

COMMODITY TREATMENT PROTOCOLS: PRESERVING THE COMMODITY WHILE KILLING THE PEST

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The presence of quarantined insect pests on fresh horticultural commodities can seriously disrupt marketing among countries and even among states within the U.S. Effective pest control is essential for ensuring unrestricted movement of fresh produce in domestic and international commerce. The United States Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) have a primary task of guaranteeing the uninterrupted movement of fresh horticultural products without jeopardizing quarantine security. Development of treatment processes or systems that provide quarantine security without damaging the market quality of fresh horticultural products is a difficult and complicated problem. Maintenance of product quality is often an overlooked variable when developing commodity treatments. Assessments of damage to a commodity caused by the treatment has even been categorized as useful supplementary information to treatment efficacy data and not of phytosanitary concern. Even if quality maintenance was considered during development of a commodity treatment, it is often once again overlooked when the research recommendations become legislated into treatment specifications. Some approaches for integrating product quality maintenance into treatment protocol development and treatment specifications will be discussed.