



Section 1 – Introduction

Water is a Global Issue

Water and wastewater is a global issue. Water scarcity and depleting resources are a concern in many countries and regions of the globe. In many countries potable water has severe restrictions placed on it or it is very expensive. Many countries in Europe charge three times the cost for water that is charged in Ontario, providing an incentive for food processors to be smart about how they use the resource. Some countries, such as Mexico, either ration or restrict how water can be used, creating an environment for food processors, especially multi-national corporations, to be creative on how to minimize consumption to stay within the ration parameters.

Closer to home, regions in the US and Canada have concerns where conservation is mandated. Areas of California, Texas, and Saskatchewan have issues of scarcity. Restrictions on water use are mandated. However, even in Ontario, water consumption and sustainable water use is an issue of higher concern and priority where government is passing legislation and developing programs that will have a significant impact on water availability and cost for food processors.

Addressing the issue

In the Food and Beverage Processing Industry, water is arguably the most important utility and resource, along with energy. It represents a significant percentage of the total cost of production, documented to be as much as 3% to 8%. The pressures on Industry continue to mount. The cost of the resource as well as the cost to stay in compliance is increasing – and that erodes the industry’s competitive position in the marketplace.

In anticipation of these pressures, AOFPP has designed a program with resources to help food and beverage processing companies address this issue. The Program includes a series of modules designed to help food processors investigate their consumption of water and develop ways to minimize and/or conserve water and waste. The resources have been designed as a modularized “Toolbox”. This Toolbox provides the resources to critically evaluate the traditional use of water and creatively address opportunities to reduce, minimize, or recycle this resource. As modules, participating companies can progress at their own speed. Companies looking for support can check in with AOFPP for opportunities for follow-up resources for successful strategy implementation.

An opportunity to show leadership

As the water costs continue to rise, so does the importance of innovation and new approaches that will lead to cost savings. Those companies that show leadership and demonstrate a good knowledge of the options available for water use will better succeed in the competitive environment.