

# Our Multi-Hurdle Food Safety Program

The Earthbound Farm food safety program is operated under the guidance of some of the most respected food safety scientists in the country. We have worked to build a system which radically improves the safety of fresh produce, beginning with leafy greens and extending to all other fruits and vegetables. We continually monitor the efficacy of these programs and improve them as necessary.

#### 1. Seed to Harvest

- At the farm: irrigation water, soil amendments, and plant tissues are tested for pathogens.<sup>1</sup>
- Sanitation protocols for farm equipment, packaging supplies, and transportation must meet specified GAP requirements.
- GAP efficacy is monitored through statistical process control (trending and tracking) of test data, in-house monitoring audits, and third-party verification audits.

#### 2. The Raw Material Firewall

- Because microbial contamination of agricultural commodities most commonly occurs at the farm level, where the environment presents challenges to total control, we have implemented a firewall to reduce the risk of contaminated raw materials entering the processing environment.
- That firewall is created by a raw-product Test & Hold program. Incoming salad greens are tested and held until results return negative for pathogens.<sup>2</sup> Only cleared product is released into production.
- Testing protocols are designed to prevent a widespread contamination.

### 3. The Processing Facility

- Our buildings and processing equipment are designed to make daily cleaning and sanitation efficient and effective.
- All processes are reviewed and validated on an ongoing basis by our consulting scientists, in-house audits, and independent third-party audits.
- The USDA's Qualified Through Verification (QTV) service validates our Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) program and certifies compliance throughout the year with unannounced inspections that keep us "inspection-ready" every day. Our participation in this heightened program is voluntary.
- We're guarding against foreign object contamination on every packing line with state-of-the-art optical sorting systems that offer an extremely high degree of dependability for removing any non-leafy object from the product stream.

### 4. The Finished Product Firewall

- As a final safeguard to ensure that all of our food safety interventions have been effective, we have implemented a second firewall.
- That second firewall is created by a finished-product Test & Hold program. Salads are tested and held until results return negative for pathogens.<sup>2</sup> Only cleared product is released for shipping and, ultimately, use by the consumer.

<sup>1</sup>E. coli O157:H7, enterohaemorrhagic E. coli, and salmonella. <sup>2</sup>E. coli O157:H7, enterohaemorrhagic E. coli, salmonella, and shigella.



# Our Food Safety Program

This multi-hurdle program affects all leafy greens, salad items, and herbs

## **PROCESS STAGE** PROTOCOL/HURDLE **Sampling Plan for Soil** Site Selection If evaluation is deemed necessary, the soil is tested for pathogens.<sup>1</sup> History established · Impact of topography and neighbors evaluated **Irrigation Water Sampling Plan for Irrigation Water** · Water source tested Water sources are tested regularly for pathogens. Frequency is based on the source's regularly, frequency assessed risk category. based on risk assessment **Fertilization Sampling Plan for Soil Amendments/Fertilizers** All lots of soil amendments and composted materials are tested for pathogens.<sup>1</sup> All field harvesters are thoroughly trained in Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), and **Harvesting** harvest crews are audited. All harvest equipment is regularly inspected and sanitized. **Arrival for Processing** PRIMARY FIREWALL — Test & Hold Sampling of Incoming Raw Materials Incoming leafy greens are tested for pathogens<sup>2</sup> and cleared before being used **FIREWALL** for production. State-of-the-art optical sorting systems offer an extremely high degree of dependability **Processing** for removing any non-leafy object from the product stream on every packing line. Salad greens are then washed in an agitated multi-stage system using chilled, sanitized water that is regularly monitored. Our processing program is validated by unannounced inspections by USDA's Qualified Through Verification (QTV), a voluntary program. **Finished Product** SECONDARY FIREWALL — Test & Hold Sampling of Finished Product Finished salad products are tested for pathogens<sup>1</sup> before being shipped from our facility. **FIREWALL** Proper loading to ensure adequate cooling is enforced. **Shipped Product**



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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>E. coli O157:H7, enterohaemorrhagic E. coli, salmonella, and shigella.