



WHAT TO WASH AND WHAT NOT TO WASH SIGNS

Created by New Lands Farm, MA

Summary

The What to Wash and What Not to Wash signs are visual aides to assist farmers at the wash station in order to recognize which vegetables should be washed in water and those that should not be washed with water. This resource can be used by staff as a guide to teach farmers during a workshop on post-harvest handling, but then will stand alone as a large sign in a farm wash station area. Staff will use hands-on demonstration to show farmers how to utilize the wash station and follow food safety procedure; this is one piece of that education.

Who made this guide?

This teaching resource was developed by New Lands Farm and enhanced in collaboration with the Institute for Social and Economic Development (ISED). From 2015-2017, ISED partnered with refugee farmer training programs throughout the country to support the design of new and shareable teaching resources for culturally and linguistically diverse farmers. To access the whole list of newly developed teaching resources for refugee and immigrant farmer training programs, follow this link to the [‘New American Resource Library’](#). For more in-depth explanations of the teaching approaches and activities used in these materials, you can refer to this [Teaching Handbook: Refugee Farmer Training](#)



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Audience (TA or Tot)	TA (Technical Assistance for farmers)
Language and Literacy Level	Any. However, some initial teaching is important to orient farmers to the purpose of these signs and understand the symbols.
Farmer Experience	Beginner to Advance
Pre-Requisites	None
Region or Climate	All
Program Structure	Community farm with individual farmers using shared infrastructure with a range of literacy levels and cultural identities
Season	Beginning of harvesting season, prior to selling
Time	
Staff and Interpreters	One staff
Additional Supplies Needed	Washing signs printed in color, laminated, and enlarged to appropriate size. A working wash station including sample vegetables to practice with (this depends on season).
Background Material	none

TEACHING MATERIALS INCLUDED

1. Washing Signs



CORE SKILLS IN THIS LESSON

- Post-harvest washing/not washing
- Vegetable identification

SUGGESTED TEACHING METHODS

Realia

- By showing and using real life objects or vegetables during whichever training you introduce these signs in, farmers will find it easier to follow and understand what is being presented.

Oral drills

- Oral drills can be utilized simply enough by repeating vegetables names represented on the signs or the components of the wash station or words like water, dry, and wash.

Sorting and categorizing

- Sorting and categorizing could be used if your staff intention is that people memorize which vegetables to wash and which not to wash. You could pre-plan by printing out photos of vegetables or having some realia examples and having farmers place them either in the wash tub or not.

TEACHING TIPS

Variations

- *Can be connected to:* Food Safety, Harvesting, Proper storage, Marketing
- *Core skills to add:* If one were to pair this tool with an introduction to Food Safety or Harvest and Post-harvest Handling trainings, the following core skills could be added: Post-harvest storage, harvest maturity standards, quality standards, harvest time of days, following food safety guidelines. In addition, if one is connecting this to marketing then you could include the following skills: CSA packing and wholesale packing.

Note to trainers:

These signs are very basic, they only address literally which vegetable not to wash or wet. The simplistic nature and repeated use make them one of the most functional teaching items on our farm site. Each year during the food safety or wash station trainings we give to various levels of farmers, we point out the signs and how to use them. That's it, and then they live there close to the daily action as a large poster/sign in the wash station.

It has proven very useful because farmers have an inclination to harvest and promptly stick everything in the water (sadly even basil or broccoli). This isn't a bad thing, since it shows they want to keep everything clean, but there are many vegetables that do not store well once wet, and we found staff were often too late in reaching the farmer with beautiful basil bunches, only to watch them pull out the bunches from the water.

Now, there are some vegetables here that we sometimes make exceptions for, such as bush beans. If for whatever reason they are really dirty (think muddy rain splashes) then we will have them wash them and follow up by fan drying them. So, you may find that ones we have put in one category may conflict with your farm protocol. Feel free to change and add vegetables! Or, use pictures that represent the varieties you use at your farm.

This sign has also allowed us to better communicate with farmers when assigning harvest orders, as we can point to a picture when the farmer is unsure of a vegetable name in English.