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Fresh Produce growers reminded of Red Tractor water testing guidance

Red Tractor Assurance is reminding Fresh Produce scheme members of the guidance available to help them meet standards on the testing of water used in crop production.

Growers are required to test water in response to a risk assessment and in-line with a water matrix, which was introduced as part of a review of the Fresh Produce scheme back in October 2017.

The matrix enables growers to clearly identify what sampling frequency is required under the standards in an easy to interpret format. Under the water matrix, sampling frequency is dependent on water source and what crops water is being applied to.

Fresh Produce Technical Manager Vicky Smith said: “Testing water used in crop production helps to ensure the safety of food produced on farm. The water matrix acts as a reference tool for growers, helping them determine what their sampling regime need to be.”

Water testing is a crucial tool in reducing the risk of a food safety issue, the cost of which could be enormous in terms of both financial implication and the reputation of British Food.

One of the most high-profile food scares in recent times was an outbreak of *E.Coli* in German beansprouts where Spanish cucumbers were blamed for the contamination. Fepex, Spain’s fruit and vegetable export body reported that at the peak of the scare it was costing the industry £175m per week.

More recently, a *E.Coli* outbreak across several states of America in June 2018 resulted in five deaths and almost 100 people hospitalised.

To support growers, Red Tractor has a practical guide on how to take a water sample on the [Red Tractor Assurance website](#). In addition, the water matrix and other supporting material is also available.

Ends.