

ing Produce To Cleanliness



Bassam Annous, microbiologist, works on the computer that controls the pilot plant containment chamber and other fruit sanitizing equipment.

outbreak information, thus putting the issue in the spotlight.

"There is nothing unique or secret about researching better methods of sanitizing fruits and vegetables," said Sapers. In fact the information is public and results of studies have been presented at meetings and conventions.

Other laboratories in the U.S., along with state universities, are also working on the challenge. However what is unique at ERRC is the specially designed pilot plant.

This plant allows the research team "the ability to work with precisely controlled flow rates and exposure times, temperatures, and other treatment conditions. Most of the things that we do in the lab in beakers and flasks has to be tested on a large scale," said Sapers, "and this can be dangerous when working with pathogenic bacteria."



Gerald Sapers stands at the end of the pilot plant containment chamber, which has its own steam decontamination system.

Besides changing sanitizing agents, the pilot plant enables the researchers to adjust variables such as brushes (position, rotation,

stiffness, shape), temperature, spray volume and position, and water flow. Equipment in the pilot plant is made of stainless steel, allowing researchers to use sanitizing agents stronger than conventional agents.

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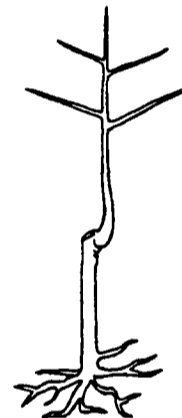
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