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.

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

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