

Preventing Peanut Cross-Contamination in Georgia Pecans (Trailer Decontamination)

Peanut cross contamination within the pecan industry is a serious concern. One potential source of cross-contamination within the Georgia pecan industry is the use of trailers previously used in peanut harvest for transport of pecans during pecan harvest. Sixty three percent of all food-allergen related deaths in the U.S. are the result of peanut allergies. These allergies result from allergenic proteins found in the peanut kernel. If pecan growers were to use trailers which previously held peanuts during pecan harvest, the potential would exist for the pecans to be contaminated with peanut allergens through peanut oil residue left on the surface of the trailer or through left-over peanuts still remaining in the trailer from peanut harvest. If contaminated pecans were to be processed in a shelling plant, the entire shelling plant itself could become contaminated. Ultimately, a peanut allergin-related death traced back to the consumption of peanut contaminated pecans could have a devastating effect upon the Georgia pecan industry. Therefore, before pecans are dumped into trailers at harvest, the following steps are suggested for decontaminating trailers that may have previously been used in peanut harvest:

1. Clean & sweep trailer thoroughly, assuring that all previous products are removed from trailer.
2. Wash trailer with soap & water solution, making sure all surfaces are scrubbed well with a brush. Use any FDA approved food grade detergents.
3. Rinse trailer out thoroughly with water making sure there are no visual signs of cleaning solution left inside.
4. Sanitize inside of trailer with at least 50 ppm chlorine water solution. This can be accomplished by using 1 pint of household bleach (5% Chlorine) per 100 gallons of water.
5. Allow proper air drying time.
6. Visually check trailer to assure all surfaces have been properly cleaned and sanitized before pecans are introduced.