



To Our Valued Customers

From time to time we receive questions on how our products are washed or what exactly does “Pre-washed mean”. If the packaging of fresh-cut or other value-added produce says washed, triple washed or ready-to-eat then they have been washed in product-specific, state-of-the-art wash systems and re-washing is not required. In some cases the packaging may be specified by a private brand or a particular customer requirement and may not have the wording as to its wash status. For fresh-cut and value-added products produced by Church Brothers-True Leaf these products are washed and ready to eat.

When answering the question about wash method and which chemicals are used it is important to describe the overall processing objective. First, the primary food safety objective of the wash process is to eliminate the potential for cross-contamination. A secondary effect is some level of sanitizing of the product (1-2 log reduction). Our value-added products are handled and processed under FDA Title 21 of the Code of Federal Regulations (21 CFR part 110) which establishes regulations for current good manufacturing practice (CGMP) in preparing, packing or holding food. As such, our value-added products are subjected to a multi-stage chlorinated wash system using Smartwash™ to achieve USDA ARS-validated optimal pH and cross-contamination control. Our wash systems operate under rigorous Quality Systems and HACCP-based process controls. Temperature, free-chlorine, and foreign object control points are monitored according to an established program with real-time control and data-logging. Our processing plants are under the jurisdiction of the FDA and as such are inspected on a regular, unannounced basis. Furthermore, our facilities have been HACCP certified under the Global Food Safety Standard (GFSI) and they are audited by a number of 3rd party agencies.

We are also asked about the need for re-washing of our processed items. Church Brothers-True Leaf does not recommend re-washing our product prior to use.* Re-washing ready-to-eat packaged salad isn't necessary and does not provide additional benefit, according to a scientific panel that studied the issue in 2007. (Source: Palumbo et al, 2007. “Recommendations for Handling Fresh-Cut Leafy Green Salads by Consumers and Retail Foodservice Operators”, *Food Protection Trends*, vol. 27, no. 11, pp 892-898.

Lastly, we are often asked about the use of preservatives. The key to maintaining good shelf-life of our products includes the raw materials condition, cleaning of the product, temperature control, and packaging methods. No preservatives, such as sulfites, are used on our fresh cut vegetable products.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact us or your sales representative directly.

Sincerely,

Francis Adenuga

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*CA DHS Retail and Consumer Safe Produce Handling guidance is available at:

www.dhs.ca.gov/fdb/HTML/Food/indexfoo.html