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## U.S. Army approves Fit wash as produce sanitizer

By Joan Murphy

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After reviewing studies on Fit fruit and vegetable wash, the U.S. Army has approved it as an alternative sanitizer for fresh fruits and vegetables used by the military, a move that may clear the way for the Fit manufacturer to market the antibacterial product to government installations.

"We were approached by the manufacturer and found it worked," said Alphonso (Rick) Byrd of the Army Center for Excellence, Quality Assurance Division. The group, based in Fort Lee, VA, is in charge of providing food- safety advice for the military's worldwide foodservice program.

U.S. Army food-safety personnel reviewed studies undertaken by the University of Georgia on Fit's record of reducing pathogenic microorganisms and announced in April that the commercial product qualifies as one of several alternative sanitizers available to Army personnel.

The U.S. Army does not endorse products, said Mr. Byrd. But it does review products to see if they comply with a government regulation that allows foodservice operations to use alternative sanitizing procedures "if they are scientifically sound and approved by the medical commander or designated representative."

He said that it helps to "give troops the widest variety" of cleaning procedures.

Mr. Byrd said that the authorization allows the manufacturer to try to have the product catalogued with the General Services Administration, which sells to individuals and groups in the government, including firefighters and the National Guard.

The approval of the antibacterial powder applies only to the commercial product manufactured by HealthPro Brands, not the household product, said the Army.

There are instructions and limitations for the product outlined in the Army approval. It directs trained personnel to maintain the Fit solution at a pH between 2.5 and 3.2 during use and to follow the Fit instructions that require a five-minute soak and rinse with potable water.

"The critical measurement for active levels of Fit is the pH of the solution," the Army said in a statement. "Under no circumstances will Fit be mixed or used with chlorine bleach."

Fit also is not approved for emergency feeding situations where fresh fruits and vegetables are grown in areas of "night soil" or sewage-based fertilizer. It has not been proven to kill that material, said Capt. Jason

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Originally developed by Procter & Gamble in 2000, Fit was sold to HealthPro Brands in 2006. The product, which is made from all-natural ingredients, is being used by Ohio repacker Caruso Inc. on potatoes and yams, by Idaho-based Wada Farms LLC on potatoes and by Florida-based Six Ls Packing Co. on tomatoes, according to HealthPro Brands.



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