

Contamination Control

Cleaning is a critical step in the management of food safety and quality. However, poorly design cleaning equipment can quickly become both a source and vector of contamination. Consequently, the correct selection of cleaning equipment by the food industry is essential to minimise the risk of product contamination, and aid compliance to relevant regulatory, guidance and standard requirements.

WHAT ARE THE CONTAMINANTS OF CONCERN?

Pathogenic microbes - The greatest risk to food safety is from food-borne diseases caused by pathogenic microbial contamination. In the European Union (EU), over 320,000 human cases are reported each year, but the real number is likely to be much higher. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that, worldwide, food-borne and water-borne diarrhoeal diseases, taken together, kill about 2.2 million people annually.

Allergens - The management of food allergens has become an essential part of food safety. For consumers with food allergies or food intolerances, eating even a small amount of the food to which they are sensitive can make them very ill and in some cases, cause potentially fatal anaphylactic reactions. Consequently, control of allergen contamination is essential.

Foreign bodies - Food products can also become contaminated with foreign bodies, e.g. glass, plastic, stones, which can pose a food safety or food quality issue, or both. For more information please see [‘Myth-busting the Metal Detectability of Metal Detectable Plastics’ White Paper](#).

Food and chemical residues - Additionally, although contamination of foods aimed at specific consumer groups, e.g. vegetarian foods contaminated with meat residues, GMO free foods contaminated with GMO ingredients, pork products contaminated with beef and vice versa, may not raise issues of food safety, the manufacturer could be in breach of trading standards. Contamination incidents like these, or related to cleaning chemical contamination, often lead to loss of consumer confidence and bad publicity, and consequent loss of business.

The risks of contamination are present from farm to fork and require prevention and control throughout the food chain. For those concerned with protecting food safety and quality and/or working in the food processing industry the significance of contamination control cannot be under estimated.

To find out more about these contaminants and how Vikan products can help improve food safety and quality, please see [‘Guidance on the use of colour-coding to improve food safety and quality’ White Paper](#)

HOW UST BRUSHWARE CAN HELP MINIMISE THE RISK OF CONTAMINATION

As a long established provider of professional cleaning solutions to the food industry, Vikan understands the impact these hazards can have on our customers business. To minimise the risk of food product cross-contamination from cleaned surfaces, and from the cleaning equipment itself, cleaning equipment must be effective at cleaning and, itself, easy to clean, i.e.

hygienically designed.

Consequently, the UST brushware range has been developed in line with best practice guidance on hygienic design, as provided by European Hygienic Engineering Design Group (EHEDG) Guideline Document 8 'Hygienic Equipment Design Criteria. [Click here to download document about Hygienic Equipment Design Criteria.](#)

Throughout development, and at the final product stage, UST brushware were assessed for their cleaning efficacy and their hygienic design. Please see [Functionality Test - Bench Brush](#)
[Functionality Test - Hand Brush](#)
[Functionality Test - Stapled Broom](#)
['UST' White Paper](#)

Food factory based field trials were also undertaken, to obtain customer feedback on prototype functionality, durability, and cleanability and thus aid further product

development.

The results of the assessments showed that UST brushware is highly effective and, due to its fully moulded construction and smooth surface finish, it is also easy to clean, disinfect and dry, thereby minimising the risk of product contamination by microbes, allergens, and food and chemical residues. Additionally, its unique bristle retention system minimises the risk of foreign body contamination through bristle loss.

UST product are available in 8 fully coloured options, to allow easy segregation of use, by different coloured products, in different areas of production or for different purposes, as prescribed by HACCP. Please see: ['Guidance on the use of colour-coding to improve food safety and quality' White Paper.](#)