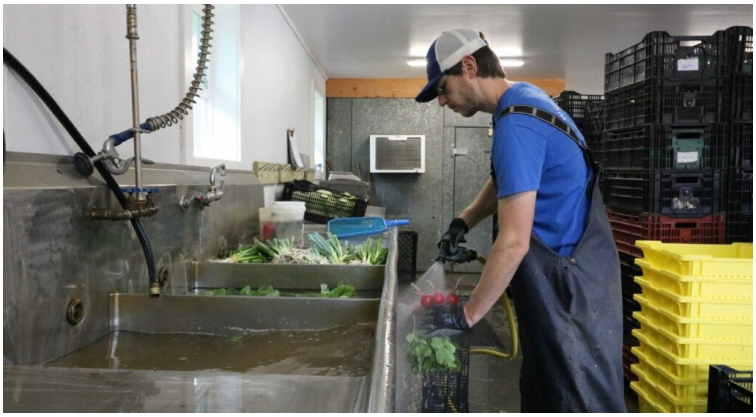
Vegetable Wash Sinks, Tanks, Tubs and Basins

Introduction

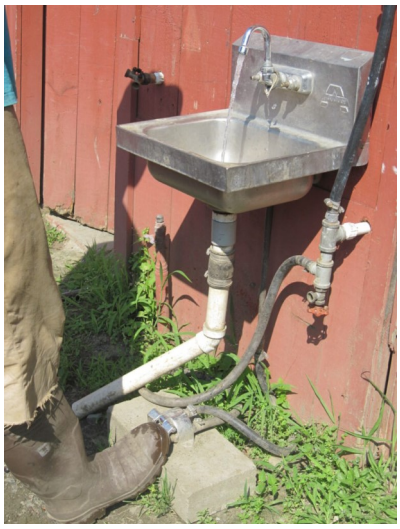
Farms use a wide variety of produce wash sinks and tanks. These include different styles, designs, sizes, and applications. The needs vary from farm to farm, but this document highlights some features to consider when making a selection. Some common choices for washing vegetables include the following:

- Kitchen sinks
- Utility Sinks
- Livestock watering tanks (new)
- Sheep stock tank (new)
- Rubbermaid stock tank (new)
- Dairy milk bulk tanks
- Maple sap tanks
- Restaurant Sinks
- Double bay
- Triple bay
- With or without drainboards



Stainless steel restaurant sinks are desirable because they are large, durable, easy to clean, and fairly easy to find. The restaurant industry transitioned to full stainless construction, so now there are used tables and sinks with stainless tops on galvanized legs available. Full stainless steel equipment is not required for produce washing. The key requirement is that food contact surfaces are smooth and cleanable as appropriate.

Upgrading to a stainless steel restaurant sink is not required. Many other options work and what you have now may be working well for your needs. However, there are a few upgrades that might make your vegetable washing even better.



A separate, dedicated sink should be used for hand washing. For food safety, you should not be washing your hands in the same sink as produce.

Water Supply

Getting water to your wash basin is an important consideration that can influence efficiency and safety. Basins can be filled with hoses or hard plumbed, delivered via tall faucets, restaurant spray nozzles, or even a suspended hose. Routing of the supply should be thought through carefully. Some guidelines include:

- Keep hoses out of the sink, tank or tub. This reduces the risk of backflow and cross contamination.
- Keep hoses off the floor. This minimizes tripping hazards, and keeping the hose, and floor cleaner reducing risk of cross contamination.
- Route water supply lines so that they are not run directly over where produce is handled, or provide drained, cleanable gutters underneath. This prevents condensation that occurs on the cold water lines from coming into contact with produce and food contact surfaces.

For more information in hoses check out the blog post here.

Hands-Free Operation

Hands free operation of a sprayer improves efficiency and ergonomics by keeping both hands-free for handling produce. The use of a foot-operated pedal valve achieves this and also reduces water use and overspray. These pedal valves can be found at a restaurant supply company or plumbing stores such as:

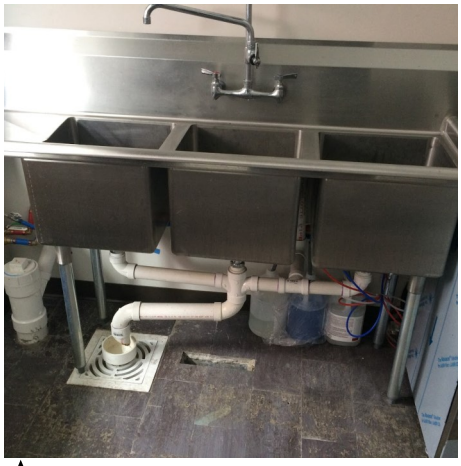
Websturantstore.com
RestaurantSupply.com
Zurn - Manufacturer
American Standard - Manufacturer

Hands-free valves save time and water.

Drains

Planning for rapid draining with intentional flow can greatly improve efficiency and produce safety. Your wash water generally doesn't need to go into a septic system but check with local officials. Guidance for vegetable wash water discharge in Vermont can be found here. Sink drains should be "broken", resulting in an air gap for prevention of backflow in the event of a clogged drain backing up into your fresh produce. Backflow prevention information is available in our backflow guide.

A "broken drain" provides an air gap for back-flow prevention.



If your drain is underneath the sink then a twist drain makes it easy to drain the water without crawling underneath.

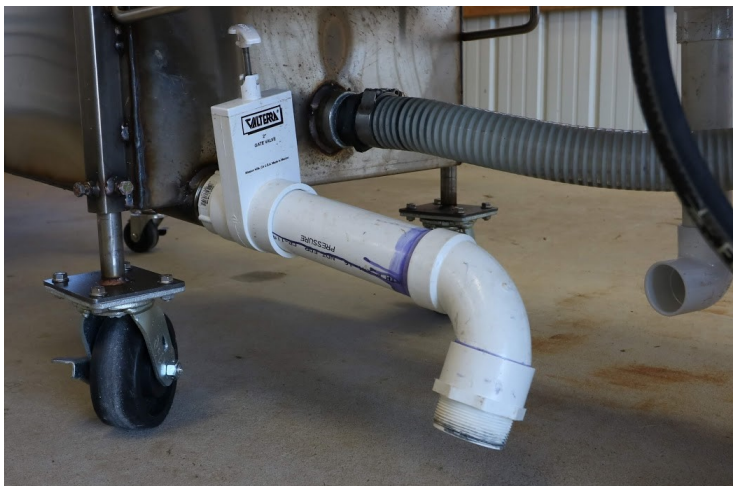
[Zurn - Manufacturer](#)
[WebsturantStore](#)

This sink has a "broken drain" which provides an air gap to prevent back flow.

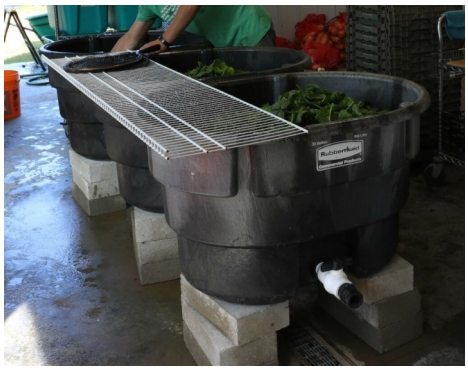
HEIGHT

Consider the optimal height of the sink based on the application. Large dunk tanks that receive produce from bins conveyed low to the ground can be located down low. Sinks or tanks that require workers to be moving product through while standing should be elevated to prevent bending strain.

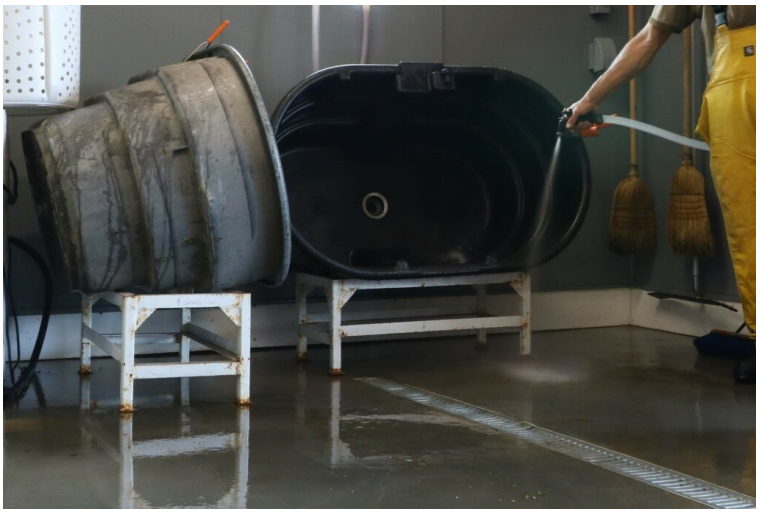
Adding, adjusting or modifying legs or a support frame to position the sink at a comfortable working height will make the work easier and more comfortable. Use long flexible supply lines or hoses initially to allow for experimenting with height. If you are using a stock tank the height of these could easily be adjusted using wood blocks or cinder blocks temporarily with a more permanent smooth and cleanable frame being installed later. Once you find a height you like, a metal stand can be made. This will make it possible to move the tank around with a pallet jack. Save your back, improve efficiency, and make the station comfortable!



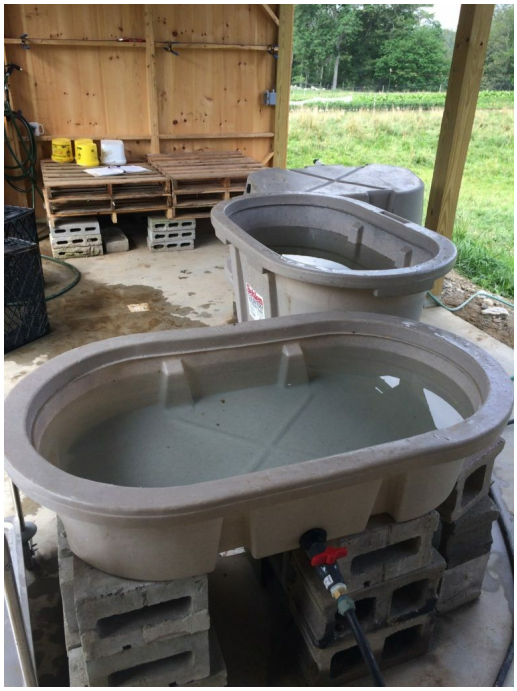
If your building has adequate floor drainage, you can drain to the floor.



Stock tanks, on cinder blocks for prototyping to find the best working height. Note the use of coated, wire closet shelving above the tanks for holding and draining baskets.



This farm uses metal stands for their wash tanks . The stands keep the tanks off the floor during washing and drying and can even be moved with a pallet-jack even when full of water.



These light grey stock tanks make it easier to inspect greens during washing and to decide when to change the wash water.

Agricultural ENGINEERING

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An online version of this publication is available at go.uvm.edu/sinks

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