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Antimicrobial Copper's Potential Role in the Food Processing Industry

The latest science clearly shows that copper has powerful antimicrobial efficacy against major foodborne pathogens threatening public health today and could therefore have an important role in improving hygiene in food processing applications. To raise awareness of this new weapon in the fight against disease-causing organisms, Copper Development Association has been invited to make a presentation at the forthcoming Food Hygiene Conference at Campden BRI in May.

Copper has been recognised as a hygienic material since the dawn of civilisation and, in the last two centuries, the anecdotal evidence has been supported by scientific research showing that copper is a broad-spectrum antimicrobial, i.e. it kills harmful pathogens – bacteria, moulds, algae, fungi and viruses.

The antimicrobial uses of copper have traditionally included fungicides, antifouling paints and antimicrobial medicines but the latest laboratory and clinical studies have recently led to the installation of copper touch surfaces – door handles, taps and grab rails – in hospitals to help prevent the spread of infections.

The compelling body of peer-reviewed and published science demonstrates copper's antimicrobial effect on a range of pathogens responsible not just for healthcare associated infections, such as *MRSA* and *Clostridium difficile* but for food poisoning, such as *E.coli* 0157, *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Toxic Salmonella*, and *Campylobacter*, indicating a role for copper in supplementing hygiene in food processing applications.

To find out more about copper's antimicrobial properties and applications and to join the Interest Group for updates, please visit <http://www.copperinfo.co.uk/antimicrobial>. The Antimicrobial Copper presentation will be made at the Campden BRI in Chipping Campden on 26th May 2010 by Mark Tur, CDA Technical Consultant. For further information, please visit the BRI website at <http://www.campden.co.uk>.

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