

AG WATER SAFETY

SAFELY USING CISTERN WATER FOR CROP PRODUCTION

- Agricultural water, used to irrigate crops, carry fertilizers, & for spray applications, has the potential to house & transfer harmful microorganisms from animal & human waste to produce

- Cisterns hold rainwater collected from roofs of homes, barns, high tunnels, greenhouses, & more

- Collected water has a high risk for contamination because it is hard to control what microorganisms enter the cistern

What increases contamination risks?

- debris and particulates are allowed to enter the cistern
- roof is not cleaned regularly

If the water from your cistern comes into contact with produce that will be eaten raw, consider mitigation measures to ensure the safety of your products

Mitigation measures:

- use filters to prevent particulates from entering cistern
- clean and inspect filters & screens yearly (may require entering cistern) with chlorine and water
- schedule regular maintenance and evaluation of your entire irrigation system
- use drip irrigation rather than overhead watering
- test water in your cistern for the presence of E. coli five or more times per year

Untreated surface water is not suitable for post harvest activities

