



Safety and Quality of Leafy Vegetables

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Background

There is an increasing demand for leafy vegetables and ready-to-eat salads, now that people are changing their diets due to a healthier lifestyle becoming a more popular interest.

Foodborne disease outbreaks are on the rise as a result of increased consumption of leafy vegetables, especially ready-to-eat products. This increase has been observed both in Europe and the USA. The reason is not only thought to be from increased consumption and enhanced surveillance of them, but also due to factors such as changes in farming, post production, storage and distribution world wide.



Methods

1. A survey was conducted in April 2013 on the state of leafy vegetables in the Icelandic market. Samples were analyzed for total plate count, *Campylobacter*, *Listeria*, *Bacillus Cereus*, *Salmonella*, *Escherichia coli*, yeast and molds. Other surveys from 2003, 2005, and 2008 done by the local control will also be used in the information processing.
2. Analysis of chill chains. iButtons were used to monitor the temperatures inside the packages of the leafy vegetables from the time they were packaged by the farmer until they reached the supermarkets, and until the “best before” date was reached. Samples were collected multiple times during the period for microbiological analysis and evaluation of the sensory quality.
3. Determination of ready-to-eat leafy vegetable’s shelf-life and what can be done to extend the shelf-life.

Rucola Salad from Farmer to Three Different Supermarkets

