

Brussels, 7th of April 2014

INDUSTRY INITIATIVE TO PREVENT VIRUS TRANSMISSION BY FROZEN FRUIT

An industry working group, comprised of five leading European IQF fruit businesses, facilitated by PROFEL, The European Association of Fruit & Vegetable Processors, and after a hearing of Ghent University Professor Mieke Uyttendaele - as one of Europe's experts on virus detection and transmission in food - has prepared the guidelines below.

The participants of the PROFEL working group firmly believe, that by following these guidelines, frozen fruit producers will significantly reduce the risk of contaminating fruit with viruses such as Hepatitis 'A' or Norovirus.

Industry Golden Rules to avoid Virus Transmission by frozen fruit

I) Field stage

- a. Pre-season training on **hygiene rules**, including hand-washing (with clean water and soap), and hand disinfection should be provided to all farmers and fruit-pickers. Training must include an explanation of the risks to consumers.
- b. **Hand-washing and disinfection facilities** must be provided and must be used following toilet and lunch breaks. **Sanitized toilets** must be available for field workers.
- c. **Irrigation water** must be clean and not contaminated. Drip irrigation is preferred to avoid water coming in direct contact with the fruit.
- d. Water used in **crop spraying** must be clean and not contaminated.
- e. The application of **Sewage** sludge to fruit fields must be avoided.
- f. Strict instructions must be in place - not to come to work/pick fruit if a person is **affected by or recovering from a virus**. Person recovering from HAV should only be allowed to return to work after the disappearance of the jaundice (yellowing of the skin).
- g. **Food contact materials** (crates and transport) should be kept clean and should be cleaned if necessary.

II) Processing stage

- a. **Training on hygiene rules**, including hand-washing (with clean water and soap), and hand disinfection should be provided to all workers. Training must include an explanation of the risks to consumers.
- b. **Hand-washing facilities** must be provided and must be used following toilet and lunch breaks. **Hand disinfection** should be compulsory before entering the production area and workers should always wash their hands before the starting to work, during a break, and after using a toilet etc.
- c. **Disposable gloves** - where used - should be changed after each break or toilet visit.
- d. Strict instruction must be in place - **not to come to work if affected by or recovering from a virus**. Person recovering from HAV should only be allowed to return to work after disappearance of jaundice (yellowing of the skin).
- e. **Food contact materials** (production lines, tools, trays etc.) **should be cleaned** and disinfected at least daily during production packing season.