

Cow 'car wash' designed to improve food safety

By Robert Rodriguez, Fresno Bee

It might look like a carwash, but that's where the similarities end.

Cargill – one of the world's leading beef processors – has installed a \$4.2 million cow-cleaning system designed to improve food safety at its sprawling 60-acre plant in southwest Fresno.

Every day, cow carcasses are brought into the factory, dangling by their back legs, as large, spinning bristles scrub the animals' hides. At the same time, high-pressure nozzles blast the carcasses with an anti-microbial solution.

The idea is to remove dirt, debris and feces from the cow before the hide is removed – rather than after. Even some critics of the meat-processing industry say it could help prevent contamination.

"This really is the next generation in this process, and we will keep working to make it better," said John Niemann, general manager of Cargill's Fresno plant. "We want to be a leader in food safety because it is critical to our business."

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