

FOOD SAFETY

Perishable Technology

As the industry has learned to recognize the causes of food borne illness, the focus has been about developing better prevention strategies, notes Tom Daniel, vice president/general manager of Sterilox Food Safety, a division of PuriCore.

How would you describe the state of food safety today?

Tom Daniel: I believe the industry as a whole strives to provide safe, wholesome products. However, there are many opportunities from farm to fork for products to become cross contaminated along the supply chain. Fortunately for the industry, trade organizations such as the Produce Marketing Association and the Food Marketing Institute work closely with all facets of the supply chain, and offer valuable guidance and education to reduce the risk of food borne illness and insure proper food handling.

Has the industry made any progress in addressing food safety concerns?

Absolutely. There is always progress, but food safety is a never ending journey. For example, given the substantial increase in per capita consumption of fruits and vegetables, it's really a numbers game. Due to that coupled with the popularity of organics, the industry has to be more diligent than ever in preventing food safety hazards along the entire supply chain. Furthermore, since the supermarket channel accounts for over half of produce sold, it is critically important food retailers have good training programs to prevent events such as cross-contamination in their stores.

In addition to spoilage, what are the food safety areas retailers are excelling in and conversely, what areas could still benefit from heightened awareness?

I think retailers are doing a good job in making the transition to understanding they are really production facilities now and processes such as understanding time/temperature management of perishable products is vital to their success. In addition, simple things like proper hand washing can go a long way in the prevention of a food borne illness event. Unfortunately, given the associate turnover ratio, training is a never ending battle. Ongoing employee training and education in subjects like HACCP are now the norm versus years ago. Also, many retailers have programs in place to educate the customer on proper handling and preparation

after they take the product home, which is valuable to insuring safety to consumers.

How is technology, or more specifically equipment, changing the way food safety is addressed?

We know that equipment technology is making a significant contribution to the cause, whether it is in time and temperature monitoring systems, quick chill units that bring some prepared products down through the danger zone or new technology like our Sterilox food sanitizing system, which specifically deals with areas not previously addressed at the retail level. These systems offer real economic value to the retailer.

Where are the key food safety hot spots in the store?

Anywhere there are fresh or ready to eat products are primary areas of concern. Resolving the issue centers around increasing awareness, education and training store associates in the potential hazards in handling fresh or ready to eat products. However, things do happen, which is why you need processes and interventions which are not only effective in and of themselves, but are executable at the store level.

How do products such as yours help and what are some of the benefits or value-added components to using your equipment?

The Sterilox system produces a sanitizer from basic water and salt which, when converted through the patented technology, provides retailers a solution to combat cross contamination of harmful bacteria or spoilage organisms in both the produce crisping process and misting systems. The equipment is fully automated and uses very little floor space, which is ideal for supermarket produce backrooms. The sanitizer is non-toxic, food safe, FDA allowed and EPA registered.

Our unique and proprietary technology has proven to substantially reduce shrink and labor costs while improving the freshness and safety profile in produce, seafood and floral departments with numerous leading grocery retailers. *

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A Fresh Approach To Food Safety

The Sterilox system is the choice of leading supermarket chains as a proven intervention to improve shelf life and home life for fresh produce, floral and seafood.

- Keeps Produce Fresher Longer
- Reduces Wet-Rack Shrink
- Improves Home Life
- Removes Harmful Bacteria
- Less Shrink + Less Labor = Increased Profits
- FDA Allowed and EPA Registered
- Replaces Floral Food
- Eliminates Pot Fouling



RED LEAF LETTUCE - DAY 5



TREATED



UNTREATED

STRAWBERRIES - DAY 6



TREATED



UNTREATED

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www.steriloxfresh.com
1-866-369-3130

STERILOX FOOD SAFETY
A DIVISION OF PURICORE INC.
320 KING OF PRUSSIA ROAD
RADNOR, PA 19087