



FACT SHEET

Sanitisation issues

Serious health issues have been raised about re-using the same containers, especially when food is involved. Three [University of Guelph study](#) studies that examined some of the re-usable plastic crates (RPCs) being used to ship fresh fruit and vegetables in Canada found that a high proportion of crates were in poor sanitary condition. Of particular concern was the high prevalence of food safety indicators, especially *E. Coli*. Similar conclusions were reached by a subsequent US studies.

Food scientists in [one study](#) deliberately placed bacteria on plastic crates and then used standard industry treatments to remove them, but found they could not do so. [Another study](#), this time of corrugated boxes, found that every single one of them met acceptable sanitisation levels.

More recently, Salmonella has been found to survive a simulated crate washing treatment.

PPEC has written a number of blogs or posted on this issue:

Salmonella survives plastic crate washing test, transfers to fresh cucumber	12/04/2019
Fact and fiction in the fight to deliver your fruit and veggies	04/05/2017
Retailers can't duck food safety issues when pushing growers to re-use crates	28/03/2017
A moving (and puzzling) story about dead Toronto chickens	20/12/ 2016
New Research Shows Fruit Packed in Corrugated is Safer and Fresher than in RPCs	29/06/ 2016
Retailers urged to "follow the science" on sanitisation	11/11/ 2015
Food scientist warns retailers that live bacteria on crates is like a "smoking gun"	02/03/ 2015
It's not as simple as re-use versus recycling	12/02/ 2015
This is not a puff piece but ...	11/12/ 2014
Re-use is not always the better alternative	27/10/ 2014
Food safety is a big issue for growers, retailers, and consumers	13/11/2013
Loblaw and IFCO need to clean up their act	15/10/ 2013