berries must follow proper hygiene procedures.

### **Cleaning of berry contact surfaces**

All berry contact surface should be cleaned before use and as needed during the harvest season. This includes machine harvesters, flats and containers. Use clean, tested water source or municipal water for cleaning equipment and containers. Apply cleaning products according to label instructions, and store them separate from product, equipment and picking containers. All containers and any equipment used for harvesting should be stored where risk of contamination is minimal.

### **Machine harvesting**

See manufacturer's instructions for proper cleaning and maintenance of harvesting equipment. Do not use anything on harvesters that could contaminate the berries. Use only food grade lubricants and ensure that any glass is shatterproof or protected.



### **Harvest containers**

Harvest containers should be stored off the ground and should NOT be used for anything other than carrying fruit. Avoid stacking soiled bins on top of each other if the bottom of the bin has had contact with soil.



### **Hygiene facilities**

Growers are responsible for providing pickers with proper sanitary facilities.

A proper hand wash unit includes:

- clean water
- liquid soap dispenser
- water basin
- individual paper towels
- paper towel dispenser
- garbage can

Hand wash stations located outside the toilet are strongly recommended.

Toilets should be located for convenience to workers and to prevent contamination to product, packaging, equipment, growing areas and water bodies. Limited access to toilet and handwashing facilities may discourage their use by workers or visitors, and could lead to contamination of food and food contact surfaces with pathogens. A minimum of one toilet per 20 workers is recommended.

Toilets and hand washing units must be serviced & cleaned regularly.

### **Worker training**

It is very important to provide regular training to all workers on hygiene and picking practices. Each farm should have at least one individual who is responsible for training and monitoring employees' hygiene and picking practices. Provide training to all workers at the beginning of each season. In addition, provide refresher training to new employees, and to reinforce practices as required. Keep records of all training activities.

Training of pickers should include at a minimum:

- employee illness, disease and injury policies
- handwashing procedures
- proper glove use, if applicable
- good picking practices (discarding contaminated berries, etc)
- use of toilet facilities
- restrictions on eating, drinking, smoking, etc in the harvest areas
- proper disposal of waste
- storage of personal effects (away from berry contact surfaces)

Once fruit is harvested, proper steps should be taken to prevent contamination of the harvested fruit. Berries should be kept covered in a cool location and shipped to the processor/packer as soon as possible.

### **Records to keep:**

- Employee Hygiene and Berry Handling Practices Training Log
- Equipment Cleaning Records
- Toilet & Hand wash Station Cleaning records
- Harvest Record Sheet
- Transport Record Sheet

For further information please contact:

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| Fraser Valley Strawberry Growers Association | 604-864-0565 |
| Raspberry Industry Development Council       | 604-854-8010 |