



COVID-19: Sanitation precautions

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COVID-19 has resulted in a large number of sanitation products and applicators being marketed to the industry. Unfortunately, not all of the practices are acceptable from a human health point of view.

Sanitation and disinfectant products

CRI, and particularly the postharvest arm, has been offering advice on the various products based on the declared ingredients in terms of residue risk to fruit. However, CRI is not a medical facility nor accredited testing laboratory, and is therefore unable to approve the efficacy against human pathogens, including the corona group of viruses. Products that have seen long-term use in the industry, and have accredited test reports (e.g. from a SANAS accredited laboratory) to prove efficacy against viruses, should be preferred by packhouses.

In the case of unknown products, be aware of any scientific data, SANAS-approved laboratory test reports, and legal registration of the products before deciding to use the product. Producers and packhouses need to be aware of any potentially hazardous aspects by gaining all the relevant labels, instructions, MSDS's and test reports, and take responsibility for any consequences of untried sanitisers or equipment.

Misting tunnels

Misting tunnels have recently been marketed in the industry as a so-called acceptable form of application of sanitisers for workers, whereby they walk through them before entering facilities. On the 15th of May 2020 the World Health Organisation released the following in a formal document:

*“Spraying individuals with disinfectants (such as in a tunnel, cabinet, or chamber) is **not recommended under any circumstances**. This could be physically and psychologically harmful and would not reduce an infected person’s ability to spread the virus through droplets or contact. Moreover, spraying individuals with chlorine and other toxic chemicals could result in eye and skin irritation, bronchospasm due to inhalation, and*

gastrointestinal effects such as nausea and vomiting.”

In addition, on the 22nd of May 2020, an internal memo to the office of Dr ZL Mkhize, the South African Minister of Health, clearly echoes the WHO document. **It is therefore important that misting tunnels be avoided**, as there are serious consequential health concerns, with no proven health benefits to the use of such tunnels.

Conclusion

During these challenging times, always keep worker safety in mind and the long-term sustainability of your business. Please refer to published documents based on already well-known scientific or workplace data such as:

- Cutting Edge No. 293: COVID-19: Supporting guidance for packhouse managers.
- CGA's COVID-19 Workplace Best Practice Guidelines.

CRI does not endorse products under normal circumstances and we are not in a position to test or approve sanitisers intended for human use. If you encounter any claims citing that CRI approves of a certain sanitiser, please contact Dr Wilma du Plooy (082 8711669) or Catherine Savage (072 327 0058) to verify.

References

1. Cleaning and disinfection of environmental surfaces in the context of COVID-19, Interim guidance, 15 May 2020, World Health Organization. WHO reference number: WHO/2019-nCoV/Disinfection/2020.1
2. Advisory on Disinfection Tunnels for Preventing SARS-COV2 Transmission. 22 May 2020, Ministerial advisory Committee on COVID-19.



COVID-19: Sanitasie Voorsorgmaatreëls

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As gevolg van die uitbraak van COVID-19 het 'n groot reeks saniteermiddels en saniteertoedieners die lig gesien in die industrie. Ongelukkig en vanuit 'n menslike gesondheidsoogpunt, is nie alle praktyke aanvaarbaar nie.

Sanitasie- en disinfekteermiddels

CRI, en in besonder die na-oes afdeling, het in die afgelope tyd advies gegee waar produkte se aktiewe bestandele bekend was, met die oog op die moontlike risiko's rondom residue van hierdie produkte vir uitvoervrugte. CRI is egter nie 'n mediese fasiliteit nie, wat dus beteken CRI kan geen uitsprake maak oor die effektiwiteit van enige saniteermiddel teen menslike patogene nie, insluitende die corona virusgroep. Produkte wat al lank in die industrie bekend is en wat wel 'n akkrediasie sertifisering dra (soos bv deur 'n SANAS geakkrediteerde laboratorium), moet voorrang geniet.

In die geval van onbekende produkte, moet bestuurders hulself vergewis van enige wetenskaplike data, SANAS geakkrediteerde laboratorium toetse, en wetlike registrasies van so 'n produk voordat die besluit geneem word om dit te gebruik. Produsente en pakhuis moet bewus wees van die potensiële gevare deur die toepaslike etikette, aanwysings, MSDS'e en toetsverslae te bekom. Hulle moet self verantwoordelikheid dra vir die gevolge waar onbekende en onbeproeftede produkte en toerusting gebruik word.

Bemistingstonnels

Bemistingstonnels is die nuutste toerusting wat bemark word as sogenaamde aanvaarbare aanwendingstegnologie vir sanitering vir werkers, waar mense deur so tunnel moet stap voordat hulle die pakhuisfasiliteite mag betree. Op die 15^{de} Mei 2020 het die Wêreld gesondheidsorganisasie (WGO) die volgende dokument vrygestel:

*“Spraying individuals with disinfectants (such as in a tunnel, cabinet, or chamber) is **not recommended under any circumstances**. This could be physically and psychologically harmful*

and would not reduce an infected person's ability to spread the virus through droplets or contact. Moreover, spraying individuals with chlorine and other toxic chemicals could result in eye and skin irritation, bronchospasm due to inhalation, and gastrointestinal effects such as nausea and vomiting.”

Gevolglik, op die 22^{ste} Mei 2020, was 'n interne memo aan die kantoor van Dr ZL Mkhize, die Suid-Afrikaanse minister vir Gesondheid, gerig, waarin die WGO dokument duidelik herhaal word. **Dit is dus belangrik dat bemistingstonnels vermy word**, aangesien daar ernstige bekommernis bestaan oor die gesondheidsveiligheid daarvan, met geen bewese voordele.

Gevolgtrekking

In hierdie tyd van groot uitdagings, moet werkerveiligheid voorop gestel word, tesame met die langtermyn volhoubaarheid van die besigheid. Verwys asseblief na gepubliseerde dokumente gebaseer op bekende wetenskaplike data of werksplek data soos:

- Snykant 293: COVID-19: Ondersteunende riglyne vir pakhuisbestuurders.
- CGA's COVID-19 Workplace Best Practice Guidelines.

Onder normale omstandighede ondersteun CRI nie produkte nie, en CRI is nie in 'n posisie om saniteermiddels vir menslike gebruik te toets of goed te keur nie. Indien daar enige bewerings gemaak word dat CRI sekere saniteermiddels goedkeur, kontak asb Dr Wilma du Plooy (082 871 1669) of Catherine Savage (072 327 0058).

Verwysings

1. Cleaning and disinfection of environmental surfaces in the context of COVID-19, Interim guidance, 15 May 2020, World Health Organization. WHO reference number: WHO/2019-nCoV/Disinfection/2020.1

2. Advisory on Disinfection Tunnels for Preventing SARS-COV2 Transmission. 22 May 2020, Ministerial advisory Committee on COVID-19.