

Title Microbiological quality considerations for the ready-to-eat fresh produce industry
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Abstract

The fresh cut industry is growing because of changing consumer lifestyles and the need for fast convenient food preparation. Increasingly there is a requirement to improve the quality of fresh-cut products to achieve increased shelf life so supermarkets can manage their supply chains. The increased shelf life requirements mean that the quality parameters of the product must be optimised when it leaves the processing plant. Along with the increase in quality of the produce it is important not to compromise the food safety of the final product. Consequently processes developed to maximise product quality must also minimise the risks to food safety. This presentation will discuss the different ways that quality parameters, including food safety, can be increased in order to produce the best possible product. It will discuss steps in the whole chain where quality can be increased, including pre harvest, postharvest, pre cutting, washing, slicing, packaging, storage and transport.