

Pest Control in the Packing and Storage Area: Best Practices To Ensure On-farm Food Safety



The purpose of a pest control program is to reduce the presence of pests or to exclude pets from produce processing and storage areas.

Pest control can be performed by farm personnel or another company. If pest control is performed by personnel working on the farm, a farm employee must be appointed as a pest control program manager. That manager is responsible for all pest management issues. If pest control is contracted out to a pest control company, records from the paid inspector must be kept on the farm and available for inspection within 24 hours of the initial request.

Key Components of Pest Control in Produce Packing and Storage Areas

Implement strategies to prevent pests from entering the packing areas.

- Seal air spaces between windows and doors.
- Install screens on windows and doors.
- Traps and nonpoisonous baits may be used inside storage facilities. Baits containing poison may be used only outside of storage/packing facilities.
- All traps and baits should be coded and recorded on a map to aid with tracking pest activity.
- Remove cull piles in and around storage and packing areas on a daily basis.
- Any trash or cull containers in or around the packing and storage areas should have tightly sealed lids.
- Eating is not allowed in packing and storage areas.
- Open air facilities should use exclusion devices to discourage birds from entering and roosting in rafters (for example, rubber snakes and shiny moving objects).
- Processing and storage facilities should be cleaned and sanitized prior to use.
- Inspect for the presence of pests before processing

or storing products.

- Pets also are a potential source of microbial contamination and should not be allowed in storage and packing areas.
- Install fencing or keep the area closed (for example, with doors) to prevent pets from entering the facility.

Pest problems pose a serious health risk and should be dealt with prior to processing or storing products. Activities must be documented each time a pest control strategy is implemented.

Example of a Record

July 17, 2015 – Eight mouse traps were set in each corner of all storage and packing facilities. Roach bait devices were discarded from the previous month, and new bait devices were installed. All screens on doors and windows were in working order except for the back door of the cooler, which was repaired immediately. There was no evidence of animal feces in any of the storage or packing areas. – *Initials or signature of the pest control program manager*



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