



Crop Specific Protocol

CRESS (SALAD)

(CROP ID: 21)



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Acknowledgements

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Preface

This crop specific protocol has been written to complement and avoid duplicating the generic principles of the scheme and appendices.

It is advisable to read the Assured Produce Generic Crop Protocol Standards and the Assured Produce Generic Protocol Guidance Notes (referred to in this document as the Generic Standards and Generic Guidance Notes) first before reading this crop specific protocol.

This protocol is designed to stimulate thought in the mind of the reader.

This crop specific protocol contains crop specific parameters and guidance, where applicable, for the requirements stated in the Generic Standards.

All statements in this protocol containing the words "**must**" (in bold type) will be verified during the Assured Produce assessment and their compliance will form a part of the certification/approval decision. The score required for these "**must**" control points can be found on the final page of this document and in the checklists produced by Assured Produce licensed certification bodies.

Disclaimer and trade mark acknowledgement

Although every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, Assured Produce does not accept any responsibility for errors and omissions.

Trade names are only used in this protocol where use of that specific product is essential. All such products are annotated[®] and all trademark rights are hereby acknowledged.

Notes:

There may be other withdrawals or revocations. Products containing substances which have been revoked are shown on the PSD website (<http://www.pesticides.gov.uk>). Growers should check with their advisers, manufacturers, the Assured Produce website 'Newsflashes', the PSD website (www.pesticides.gov.uk)

Growers should comply with the 'Use up by' dates for all pesticide products. Growers should also be aware of and comply with changes on new product labels.

There may be changes for the following reasons:

- At re-registration stage after Annex 1 listing there may be: reductions of dose rates; changes in timings and/or number of applications for some products.

In the following Appendices products and use by dates are only listed for SOLAs, and in some cases new product MAPP numbers may not be available yet.

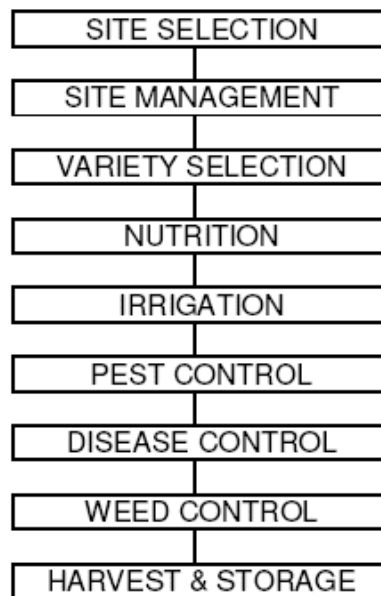
For pesticides on-label, only active substances are shown.

Any new standards have been prefixed in the text with **(NEW)**

1 General introduction

Following a systematic approach will help growers to identify and manage the risks involved in crop production. This protocol is based on a typical crop production process. Using a flowchart approach, food safety, Health & Safety, environmental and quality hazards are identified. Appropriate controls may then be established to minimise risk. Food safety and Health & Safety issues always take precedence over quality and environmental controls.

The flow chart is structured as shown below. Note that the sectional layout of both this protocol and the crop specific protocols follow the same structure.



The contents of each crop specific protocol are reviewed annually by informed farmers and growers, food technologists, scientists, the relevant fresh produce association, processors and agronomic consultants. Updated editions are issued prior to the cropping season.

The review process considers both new developments and all relevant technology which has emerged throughout the course of the previous year and which have been found to be both workable by the grower and beneficial to the environment. As one aim of the Scheme is to transfer such information and technologies to growers, attention is drawn to those features of specific relevance to ICM by using *italic* script. In order that growers may be confident that they are working to a current document, each protocol is dated and numbered.

2 Planning and records

See Generic Standards and/or Generic Guidance Notes.

2.8.1 Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point

See Generic Protocol Guidance Notes 2.8.1 on Food Safety, and 14 Microbial Food Safety.

Very few pesticides can be used on salad cress, because of its short growing cycle. Therefore a quality management system based on HACCP is of the utmost importance. Further guidance and information is available in the Generic Guidance Notes. Members **must** undertake a Hazard Analysis to identify Critical Control Points in their production process (See Generic Standards 2.8.1), record their findings and procedures

for corrective action and have a named HACCP team in place. The management of microbiological risks at each stage of the manufacturing process **must** be considered and a microbiological testing plan on each batch to verify HACCP formulated.

NB What constitutes a “batch” **must** be considered within HACCP bearing in mind product trace-ability.

3 Site selection

Salad Cress can only be grown commercially as a protected crop, usually on benches; thus potential sites need to be suitable for the erection of protective structures (i.e. glass houses and poly-tunnels) capable of environmental control.

As the use of pesticides for crop protection is very limited, the choice of production sites should be influenced by the need for a high degree of cleanliness for production and storage.

Salad Cress is not grown in the soil. Growing medium and other products will need to be delivered by heavy goods vehicles. The site should be assessed for its suitability of the production of salad cress taking into account its impact on the local environment.

4 Site management

See Generic Standards and/or Generic Guidance Notes.

5 Variety selection

Salad Cress is a generic name for produce grown to the cotyledon stage. In Europe the product is pure cress seed. In the UK the product is usually a mixture of 95% rape and 5% cress or a defined mixture of rape, cress and/or mustard seed.

Growers **must** have a contract with their seed suppliers stipulating freedom from human pathogens and setting out the requirements re GMO's.

6 Nutrition

6.1 Nutrient requirement

Oversupply at any time is not only wasteful and expensive, but can lead to crops being more susceptible to pests and diseases. Therefore application rates of either mineral or organic fertilisers should meet the needs of the crop, which can vary depending on weather, light and seasons.

6.2 Advice on fertiliser

Growing Salad Cress is a very specialist crop grown by only a handful of growers. There is little outside knowledge available. The use of fertiliser should be decided through an extensive programme of trials taking into consideration the variable conditions.

7 Irrigation

Optimum irrigation for a quality product is determined by the needs of the crop, which in turn depend on the growing stage of the product as well as weather conditions. Regular checking of the crop and weather forecasts and the use of scientifically recognised methods of predicting water requirement as well as common sense and acquired product knowledge should be utilised to make sensible use of irrigation.

Consideration should be given to a water management plan to optimise water usage and reduce waste, i.e. maintenance to reduce leakage etc.

All water used **must** be fit for the food chain and frequently checked for microbial, chemical and mineral pollutants (See Generic Standards 7.3.2).

Sources of water **must** be analysed by an UKAS accredited laboratory for microbial, chemical and mineral pollutants with the frequency determined by a risk assessment based on water source / treatment, irrigation systems and historical results (see appendix 4). Water at points of irrigation **must** be microbiologically analysed (See Generic Standards 7.3.2). Results should be compared to the standards as set out in appendix 4 and adverse trends acted upon.

Where water is stored on site - water tanks and reservoirs **must** be covered to avoid possible contamination. This **must** consist of a tightly fitting cover - just putting a water tank inside will not be sufficient.

8 Crop protection

8.1 The basic approach to crop protection

8.1.1 Non-chemical methods

See Generic Standards and/or Generic Guidance Notes.

8.1.2 Integrated crop management

Key principles of ICM for protected salad crops

1. Environmental and cultural methods of pest and disease control must be used as the first line of defence. Biological control measures are unsuitable because of the short growing cycle of our crop.
2. Pesticides are to be used only when other controls are not available or shown not to be working. The **few** products approved for use on Salad Cress are listed in Appendix 2.
3. Each batch should be monitored and records made of pest and disease levels.
4. Climate control computers should be used to ensure a suitable environment is maintained at all times.
5. Records **must** be kept of all pesticide applications.

8.1.2.1 Adaptation for new pests and diseases

The occurrence of a new disease or pest problem is largely unpredictable. It may arise, for example, when a previously non-indigenous disease or pest becomes established in the UK (e.g. western flower thrip), with a change in variety or cropping practice (e.g. change in substrate use) or when a pathogen/pest previously controlled by a particular pesticide develops resistance. In all these situations it may be necessary to implement additional pesticide treatments.

A proposed schedule for controlling 'new' pest or disease problems, in order of priority, is described below:

The key objective is that the organism is controlled by means of a change in glasshouse environment, crop culture, biological or other non-chemical method. In some situations however, it is possible that additional use of pesticides may be necessary, at least in the short term or until a suitable alternate variety with genetic resistance is available. Such new varieties should be incorporated into the cropping programme, as they become available, providing they meet the end-market specifications.

The 'new' pest or disease situation may be controlled by selecting products already known to be compatible with the biological control measures.

If none of these pesticides provide effective control, advice should be sought on a suitable alternative product, currently approved for use on the appropriate protected crop under Control of Pesticides Regulations (1986).

8.1.3 Monitoring

All batches of cress should be inspected as part of the normal production cycle. Regular monitoring of pest or disease incidence is of vital importance to prevent any build-up. All nursery staff should be alert to fresh pest or disease symptoms.

8.2 Plant protection product choice

See Generic Standards and/or Generic Guidance Notes.

Please note that due to the short growing cycle very few pesticides can be used on Salad Cress. The list in Appendix 2 is subject to change. See also Appendix 3 listing the specific off-label approvals. It is the grower's responsibility to keep an updated list.

PLEASE NOTE

Approved uses not included on the product label

In some circumstances product labels do not include all of the approved uses and growers and advisers wishing to check the approval notice of a particular product should note that this information is available from www.pesticides.gov.uk/psd_databases.asp

A search on the database for a product name should yield a results page. A click on the product name should link to a summary of the approval information. At the bottom of the summary are links to available notices which will give the statutory conditions of use.

In the case of products with older approval an electronic approval may not be available. In these cases growers should contact the PSD Information Services Branch for details of the approved conditions of use.

Contact details are: p.s.d.information@psd.defra.gsi.gov.uk tel. 01904 455 775

8.3 Advice on the use of pesticides

See Generic Standards and/or Generic Guidance Notes.

8.4 Application of pesticides

See Generic Standards and/or Generic Guidance Notes.

8.5 Records of application

See Generic Standards and/or Generic Guidance Notes.

8.6 Protective clothing/equipment

See Generic Standards and/or Generic Guidance Notes.

8.7 Pesticide storage

See Generic Standards and/or Generic Guidance Notes.

8.8 Empty pesticide containers

See Generic Standards and/or Generic Guidance Notes.

8.9 Pesticide residues in fresh produce

See Generic Standards and/or Generic Guidance Notes.

PLEASE NOTE

See Generic Protocol Guidance Notes 8.9 for further background and generic advice.

Assured Produce is aware that a key area in the production of fresh produce which requires continued attention by growers and their advisers is that of keeping pesticide residues to a minimum. The issue is not just one of meeting the MRL trading standard but ensuring that any individual or multi residues are kept as low as possible below this level.

The key targets are:

- **Optimising late application of fungicides and insecticides to the edible part of the crop**
- **Optimising the use of post harvest treatments**
- **Ensuring minimum harvest intervals are followed**
- **Ensuring that application equipment is applying products correctly**

Currently there are no residue issues associated with this crop but the awareness needs to be maintained for any future issues.

8.10 Pest, disease and weed control

8.10.1 Pest control

Currently very few pesticides can be used on Salad Cress - so pest control is mainly based on prevention.

Prevent pest problems being brought into the production unit by maintaining a policy of product testing before delivery of any material.

Where available, use pest resistant varieties.

Maintain a suitable climate to minimise problems.

Where appropriate, place barriers across vent openings, etc to reduce pest entry.

Above all, maintain a high standard of hygiene in all areas of the nursery.

All production benches, trays, tray carrying equipment, trolleys, tractor tyres and any associated tools and equipment **must** be routinely cleaned with an appropriate disinfectant (see Appendix 1). The same applies to clothing and gloves.

Store cleaned trays and tray carrying equipment carefully to avoid re-contamination.

After using disinfectants in the glasshouse thoroughly ventilate the house to remove all traces of vapour. Rinse trays and tray carrying equipment with potable water after treating with the disinfectant.

Regular and frequent crop inspection is the best method to prevent pest build-up.

8.10.2 Disease control

Currently very few pesticides can be used on Salad Cress - so disease control is mainly based on prevention.

- As more than one batch may be present at any one time the chance of cross contamination should be minimised through a policy of checking all seed material and growing medium for potential problems such as *Sclerotinia* and *Rhizoctonia*, and the presence of bacterial contamination (such as *E-coli*, *Salmonella* and *Listeria*).
- All product-contact equipment like trays and benching should be managed as to minimise cross contamination.
- Prevent disease problems being brought into the production unit by maintaining a policy of product testing before delivery of any material.
- Where available, use disease resistant varieties.
- Maintain adequate control of nutrition and irrigation to prevent soft growth.
- Maintain a suitable climate to minimise problems.
- Above all, maintain a high standard of hygiene in all areas of the nursery.

Regular and frequent crop inspection is the best method to prevent disease build-up.

8.10.3 Weed control

Destroy all weeds around the glasshouse at regular intervals during the season using non-hormone herbicides of short persistence or by mowing.

Weed species and cress seedlings within the production houses can harbour pests and diseases and should be removed.

8.11 Training requirements

Pest and disease identification

Staff working regularly on protected crops must be aware of the possibility of the presence of the following pests and diseases:

Powdery mildew
Downy mildew
Botrytis (grey mould)
Sclerotinia (white rot)
Alternaria stem rot
Pythium root and stem base rot
Rhizoctonia
Bacterial soft rots
Glasshouse whitefly
Caterpillar damage
Flea beetle damage
Thrips

Staff must know how to spot problems and who to report to if problems are suspected. Managers and supervisors must identify the problem, assess the risk and take appropriate action.

In service training

Training in recognising the possible presence of relevant pests and diseases, their damage, biological control and an appreciation of the objectives of this protocol must be given to each new member of staff.

All staff working on the nursery, both regular and casual, must be instructed as necessary to satisfy COSHH requirements with respect to pesticide treatments, and to satisfy the requirements of the Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 1995 (See Generic Standards 9.1.1)

9 Harvesting and storage

See Generic Standards and/or Generic Guidance Notes.

Comprehensive guidelines on **microbial food safety** are included in the Generic Protocol Guidance Notes (under Section 14) to provide guidance to members on risk management and good agricultural practice in the area of microbial food safety. These guidelines are fully integrated within the Assured Produce audit as from 1 January 2007.

9.1 Specific hygiene measures

Cleaning up between batches

The greatest threat to Salad Cress production comes from bacterial infection. The warm and humid conditions as part of the growing process are conducive to the build-up of harmful bacteria, which can cause considerable losses, as well as be a threat to public health. Hygiene is therefore of the utmost importance.

As each batch is removed, all debris should be removed - this will include compost and seedlings that have fallen from trays, etc.

Weed volunteers should be removed regularly from benches and under benches and from the immediate area around the cropping structures.

Wash down benches (if used) with suitable disinfectant (see Appendix 1) to prevent any build up of harmful bacteria - this is particularly important in the summer months.

To avoid damage to the plants and contamination, cleaning down of production areas should only be carried out when all plant material is removed.

Debris left in a skip awaiting collection, should be covered.

All production benches, trays, tray carrying equipment, trolleys, tractor tyres and any associated tools and equipment **must** be routinely cleaned. and treated with an appropriate disinfectant (see Appendix 1). The same applies for clothing and gloves. Trays and tray carrying equipment should be rinsed with water suitable for the food chain after treating with disinfectant.

Cleaned trays and tray carrying equipment should be stored carefully to avoid re-contamination.

At suitable intervals the whole of the glasshouse structure should be washed down and treated with a suitable disinfectant. The heating pipes, irrigation lines and other equipment used in the glasshouse should also be treated with a suitable disinfectant. **Formaldehyde must not be used.**

After using disinfectants in the glasshouse the house should be ventilated to remove all traces of vapour.

All batches should be inspected close to harvest for presence of disease.

Due to the difficulty in identifying potential bacterial problems, samples **must** be taken to check for presence of human pathogenic bacteria including Salmonella, Listeria Lm and E-coli 0157 , the frequency of which is determined by a risk assessment taking weather conditions into consideration.

A recorded daily/weekly cleaning schedule and hygiene audit **must** be in place.

Growing media **must** also be checked for potentially damaging contamination - before use. Equipment and containers used for seed germination must be thoroughly cleaned and treated with a suitable disinfectant before re-use.

Trays used for production **must** be cleaned before use and seeding equipment must be regularly cleaned down to reduce risk of disease.

A written maintenance schedule **must** be in place based on appropriate assessments. This **must** include a policy on minimising physical contamination, i.e glass / hard plastic. (See Generic Standards 9.1.9)

A policy of raw material analysis and microbial testing before purchasing **must** be in place and comply with the standards set out in Appendix 4.

A policy of microbial product testing **must** be in place, complying with the standards set out in Appendix 4. All staff need to be aware that this salad product could be used without further washing and as such must be clean when packed. The utmost care is needed to harvest, transport, store and pack the produce and all workers **must** receive basic training in food hygiene. (Generic Standards 9.1.1)

Packing facilities **must** be clear of litter and waste and have adequate provision for waste disposal. (Generic Standards 9.1.2)

The whole site **must** have adequate rodent pest control systems in place.

Packaging in direct contact with salad cress (i.e. punnets) **must** be of certified food grade material. Any re-usable containers **must** be cleaned before re-use.

All sources of water used for final product washing **must** be food chain safe.

Toilets must be placed away from production and packing areas, hand-wash facilities must be placed at all entrances. The premises **must** have appropriate 'No smoking/No food' signs and staff must be provided with a clearly defined area to eat/drink.

10 Pollution control and waste management

See Generic Standards and/or Generic Guidance Notes.

11 Energy efficiency

See Generic Standards and/or Generic Guidance Notes.

12 Health and safety

See Generic Standards and/or Generic Guidance Notes.

13 Conservation

See Generic Standards and/or Generic Guidance Notes.

Appendix 1 Disinfectants for use when cleaning down

Cleaning down of surfaces and equipment is important to reduce the risk of disease spread in the growing areas but is also important for reasons of food hygiene.

Steam cleaning can be carried out at suitable intervals where cropping areas are emptied for cleaning.

When washing down, preferably biodegradable chemical disinfectants should be used. The following commercial products are approved for food use but the list is not exclusive.

Product	Trade name
hydrogen peroxide + per acetic acid	Jet 5
benzoic acid	Menno Florades
glutaraldehyde + quarternary ammonium compounds	Horticide, Unifect-G
10-13% available chlorine	sodium hypochlorite - least environmentally friendly but very effective

Appendix 2 Products currently approved for use on Salad Cress

Active Ingredient	Trade Name	Organism Controlled	Approval Type	Expiry	Harvest Interval ⁽¹⁾	Hazard Rating	MRL (mg/kg)
cupric ammonium carbonate	Croptex Fungex [®]	<i>Diseases</i>	Full	31/12/13	none stated	none stated	100 draft not harmonised
dodecylphenol ethoxylate	Agri 50 E [®]	Whitefly	Not classified	none stated	zero	none stated	none set
garlic juice	Garlic Barrier AG [®]	Pests	Not classified	none stated	none stated	none stated	none set
glucose polymer	Majestic [®]	Pests	Not classified	none stated	zero	Irritant	none set
nicotine NB To be phased out as per 8 June 2010	No-Fid [®] (etc)	Pests	Full	31/12/13	2 days	Toxic	none set
pyrethrins	Pyrethrum 5 EC [®] Spruzit [®]	Pests	Provisional Full	31/12/13 31/12/13	zero	Toxic to aquatic life	1.0

Notes:

⁽¹⁾ or latest time of application

Always read the product label before use - full details of application rates and harvest intervals will be found there.

N.B. Other products have been approved for use on cress, but have a harvest interval of more than 3 days.

Please note that the system of extension of use has now been withdrawn, so only products with specific recommendations or with specific off-label recommendations for use on Salad Cress will be allowed.

Please note that some approved products under this heading can not be used due to the short growing cycle of salad cress, its production process or the use of a growing medium in stead of soil. It remains the grower's responsibility to ensure compliance with all regulations.

Appendix 3 Specific off-label approvals (SOLAs) for use on Salad Cress

Active Ingredient	Trade Names	Organism Controlled	SOLA Number	Expiry	Harvest Interval ⁽¹⁾	Hazard Rating	MRL (mg/kg)
fenhexamid	Teldor [®]	Botrytis	2062/08	31/05/11	3 days	Harmful to aquatic life	30
spinosad	Tracer [®]	Thrips	1290/08	31/01/17	3 days	Harmful to aquatic life	10 temp not harmonised
thiram	Agrichem Flowable Thiram	Damping off	0792/07	31/12/13	Pre-sowing	Do not contaminate water course	0.1 LOD

Notes:

⁽¹⁾ or latest time of application

A number of other SOLA's are also listed for use on Salad Cress – but any product with a harvest interval of more than 3 days has been excluded.

Specific off-label approvals (SOLAs) provide for the use of the product named in respect of crops, situations or pests other than those included on the product label. Such use is undertaken at the user's choosing and the risk is entirely theirs. Specific off-label uses may only take place if all the conditions given the "Notice of Approval" document, the product label and/or leaflet and any additional guidance on off-label approvals have first been read and understood. The conditions of approval given in the "Notice of Approval" are statutory and supersede any on the label that would otherwise apply.

All SOLAs are conditional on the extant approval of the specific product.

Appendix 4 Standards for microbial testing

Standards for microbial testing of raw materials (seed and growing) for production of Salad Cress:

<i>E-coli</i>	<10cfu/g
<i>E.coli</i> 0157	ND in 25 g
<i>Salmonella</i>	ND in 25 g
<i>Listeria spp</i>	ND in 25 g

Standards for microbial testing of Salad Cress, end product:

<i>E-coli</i>	<1000cfu/g with a target of <10cfu/g
<i>E-coli</i> 0157	ND in 25g
<i>Salmonella</i>	ND in 25 g
<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	< 100cfu/g with a target of <20cfu/g

Standards for microbial testing of irrigation water:

<i>E-coli</i>	<1cfu/100ml (see below)
ACC at 22C & 37C	No significant changes in trended results with a target of <1000cfu/ml at 22C and <500cfu/ml at 37C (see below)
Coliforms	No significant changes in trended results with a target of <10cfu/100ml (see below)
Other indicator organisms	<1cfu/100ml (see below)

NB.

- ACC - Aerobic Colony Counts
- cfu – colony forming units
- Other indicator organisms could include Faecal Coliforms and Sulphite-reducing Clostridia
- ND - none detected.

Frequency of water sampling to be decided from risk assessments based on water source/treatment, irrigation systems and historical results. For example: mains water treated and applied through a simple irrigation system on a daily basis represents a low risk; *E. coli* to be tested monthly, ACC's and Coliforms quarterly and other test organisms twice yearly.

All results must be trended and any significant changes must be investigated and sampling frequency increased until results return to normal. A single high result (or spike) is not a trend.

Appendix 5 Control Points: Cress (Salad)

CRESS (SALAD)

- CS.21.1 The growers policy of raw material analysis and microbial testing before purchasing must comply with the standards as set out in Appendix 4 - Protocol reference: Section 9.1
- CS.21.1A HACCP must be recorded including a definition of what constitutes a "batch" and policies on microbiological testing. Protocol reference: 2.8.1
- CS.21.1B The HACCP team must be identified. Protocol reference: 2.8.1.
- CS.21.2 The growers policy of microbial product testing must comply with the Standards as set out in Appendix 4 - Protocol reference: Section 9.1
- CS.21.2A The grower's policy of microbial testing of irrigation water must comply with the standards as set out in Appendix 4 – Protocol reference Section 7
- CS.21.3 A recorded daily/weekly cleaning schedule and hygiene audit must be in place - Protocol reference: Section 9.1
- CS.21.4 Trays used for production must be cleaned before use and seeding equipment regularly cleaned down to reduce risk of disease - Protocol reference: Section 9.1
- CS.21.5 Growers must have a written maintenance schedule based on appropriate assessments - Protocol reference: Section 9.1
- CS.21.6 The premises must have appropriate "no smoking/no food" signs and staff provided with a clearly defined area to eat/drink - Protocol reference: Section 9.1
- CS.21.7 Packaging in direct contact with the salad cress (i.e. punnets) must be certified food grade material - Protocol reference: Section 9
- CS.21.8 The site should be assessed for its suitability for the production of salad cress taking into account its impact on the local environment - Protocol reference: Section 3
- CS.21.9 Deleted 2005
- CS.21.10 Contracts with seed suppliers must stipulate freedom from human pathogens and setting out the requirements re GMO's - Protocol reference: Section 5
- CS.21.11 Water must be tested by an UKAS accredited laboratory for microbial, chemical and mineral pollutants with the frequency determined by a risk assessment - Protocol reference: Section 7
- CS.21.12 Production benches, trays, tray carrying equipment, trolleys, tractor tyres and associated tools and equipment must be routinely cleaned - Protocol references: 8.10.1 and 9.1
- CS.21.13 Deleted. See CS21.2 and 2A