To Wash or Not to Wash: That is the Question?

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Why Consider Washing?

- More and more growers and “brokers” are saying that chain stores are wanting pumpkins washed.
- We also had some non-chain store customers wanting price adjustment for dirty pumpkins this year.
Efforts and Examples

- Efforts
  - NT into stubble
  - Strip Till
  - Harvesting when dry
    - But Mother Nature doesn’t always cooperate
Even with Our Best Efforts

• With Clay in out soil we are going to get “stains”
Washing / Stems

• How do you wash a pumpkin without breaking the stem?
  – Cut the stems short
    • Some buyers do not like
  – Spray the pumpkin with water
  – Brush with a soft brush

• How do you wash large quantities of pumpkins?
  – Wash Line?
  – Belt?
  – ???
Experience this Year

![Image of six pumpkins in a box]
Experience this Year
Experience this Year
Varietal Differences

• Hard shell varieties fared better than regular varieties.
• But we still saw stem rot in all varieties where the pumpkins took up water during washing.
So, What do we do?

• Efforts
  – NT into stubble
  – Strip Till
  – Minimize direct contact with soil
  – Harvest when dry
  – Brush off excess soil / debris

• If we have to wash:
  – Design a belt on which to set the pumpkin
  – Use a spray bar, do not submerge pumpkins
  – Maybe have brushes on each side
  – Use a Sanitizer
    • Chlorine (100-200 ppm)
    • Sanidate
Questions?

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