

Abstract

Fresh produce consumption in the U.S. increased steadily in recent years with per capita ranging from 283 pounds in 1987 to 326 pounds in 2000. This increase may be due to the fact that fruits and vegetables are recognized as a good source of phytochemicals with potential health benefits and the increased marketing of fresh-cut fruits and vegetables. In parallel, reported outbreaks of foodborne illness related to the consumption of fresh and minimally processed fruits and vegetables are on the rise. Although contamination of raw fresh fruits and vegetables can occur at any step of production from farm to table, the CDC listed poor personal hygiene as one of the most common causes of foodborne illness. Thus, worker health and hygiene is critical for preventing foodborne illness. This paper presents features of a brand new training program for managers and workers that features materials developed by researchers at the University of Florida, along with the current status of adoption and implementation of food safety practice recommended in the FDA Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables for selected produce in Florida. Additional documents and publications for the program can be found at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>