

1 **Title:** Fresh-cut wastewater reclamation: techno-economical assessment of solar driven
2 processes at pilot plant scale

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35 **ABSTRACT**

36 Up-scaling of solar processes for water purification is a key challenge for their implementation
37 at industrial scale on the agro-food sector. Benefits of using flow-tubular reactors provided
38 with Compound Parabolic Collector mirrors has been previously demonstrated, nevertheless
39 some techno-economic aspects still being unknown.

40 This study shows a comparative analysis of the treatment efficiency of H₂O₂/solar and Fe³⁺-
41 EDDHA/solar and Fe³⁺-EDDHA/H₂O₂/solar as novel processes for treating synthetic fresh-cut
42 wastewater (SFCWW) containing 100 NTU of turbidity. The highest treatment capability was
43 obtained with Fe³⁺-EDDHA/H₂O₂/solar (2.5/20 mg/L-Fe³⁺-EDDHA/H₂O₂), attaining the
44 fastest microbial inactivation kinetics (>5-log of *E. coli* O157:H7 and *Salmonella enteritidis*)
45 and OMCs degradation (36% of 5 microcontaminants) in 60 and 120 min, respectively.

46 Treated SFCWW by Fe³⁺-EDDHA/H₂O₂/solar process fits microbiological quality established
47 in water reuse guidelines for irrigation, no bacterial reactivation after 24h post-treatment, no
48 significant ecotoxicity and treatment cost was estimated as 1.10 (only disinfection) and 2.10
49 €/m³ (simultaneous disinfection and decontamination).

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52 **Keywords:** Agro-food sector, Foodborne pathogens, Compound Parabolic Collector, Near-
53 neutral pH, Iron-chelate.

54 **1. Introduction**

55 The fresh-cut produce industry has suffered a fast growth in the last years, expecting to continue
56 due to the increase of the global population and consumer's shifts toward ready-to-eat fresh
57 food (like leafy salads) that stand out in healthy diets [1]. This industry is one of the major
58 water consumers of the agro-food sector due to the high water volumes (up to 40 m³/ton of raw
59 product) required during processing stages (prewashing, disinfection and rinsing of the
60 vegetables). The water quality for this sector must accomplish the microbial and chemical
61 quality standards of the potable water (Council Directive 98/83/EC (1998)) [2] explained by
62 the fact of the consumption of raw vegetables, a potential risk for consumers if a contamination
63 event occurs during the processing steps. In fact, several foodborne outbreaks mainly caused
64 by the faecal pathogens *E. coli* O157:H7, *Salmonella* spp, *Listeria monocitogenes*, and some
65 viruses have been reported during last several years associated to this industry [3]. In this
66 regard, is important to note that most of the infections outbreaks reported are caused by *E. coli*
67 O157:H7 and *Salmonella* spp which are considered the main food-borne pathogens during
68 production chain of fresh-products. On the other hand, along the processing vegetables, the
69 wash-water generated also represents an important source of organic microcontaminants
70 (OMCs), mainly by pesticides employed during the crops cultivation which are continuously
71 released in the processing-water and detected in the range of nano to microgram per liter. This
72 highlights the importance of controlling the OMCs accumulation during the processing stage
73 of vegetables and its discharge as a preventive action to reduce further potential health and
74 environmental impacts [4].

75 Chlorination is widely used as water disinfection treatment in this industry, but the high amount
76 of organic matter in the fresh-cut washing water and the usually hyper-chlorination practice
77 leads to the generation of high amounts of unhealthy disinfection by-products (DBPs) and to
78 the forbiddance of the chlorination practice in some European countries [5]. Besides, this
79 treatment did not remove OMCs from water. Therefore, the implementation of a sustainable
80 water management system to efficiently control water-pathogens, OMCs and the formation of
81 disinfection-by-products (DBPs), providing a regenerated wastewater with a quality enough to
82 be reused, can lead to an improvement of the water foot-print of this industry [6]. Accordingly,
83 the search and evaluation of alternative water treatments has grown in last years including
84 electrolyzed water, chlorine dioxide, organic acids, UV-C, quaternary ammonium compounds
85 (QACs), essential oils, ozone, and cold plasma among others, although no great efficiencies
86 have been reported [7]. Other processes like the Advanced Oxidation Processes (AOPs) have
87 shown high disinfection capability in a wide range of water matrices including fresh-cut

88 washing water, like UV-C/H₂O₂, UV-C/PAA [8], UV-C/ozone [9] or UV-C/TiO₂ [10] due to
89 the formation of powerful oxidants such as hydroxyl radicals ([•]OH). However, all of them use
90 UV-C lamps as a photons source which generates high process costs and represents one of the
91 main drawbacks of their implementation. Moreover, there is still a lack of information about
92 their capability to simultaneously disinfect and degrade OMCs in clear and turbid waters.
93 To this respect, the use of solar radiation as source of photons, the so-called solar-driven AOPs
94 and solar photochemical processes, have demonstrated a high decontamination and disinfection
95 efficiency including a wide range of water matrices [11]. To date, the photo-Fenton process is
96 one of the most investigated solar AOP. It uses a combination of iron salt, H₂O₂ and solar
97 radiation to generate [•]OH [12]. Recently, to increase the efficiency of this process at near
98 neutral pH, the use of complexing agents that allow to keep the iron in solution have been
99 encouraged, including both synthetic [13] and natural chelating agents [14]. The synthetic
100 chelating agents based on aminopolycarboxylic acids like EDTA (Ethylenediaminetetracetic
101 acid) and EDDS (Ethylenediamine-N',N'-disuccinic acid) have shown a good performance
102 based on their high stability [15]. More recently, the use of EDDHA (Ethylenediamine-N,N'-
103 bis 2-hydroxyphenylacetic acid) as Fe-chelate agent for disinfection of synthetic FCWW at
104 near-neutral pH under natural sunlight has been reported at laboratory scale [16]. Another
105 promising solar process performed at near-neutral pH for water disinfection is the combination
106 of H₂O₂ with natural sunlight (H₂O₂/solar) due to the very well reported accelerated effect on
107 the inactivation kinetics of different microorganisms, requiring the addition of low
108 concentration of reagent (range 0.1-0.3 mM) in different water matrices, including urban and
109 fresh-cut wastewater [17-19].

110 In addition, the development of solar Compound Parabolic Collector (CPC) reactors has
111 demonstrated to be the most promising technological solutions for application of solar water
112 treatments at industrial scale [20,11]. Among its main advantages highlight its high efficiency
113 on the use of solar photons, with the respective acceleration of the kinetics reactions, and the
114 modular design that permits increase the volume of water intended to be treated and its easily
115 installation and adaptation as decentralized system.

116 The aim of this study is, therefore, to assess for the first time the up-scaling (to dozens of litres)
117 of several solar processes for the simultaneous disinfection and decontamination of synthetic
118 fresh-cut wastewater (SFCWW) using solar reactors provided with CPC mirrors. In particular,
119 three solar processes were investigated; H₂O₂/solar and two novel photo-Fenton processes
120 based on the effect of a chelating agent: Fe³⁺-EDDHA/solar and Fe³⁺-EDDHA/H₂O₂/solar at
121 near neutral pH. A techno-economic assessment of the feasibility of these solar processes has

122 been performed based on their efficiency to simultaneously inactivate two pathogens (*E. coli*
123 O157:H7 and *Salmonella enteritidis*) and to remove 5 OMCs. As complementary to the overall
124 efficiency of the solar processes, a regrowth analysis and an acute toxicity assessment were
125 also performed, providing a realist insights of the feasibility of the proposed solar processes as
126 alternative treatment to chlorine in FCWW. This study demonstrates the potential possibility
127 to employ an iron chelate already added by farmers in water-scarce regions to regenerate
128 FCWW contributing at the same time to remediate two environmental problems in arid and
129 semiarid regions (such as Mediterranean countries): water scarcity and iron chlorosis disease.

130

131 **2. Materials and methods**

132 **2.1 Water matrix**

133 The water matrix used was synthetic fresh-cut wastewater (SFCWW), which permits a
134 comparison between the different processes avoiding the effect of the composition variation of
135 the industrial washing water. This is a lab-made synthetic water daily prepared following a
136 recipe previously developed and based on literature data and the analysis of real samples from
137 a local fresh-cut industry. This recipe is fully described elsewhere [19]. Its main
138 physicochemical characteristics are: 100.1 ± 0.4 NTU of turbidity, 6.25 ± 0.06 water pH,
139 1209.6 ± 14.8 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ of conductivity and 45 mg/L of dissolved organic carbon (DOC)
140 (corresponding to a 163 mgO₂/L of Chemical Oxygen Demand). The DOC value correspond
141 to the sum of 25.4 ± 0.4 mg/L from the organic matter of water recipe and 20 mg/L from the
142 organic solvent used for OMCs preparation). Moreover, the addition of the iron chelate
143 increases the water DOC content: ≤ 2 , 9 and 18 mg/L for 0.5, 2.5 and 5 mg/L of iron as Fe³⁺-
144 EDDHA (1:1), respectively. The absorbance spectrum of the SFCWW with and without the
145 presence of the iron chelate was measured in the range 200-800 nm by using a UV-
146 spectrophotometer (Thermo Scientific Evolution 220).

147

148 **2.2 Bacteria quantification**

149 *E. coli* O157:H7 (CECT 4972) and *Salmonella subsp. enteritidis* (CECT 4155) from the
150 Spanish Culture Collection (CECT) were used as models of microbial contamination.
151 Quantification and enumeration methods were done as described elsewhere [19]. Briefly, liquid
152 bacterial cultures containing a bacterial concentration of 10⁹ CFU/mL were prepared using
153 Nutrient-Broth I (5 g/L of NaCl (Sigma Aldrich), 5 mg/L beef extract and 10 g/L of peptone
154 (Panreac, Spain)) for *E. coli* O157:H7 and Tryptone Soya Broth (OXOID) for *S. enteritidis*.

155 Bacterial concentration was enumerated by the standard plate counting technique using serial
156 dilutions (10 fold) in phosphate buffer saline (PBS). For that, sample volumes of 50 μ L and
157 500 μ L (detection limit (DL) of 2 CFU/mL) were spread on ChromoCult® Coliform Agar
158 (Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany) and Salmonella Shigella Agar (Scharlau®, Spain) and
159 incubated at 37°C during 24h and 48h for *E. coli* O157:H7 and *S. enteritidis*, respectively.
160 Besides, membrane filtration method was used to assess the regrowth of bacteria after 24 h of
161 storage in the dark. In this case, 100 mL of sample was filtered using a Microfil® filtration
162 system (Millipore, USA) and cellulose nitrate filters (0.45 μ m, Sartorius Stedim, Spain) using
163 similar culture media procedure as described previously, reaching a DL of 1 CFU/100mL to fit
164 with the limit established in guidelines for wastewater reuse [21-22].

165

166 **2.3 Reagents and analytical determinations**

167 The commercial micronutrient Sequestrene 138 Fe G100 (source of iron containing 6.2%
168 soluble iron content as Fe³⁺-EDDHA, Syngenta, Spain) [16] and hydrogen peroxide (35% w/v,
169 Merck, Germany), were used as received from the manufacturer. Fe³⁺-EDDHA was used as
170 source of iron due to this iron chelate is the synthetic iron fertilizer most employed in
171 agriculture to prevent and remediate iron chlorosis disease [23].

172 Dissolved iron and H₂O₂ concentration were measured by spectrophotometric methods
173 following the procedure described elsewhere [24]. To measure the dissolve organic content
174 (DOC), the water samples were filtered using a 0.2 μ m nylon syringe-driven filter (Millex) and
175 measured by a Total Organic Carbon analyzer (Model 5050, Shimadzu, Japon).

176 Quantification of OMCs (atrazine, azoxystrobin, terbutryn, procymidone and buprofezin) was
177 done by liquid chromatography using an Agilent 1260 (Palo Alto, CA, USA) with a diode array
178 detector (UV-DAD) and a C-18 column (XDB-C18, 1.8 μ m, 4.6x50 mm). The eluents were
179 acetonitrile (ACN) (HPLC grade, Panreac, Spain) and acid ultrapure water (25 mM formic
180 acid) with a flow rate of 1 mL/min and an injection volume of 100 μ L. The working method
181 consists on: 0.5 min of isocratic condition (90% H₂O:10% ACN), followed by 5.5 min of a
182 linear gradient to 100% ACN, 100 % ACN during 1.5 min and returning to the initial conditions
183 in 1 min. Before injection, 4.5 mL of water sample was filtered using a 0.2 μ m syringe-driven
184 filter of nylon (Millex), and after that 0.5 mL of ACN was passed through the filter to remove
185 any possibly adsorbed compounds. The detection wavelength and limit of quantification (LOQ)
186 of the different OMCs were 250 nm for buprofezin (LOQ: 5 μ g/L), 230 nm for atrazine (LOQ:
187 2 μ g/L) and terbutryn (LOQ: 1.9 μ g/L) and 214 nm for azoxystrobin (LOQ: 20 μ g/L) and
188 procymidone (LOQ: 3.6 μ g/L). These pesticides were selected as OMCs targets for this study

189 according to their wide use during vegetables growing (cultivation) and their inclusion
190 (atrazine and terbutryn) as priority substances (PS) in the latest European directives.

191

192 **2.4 Solar experiments**

193 Solar experiments were performed at Plataforma Solar de Almeria (South-East of Spain) during
194 May-July 2018. All the tests were performed in a solar Compound Parabolic Collector (CPC)
195 photoreactor placed on an anodized-aluminium platform tilted at 37°. This CPC reactor has
196 been widely described elsewhere [25]. Briefly, it is formed by two CPC mirror modules made
197 by highly reflective anodized aluminium (MiroSun, Alanod, Germany) with a concentration
198 factor of 1. Each module has 10 borosilicate-glass tubes (1500 mm x 50 mm and 2.5 mm thick)
199 with a total irradiated surface of 4.5 m² and 75 % of total water volume irradiated (45 L out of
200 60 L). The water is recirculated through the tubes by a centrifugal pump (150 W, Mod.NH-200
201 PS PanWorld, USA) with a flow rate of 30 L/min. The pH and water temperature are monitored
202 throughout the experiments by sensors placed in the dark piped-system. No significant pH
203 variations (6.25±0.3) were observed along the treatment time for any of the conditions tested.
204 Reagents, OMCs and microbial suspensions were directly and simultaneously diluted in the
205 reactor to obtain the desired initial concentration: 100 µg/L and 10⁶ CFU/mL for each OMC
206 and pathogen, respectively. Reagents concentrations from 2.5 to 40 mg/L of H₂O₂ and 0.5 to 5
207 mg/L of Fe³⁺-EDDHA were selected according to previous studies and considering the range
208 of the iron micronutrient concentration usually employ in intensive agriculture [16]. The water
209 was homogenised during 15 minutes in the dark. After that, the first sample was taken out and
210 immediately the reactor was exposed to sunlight. All solar experiments started between 10:15-
211 10:45 a.m. local time and lasted 5 hours under full sunshine. The water samples were taken out
212 at regular intervals for OMCs and bacteria analysis. To evaluate the mere effect of the solar
213 processes studied in the selected targets, the residual H₂O₂ concentration was eliminated in the
214 samples by the addition of a bovine liver catalase solution (0.1 g/L) at ratio catalase:sample of
215 1:50 avoiding therefore any oxidative post-treatment effect during the time of samples
216 analytical procedure [19]. The averaged day-profile of water temperature and solar UVA
217 radiation registered during all solar treatments is shown in Figure SI1 (Supplementary
218 information). The water temperature ranged from 25±4 °C to 41±6 °C for all the experiments,
219 discarding therefore thermal inactivation of bacteria [26]. Solar UV-irradiance (λ: 280-400 nm)
220 was monitored by a pyranometer (Kipp&Zonen, CUV-5, Netherlands) which provided
221 irradiance data in W/m². Maximum and minimum solar UV irradiances were 26±3 and 49±3
222 W/m², respectively.

223 The microbial inactivation and OMCs degradation were plotted as the average values of two
 224 replicates (standard deviation as error bar) against the accumulative UV energy during
 225 exposure time per unit of treated water volume (Q_{UV} ; kJ/L), calculated according to a previous
 226 works [25].

227 **2.5 Inactivation kinetic analysis**

228 Kinetic constants were calculated considering the Q_{UV} parameter instead of the treatment time.
 229 The kinetic rates of bacterial inactivation were obtained by several mathematical models
 230 described elsewhere [27] and according to the higher R^2 value fitting the experimental data:

- 231 1) A log-linear decay according to the Chick's law (Eq. 1).
- 232 2) A 'shoulder phase' characterized by a constant bacteria concentration or a very smooth
 233 decay followed by a log-linear decay, attributed to the accumulation of oxidative damages
 234 ending in the loss of cells viability (Eq. 2).
- 235 3) A double log-linear kinetic characterized by a fast inactivation in the first stage (k_1)
 236 followed by a slow second inactivation stage (k_2) (Eq. 3).
- 237 4) A log-linear decay followed by a 'tail' (Q_{UVres}) (Eq. 4). The 'tail' represents the bacterial
 238 population that remains at the end of the experiment due to the presence of a resistant
 239 population. In our case, the tail observed may be due to the presence of dark zones in the
 240 reactor (25 % of the total volume) which enable bacteria to repair partially their oxidative
 241 damage.
- 242 5) A 'shoulder phase' followed by a log-linear decay and a 'tail' (Eq. 5).

$$243 \quad \text{Log}\left(\frac{N}{N_0}\right) = -k \cdot Q_{UV} \quad \text{Eq.1}$$

$$244 \quad \text{Log}\left(\frac{N}{N_0}\right) = -k \cdot Q_{UV} \quad \left\{ \begin{array}{l} 0 ; Q_{UVt} \geq Q_{UV} \\ -k \cdot Q_{UV} ; Q_{UVt} < Q_{UV} \end{array} \right\} \quad \text{Eq.2}$$

$$245 \quad \text{Log}\left(\frac{N}{N_0}\right) = -k_1 \cdot Q_{UV} ; Q_{UV} = [0, Q_{UV1}] ; \quad \text{Log}\left(\frac{N}{N_0}\right) = -k_2 \cdot Q_{UV} ; Q_{UV} = [Q_{UV1}, Q_{UV2}] \quad \text{Eq. 3}$$

$$246 \quad \text{Log}\left(\frac{N}{N_0}\right) = -k \cdot Q_{UV} \quad \left\{ \begin{array}{l} -k \cdot Q_{UV} ; Q_{UVt} \leq Q_{UV} \\ 0 ; Q_{UVt} \leq Q_{UVres} \end{array} \right\} \quad \text{Eq.4}$$

$$\text{Log}\left(\frac{N}{N_0}\right) = -k \cdot Q_{UV} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} 0 ; Q_{UVt} \geq Q_{UV} \\ -k \cdot Q_{UV} ; Q_{UVres} < Q_{UVt} < Q_{UV} \\ 0 ; Q_{UVt} \leq Q_{UVres} \end{array} \right\} \quad \text{Eq.5}$$

243 N/N_0 is the bacteria concentration along the solar treatment, k is the disinfection kinetic constant
 244 and Q_{UVres} is the energy value with a residual bacterial population.

245

246 **2.6 Toxicity assessment**

247 *Aliivibrio fischeri* was used as a test organism for the assessment of toxicity, this is a widely
 248 used organism for initial screening in environmental samples with unknown ecotoxicological
 249 characteristics [28]. Samples from treated SFCWW were collected at the end of each solar
 250 processes and directly used for the analysis of toxicity, no catalase was added in this case in
 251 order to determine the possible toxic effect of residual reagents in the treated water. The
 252 assessment of acute toxicity was carried out by monitoring changes in the bioluminescence of
 253 *A. fischeri* after 30 min of contact with water samples. Prior to the test, water pH of each sample
 254 was adjusted to 6~7.5, filtered with 0.2 μm syringe-driven filters (Millex®, Millipore) and
 255 salinity adjusted to 2 % (w/v). Samples were tested in triplicate. The 30-min luminescence
 256 inhibition test was performed according to standardized protocols [29]. The bioluminescence
 257 of *A. fischeri* was measured using the BioFix® Lumi-10 luminometer (Macherey-Nagel GmbH
 258 & Co. KG, Duren, Germany). Toxicity results were expressed as bioluminescence inhibition
 259 percentage (BI %) and samples were considered toxic when this value was above 50 % [30].

260

261 **3. Results and discussion**

262 **3.1 Bacterial inactivation by solar processes**

263 **3.1.1 Solar only disinfection and H₂O₂/solar process**

264 Prior to any solar test, the potential effect of OMCs over the bacterial viability was assessed in
 265 the dark for 300 min of treatment time, results revealed no decrease on the initial bacterial
 266 concentration, discarding therefore any effect of OMCs over the kinetics of the
 267 microorganisms.

268 The inactivation kinetic profiles of *E. coli* O157:H7 and *S. enteritidis* at pilot plant scale by
 269 H₂O₂/solar process at several concentrations (2.5, 5, 10, 20 and 40 mg/L) are shown in Figure
 270 1a and 1b, respectively. Also, the mere effect of solar radiation (solar only disinfection) on the
 271 inactivation of both pathogens was investigated. The corresponding inactivation kinetic

272 constants are summarized in Table 1. Data of H₂O₂ concentration measured are shown in Table
273 2 and Figure SI2 (Supplementary material). The residual concentration of H₂O₂ at the end of
274 each solar process ranged from 63 to 77 % of the initially added in all cases.

275 The solar only disinfection process leads a similar kinetic behavior in both pathogens
276 characterized by an initial log-linear decay followed by a residual concentration of bacteria,
277 not attaining a complete removal (DL: 2 CFU/mL) after 300 min of solar exposure. This
278 inactivation kinetic profile has been reported previously in other studies at pilot plant scale
279 [31]. The residual population remaining in the systems is attributed to the low-oxidative
280 capability of this treatment and the interrupted delivered solar UV radiation due to the re-
281 circulation of the water through the dark and illuminated areas of the solar CPC reactor during
282 the solar exposure. Both effects may permit the activation of the self-defense mechanism of
283 bacteria to repair the oxidative damages generated inside cells during the solar exposure,
284 keeping therefore a residual population in the sample resistant to be inactivated by solar
285 radiation [31].

286 This residual effect can be avoided by applying a more oxidative solar process, such as the
287 H₂O₂/solar process, which results clearly show an enhancement of the bacterial inactivation
288 profiles (Figure 1a,b) and kinetic constants (Table 1) compared with solar only disinfection
289 process. In this case, DL was achieved for both pathogens with all the H₂O₂ concentrations
290 tested. In general, the higher the H₂O₂ concentration, the higher the inactivation kinetic. This
291 improvement was marked at H₂O₂ concentration values of 20 mg/L (Table 1) for both
292 pathogens, especially in *S. enteritidis* where the inactivation kinetic profile changed from
293 double log-linear decay to a log-linear decay. Nevertheless, *S. enteritidis* showed no-significant
294 differences on kinetic rates by increasing the oxidant concentration from 20 to 40 mg/L. This
295 behavior is in line with previous lab-scale results that suggested that the inactivation of *S.*
296 *enteritidis* by H₂O₂/solar process is not-chemically limited at the range of reagents
297 concentration tested [19]. The negligible oxidative effect of the H₂O₂ concentrations used in
298 this study over bacteria viability has been previously reported [19], therefore, the bacterial
299 inactivation shown in Figure 1 can be only attributed to the effects of the solar processes
300 investigated.

301 Therefore, considering the overall data obtained from this solar process and the concentrations
302 of H₂O₂ tested, the best inactivation rate was obtained with 20 mg/L of reagent for both
303 bacteria. At this concentration, *S. enteritidis* showed a higher resistance to be inactivated (DL
304 reached in 60 min of treatment time and 11.9 kJ/L of Q_{UV}) than *E. coli* O157:H7 (DL reached
305 in 45 min of treatment time and 8.7 kJ/L of Q_{UV}). This difference can be attributed to their

306 different response against the oxidative stress generated by the solar process. It is believed that
307 the bacterial inactivation mechanism by H₂O₂/solar process is based on a synergistic effect
308 between the photo-oxidative damages induced by solar radiation and internal photo-Fenton
309 reactions between intracellular iron and the diffused H₂O₂ across the cell membrane [18].
310 Although this bactericidal mechanism is similar for different bacterial strains, the response to
311 the oxidative stress generated may varied for each particular microorganism. In our specific
312 case, the upregulation and a higher induction level of some genes and enzymes which act
313 against the oxidative stress generated by an excess of H₂O₂, such as OxyR related genes and
314 Superoxide Dismutase enzyme (Mn-SOD) in *Salmonella* strain, could explain the higher
315 resistance of *S. enteritidis* to be inactivated by the H₂O₂/solar process compared with *E. coli*
316 O157:H7 [19].

317 This results demonstrate the highly efficiency of H₂O₂/solar process for SFCWW disinfection,
318 even considering the presence of high turbidity, requiring values of 12 kJ/L of solar energy to
319 reach 5-log reduction value of both bacteria. In comparison with our previous works reporting
320 SFCWW disinfection by H₂O₂/solar process at lab scale, 200 mL of volume and 10 mg/L of
321 H₂O₂, where a Q_{UV} of 12.5 kJ/L was required to reach same disinfection results [16], it is also
322 clear the high performance of this solar-driven process for the treatment of turbid wastewater
323 at pilot plant scale using solar CPC reactors.

324

325 **3.1.2 Fe³⁺-EDDHA/solar process**

326 Figure 2a,b shows the inactivation profile of *E. coli* O157:H7 and *S. enteritidis* by Fe³⁺-
327 EDDHA/solar process at three different concentrations: 0.5, 2.5 and 5 mg/L. The dissolved
328 iron concentration was measured along the solar processes (Table 2, Figure SI2). At the end of
329 solar tests, more than the 30% of the initially iron added was still detected in the sample,
330 demonstrating the benefits of using this chelate to keep the iron dissolved in water.

331 The inactivation profile of both bacteria showed that the presence of the iron-chelate provoked
332 the appearance of a shoulder phase and lower kinetic constants compared with the effect of
333 solar only disinfection (Fig. 1a,b, Table 1), but also at the same time it is able to reach the DL
334 avoiding the non-desired residual concentration of bacteria observed for the solar only
335 disinfection process. These results and behavior agree with the reported in a previous study at
336 laboratory scale for similar Fe³⁺-EDDHA concentration [16]. The inactivation mechanism that
337 explain this improvement has been previously proposed and attributed to alterations of the
338 bacteria membrane permeability through chelation (by EDDHA or other subproducts) of the
339 stabilizing cations (Mg²⁺ and Ca²⁺) in the liposaccharides layers of the bacterial membrane

340 [16]. Thus, the membrane alteration increases the bacteria's susceptibility to be inactivated by
341 solar radiation as observed in the elimination of the bacterial residual phase by this solar
342 process.

343 The inactivation results showed an improvement for iron chelate concentration increased from
344 0.5 (no DL reached in any pathogen) to 2.5 mg/L; meanwhile, an opposite behavior occurred
345 when the Fe³⁺-EDDHA concentration raised from 2.5 to 5 mg/L appearing a detrimental effect
346 on the inactivation of both pathogens (higher Q_{UV} need to reach the DL). The best inactivation
347 results were therefore obtained with 2.5 mg/L of Fe³⁺-EDDHA concentration. *S. enteritidis* (k :
348 0.229 ± 0.029 L/kJ) showed also a higher resistance to be inactivated than *E. coli* O157:H7 (k :
349 0.417 ± 0.026 L/kJ), requiring 30 min of treatment time and 6 kJ/L more of Q_{UV} to reach the
350 DL.

351 The inactivation results have a clear dependency on the concentration of iron-chelated added.
352 The lower efficiency showed by increasing the iron chelate concentration from 2.5 to 5 mg/L
353 can be explained by an increase of the light scattering effect of the precipitated iron particles
354 from the Fe³⁺-EDDHA decomposition [32] that may act as a solar-screen protecting the
355 bacteria from the solar UV-photons (a significant turbidity increase of ca. 5 NTU was observed
356 at the end of the treatment for the highest iron concentration tested). In fact, the particle
357 concentration (reagents not dissolved) is as key parameter in photocatalysis, especially for
358 semiconductors such as titanium dioxide (TiO₂) and also for solar photo-Fenton and its
359 behaviour has been very well described and modelled in tubular CPC photo-reactors, where it
360 has been previously reported that an iron concentration higher than 5.5 mg/L (0.1 mM) can
361 reduce the disinfection efficiency [27]. This detrimental effect is mainly a consequence of the
362 particles screen effect that modify the homogeneous distribution of photons in the tubular
363 reactor, a key feature of the treatment performance of CPC reactors.

364

365 **3.1.3 Fe³⁺-EDDHA/H₂O₂/solar process**

366 The inactivation profiles of *E. coli* O157:H7 and *S. enteritidis* in SFCWW by the Fe³⁺-EDDHA/
367 H₂O₂/solar process are shown in Figure 3a and b, respectively. The inactivation kinetics of both
368 bacteria were improved by the combination of the iron micronutrient with H₂O₂, showing the
369 non-presence of a shoulder phase in the kinetic profile and reducing the treatment time required
370 to achieve the DL in comparison with Fe³⁺-EDDHA/solar, H₂O₂/solar and solar only
371 disinfection processes. These results can be explained based on its higher oxidative capability
372 and the more efficient and complex inactivation mechanism described elsewhere [16]. Briefly,
373 this mechanism is based on accumulative damages on the bacteria cell membrane provoked

374 mainly by: i) the capability to generate $\cdot\text{OH}$ and other ROS by photo-Fenton reactions and ii)
375 the permeability alteration of the cell membrane by the presence of the chelating agent [16].
376 Regarding reagent concentration, as for the Fe^{3+} -EDDHA/solar process, the disinfection
377 efficiency was enhanced by increasing the iron concentration from 0.5 to 2.5 mg/L, while no
378 improvement was observed for bacterial inactivation when increasing the concentration to
379 5 mg/L. A similar behavior was observed in a previous study of EDDS chelate, where the
380 disinfection efficiency was improved by increasing the iron chelate concentration from
381 0.05 mM to 0.1 mM whereas a marked detrimental effect on the efficiency was observed when
382 the concentration increase to 0.2 mM [27]. In other recent study that also use an
383 aminopolycarboxylic acid (NTA, nitrilotriacetic acid) as iron chelate for the removal of three
384 pharmaceutical micropollutants in continuous-flow mode, a significant removal improvement
385 was not observed by using twice the concentration of reagents [33]. This behavior can be
386 explained based on the combination of different reasons: i) the low iron quantity available, ii)
387 the screen effect as consequence of iron precipitation [27] and iii) the increase of organic matter
388 concentration coming from the organic chelate, a well-known competitor for the generated $\cdot\text{OH}$
389 radicals, decreasing the kinetic of radical-target reactions [34]. Therefore, to achieve the most
390 effective treatment conditions, a compromise between these different factors is needed to
391 obtain the optimal reagents concentration in CPC reactors.

392 In the present study, the SFCWW disinfection capability was markedly reduced at the iron
393 chelate concentration of 0.5, attributed mainly to a reagent limitation at this concentration,
394 where turbidity and organic matter detrimental effects of the sample prevailing over the solar
395 treatment efficiency obtaining a similarly behavior when the iron chelate concentration rise up
396 to 5 mg/L. Therefore, the faster kinetic inactivation was obtained with 2.5/20 mg/L of Fe^{3+} -
397 EDDHA/ H_2O_2 for both bacteria, where the DL was achieved after 60 min and 8.41 kJ/L of
398 Q_{UV} . This treatment condition improved the efficiency of the other solar processes studied
399 employing the same reagents concentrations separately (H_2O_2 /solar: 20 mg/L; Fe^{3+} -
400 EDDHA/solar: 2.5 mg/L). The Q_{UV} required for SFCWW disinfection by 2.5/20 mg/L of Fe^{3+} -
401 EDDHA/ H_2O_2 was 30 % and 78 % lower than the required for H_2O_2 /solar (11.91 kJ/L) and
402 Fe^{3+} -EDDHA/solar process (37.81 kJ/L), respectively.

403 In our previous work at laboratory scale (200 mL of volume), the Q_{UV} required to reach DL for
404 both bacteria and similar reagent's concentration was ca. 5 kJ/L [16], this value is very close
405 to the 8.41 kJ/L obtained at pilot plant scale, but treating 60 L of contaminated SFCWW. This
406 corroborates the possibility of up-scaling the Fe^{3+} -EDDHA/ H_2O_2 for SFCWW disinfection
407 using solar CPC reactor.

408

409 The residual iron in solution (Table 2, Figure SI2b) was significantly reduced compared with
410 Fe^{3+} -EDDHA/solar, as only 12 to 25 % of the chelated iron initially added remain in solution
411 at the end of the solar treatment for 0.5 to 5 mg/L of Fe^{3+} -EDDHA, respectively. In the case of
412 the oxidant concentration (H_2O_2), it was almost completely removed during the treatment
413 (90 %) in all the tested conditions (Figure SI2a), which was expected due to the oxidant is
414 consumed during the photo-Fenton reactions to generate $\cdot\text{OH}$. The low iron concentrations
415 tested and the very low H_2O_2 residual concentration in the solar treated SFCWW makes
416 possible a subsequent viable agricultural reuse without pose a risk to vegetables or irrigations
417 systems [17, 35]. Moreover, the partial decomposition of the chelate during the solar treatment
418 detected by the iron measurements (Fig. SI2b) and the UV-vis absorption profile of the treated
419 water (Figure SI3) indicates that the chelate still remains active and available as source of iron
420 for the further irrigation of vegetables, nevertheless it would require a new research to confirm
421 it.

422

423 **3.1.4 Post-treatment bacterial analysis**

424 The efficiency of the solar processes was assessed in terms of bacterial regrowth after 24 h of
425 dark storage. The concentration of *E. coli* O157:H7 and *S. enteritidis* detected after that period
426 is shown in Figure 4. According to Spanish RD 1620/2007, the limit of *E. coli* concentration
427 for wastewater irrigation is established at 100 CFU/100mL (RD 1620/2007) [21]. These results
428 showed that after all the solar processes and reagent's concentration tested, the bacterial
429 concentration was less than this limit for both pathogens in the treated SFCWW, except for 2.5
430 mg/L of reagent in H_2O_2 /solar process (for both pathogens) and 0.5/2.5 mg/L of Fe^{3+} -
431 EDDHA/ H_2O_2 (only for *E. coli* O157:H7). Therefore, the use of very low reagents
432 concentrations (< 5 mg/L of H_2O_2 and 2.5 mg/L of Fe^{3+} -EDDHA) may not be appropriate to
433 ensure efficient water disinfection and higher oxidative conditions should be required when
434 application to real scenarios. On the other hand, considering the new European proposal for the
435 regulation of wastewater reuse for irrigation, the presence of *E. coli* is more restrictive, as its
436 concentration is limited to 10 CFU/100mL (Procedure 2018/0169/COD) [22]. For this
437 regulation, the suitable solar processes for SFCWW disinfection and reuse in irrigation are
438 H_2O_2 /solar at concentrations higher than 10 mg/L of H_2O_2 and Fe^{3+} -EDDHA/ H_2O_2 at 2.5/20
439 and 5/40 mg/L of reagents; while lower concentration as well as the Fe^{3+} -EDDHA/solar process
440 can be discarded as appropriated treatments for SFCWW disinfection due to detection of *E.*
441 *coli* at concentrations higher than this very restrictive value.

442

443 **3.2 OMCs removal by solar processes**

444 Simultaneously to the analysis of bacterial inactivation, the degradation of each OMC was also
445 investigated in SFCWW. Figure 5 shows a comparison of the Σ OMCs removal profile obtained
446 along the solar treatments, and the degradation of each individual OMC is shown in Figure SI4.

447 In general, non-significant removal percentages were obtained by solar only treatment, due to
448 the initial OMCs concentration remained almost constant during the treatment time, discarding
449 therefore photolysis effects on the results obtained in this study. The percentage of Σ OMCs
450 removal by H_2O_2 /solar process at any reagent concentration tested varied from 10 to 20 %,
451 which is a very modest efficiency. These low efficiencies were expected due to the high energy
452 required for the cleavage of the O-O bond into $\cdot\text{OH}$ and therefore, their dissociation will be
453 generated only under shortwave wavelengths ($< 290 \text{ nm}$) which are in a very small extent in
454 the solar spectrum. The removal percentage obtained is in line with other study in literature,
455 where degradation of ca. 20 % was reported for the antibiotic chloramphenicol by H_2O_2 /solar
456 process when it was exposed to similar accumulative energy (60 kJ/L) [36]. Although the Fe^{3+} -
457 EDDHA/solar process has shown a disinfection capability, this process did not degraded OMCs
458 at any of the Fe^{3+} -EDDHA concentrations tested (data not shown). The non-degradation
459 observed are in agreement with the non-generation of oxidative species by this solar process.

460 The highest Σ OMCs degradation (42 %) of this study was attained with 2.5/20 mg/L of Fe^{3+} -
461 EDDHA/ H_2O_2 , attributed mainly to the capability of $\cdot\text{OH}$ generation of this process by photo-
462 Fenton reactions [16]. Significantly, the OMCs degradation profiles (Figure 5) observed with
463 this solar process in the two most oxidant conditions were non-linear and characterized by a
464 fast degradation in the first stage of the process followed by a smooth decay until the end of
465 the treatment time. The low chelate concentration employed and its self-degradation by the
466 generated $\cdot\text{OH}$ might explain the low efficiencies and the double kinetic degradation observed,
467 behavior previously reported for other chelate agents like EDDS in ultrapure water [37] and
468 DPTA (Diethylene triamine pentaacetic acid) or EDTA in wastewater effluents after the
469 conventional activated sludge treatment [38]. In addition, DOC content was measured
470 throughout all solar processes. The results indicated a very slight DOC degradation (lower than
471 10%) for both, H_2O_2 /solar and Fe^{3+} -EDDHA/ H_2O_2 /solar process (data not shown).

472 In summary, as for disinfection, the highest Σ OMCs removal efficiency was also attained by
473 the Fe^{3+} -EDDHA/ H_2O_2 /solar process using 2.5 and 20 mg/L of iron micronutrient and oxidant
474 as Fenton reagents, respectively.

475

476 **3.3 Toxicity evaluation**

477 Despite the fact that phytotoxicity of the Fe^{3+} -EDDHA complex as fertilizer has been
478 previously studied [39], as far as the author's knowledge there are no studies dealing with the
479 ecotoxicity of this chelating agent in wastewater samples.

480 Figure 6 shows the *A. fischeri* bioluminescence inhibition of SFCWW samples treated by the
481 best operational conditions of the three solar processes investigated, i.e., $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2/\text{solar}$: 20 mg/L,
482 Fe^{3+} -EDDHA/solar: 2.5 mg/L and Fe^{3+} -EDDHA/ $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2/\text{solar}$: 2.5/20 mg/L. Additionally, two
483 control tests (effect of the water matrix and Fe^{3+} -EDDHA at 2.5 mg/L) were also carried out.

484 A slight increase in the bioluminescence inhibition percentage (BI %) by the mere presence of
485 Fe^{3+} -EDDHA was observed (from 12.4 ± 5.7 to 21 ± 6.1 %). This indicates that the presence of
486 the commercial iron-chelate or any sub-product generated during its synthesis, somehow
487 affected *A. fischeri* metabolism, not being possible to discard the effect of each one.
488 Nevertheless, no significant toxicity by any treatments towards *A. fischeri* was obtained as
489 lower BI than 50 % was detected in all cases, including control and solar treated samples.

490 For the $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2/\text{solar}$ process, the luminescence emitted by the marine bacteria was not
491 significantly affected (16.5 ± 3.5 BI %), whereas for the other two solar processes (Fe^{3+} -
492 EDDHA/solar and EDDHA/ $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2/\text{solar}$ process) a BI % increase was obtained: 39.3 ± 3.1 and
493 24.5 ± 3 BI %, respectively. The higher BI % observed for the Fe^{3+} -EDDHA/solar process
494 could be related with the presence of photodegradation products such as salicylaldehyde,
495 salicylic acid, salicylaldehyde ethylenediamine diimine or similar subproducts generated
496 during the solar process [32]. Some of them have been reported to be harmful to aquatic
497 microorganisms [40]. However, the lower BI % observed for Fe^{3+} -EDDHA/ $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2/\text{solar}$ process
498 could be explained by the higher oxidative capability of this process (generation of $\cdot\text{OH}$) which
499 accelerates the decomposition of both the iron chelate and probably also their photodegradation
500 products, therefore reducing the number of agents that can affect bacteria's metabolism and
501 reinforced the benefits of the application of this solar process for SFCWW treatment.

502

503 **3.4 Techno-economic assessment**

504 An economic analysis of the disinfection alone and the simultaneous disinfection and
505 decontamination of SFCWW was carried out for the solar processes studied at the best
506 operational conditions obtained for each one. For the costs estimation of simultaneous
507 disinfection and decontamination, the accumulative UVA energy (Q_{UV}) obtained after 2 h of
508 treatment was considered, taking into account that kinetics of OMCs degradation did not lead

509 to a significant improvement from 2 to 5 h of treatment time (Figure 5). The total treatment
510 cost was calculated as a summation of the investment (IC) and operational cost (OP) based on
511 the calculation of their annual cost.

512 The annual IC was estimated based on the cost of the CPC field required for each solar process,
513 which represents the main investment cost for solar-driven systems, and the application of an
514 8 % of capital recovery factor (5 % of interest rate and 20 years of equipment life-time). The
515 CPC field (A_{CPC} , m²), was calculated according to the Eq. 6 [11]:

516

$$A_{CPC} = \frac{Q_{UV} \cdot V_{tot}}{T_s \cdot UV_G} \quad \text{Eq. 6}$$

517

518 Taking into account the following assumptions:

- 519 • The Q_{UV} values obtained for water disinfection (in J/L): 11.91×10^3 , 37.81×10^3 and
520 8.41×10^3 J/L for H₂O₂/solar (20 mg/L), Fe³⁺-EDDHA/solar (2.5 mg/L) and Fe³⁺-
521 EDDHA/H₂O₂/solar (2.5/20 mg/L), respectively, considering the inactivation kinetics
522 of *S. enteritidis* (the more resistant pathogen).
- 523 • The Q_{UV} values considered for the simultaneous disinfection and OMCs removal (in
524 J/L): 25.24×10^3 and 17.03×10^3 J/L for H₂O₂/solar and Fe³⁺-EDDHA/H₂O₂/solar,
525 respectively.
- 526 • The annual volume of treated water (V_{tot} , L): 18250×10^3 L/year. Considering 50 m³
527 per day and 365 operation days per year.
- 528 • Yearly time of operation (T_s , s): 157.68×10^5 s, 12 h of operation per day.
- 529 • The average of local solar UVA radiation (UV_G , W/m): 36.8 W/m².

530

531 As the rest of the equation parameters are constants, the Q_{UV} value for each process will be the
532 parameter that determines the CPC field-area in each case being its value directly proportional
533 to the necessary CPC area. The CPC area needed for SFCWW disinfection are: Fe³⁺-
534 EDDHA/solar (1189.2 m²) > H₂O₂/solar (374.6 m²) > Fe³⁺-EDDHA/ H₂O₂/solar (264.5 m²).
535 For the simultaneous OMCs removal: H₂O₂/solar (793.8 m²) > Fe³⁺-EDDHA/ H₂O₂/solar
536 (535.6 m²). The final CPC cost per m² was calculated based on the estimation of different
537 scaling-up prices: 816 €/m² for $A_{CPC} < 1000$ m² and 418 €/m² for $A_{CPC} > 1000$ m².

538 The operational costs were calculated based on the reagent, electricity and maintenance costs.
539 The maintenance cost was considered to be 2.5 % of the annual IC. For the reagents cost
540 estimation, only the H₂O₂ (industrial grade price of 0.43 €/L for a 35 % (w/v) solution) was

541 taken into account because the iron micronutrient was considered an agriculture cost (farmer)
542 due to this iron chelate is usually added to the irrigation water by the farmers to avoid the iron
543 chlorosis disease in arid or semiarid regions and therefore its addition would not entail any
544 extra cost to carry out the solar treatment if its objective is the subsequent water reuse.
545 Electricity costs were estimated considering a price of 0.155 €/kW/h in Spain and the power
546 required for two water centrifugal pumps: one for filling the reactor (0.22 kWh/m³) and
547 another one for water recirculation during the treatment time (0.44 kWh/m³).

548 The estimated total costs to treat a m³ of SFCWW by the three solar processes under study and
549 a breakdown of the relative contribution of each cost are presented in Table 3. Non-significant
550 differences were observed for the OC of each solar process (0.15-0.20 €/m³) and therefore the
551 IC was the responsible of the different costs estimated for each process representing < 85 and
552 < 90 % of the total cost for disinfection alone and simultaneous disinfection and
553 decontamination, respectively. The Fe³⁺-EDDHA/H₂O₂/solar process showed, as we expected,
554 the lower estimated IC (0.95 and 1.92 €/m³) due to the higher efficiency of this solar process
555 for the removal of the two types of targets (lower *Q_{UV}* value and therefore lower CPC field-
556 area). The estimated price to treat one m³ of SFCWW by the Fe³⁺-EDDHA/H₂O₂/solar process
557 were 1.10 € for disinfection alone and 2.10 € for the simultaneous disinfection and
558 decontamination. This cost is 36 and 45 % lower than the estimated for SFCWW disinfection
559 and OMCs removal by the H₂O₂/solar process, respectively.

560 The cost obtained in this study can be explained due to the water matrix complexity (100 NTU
561 of turbidity) and the low water volume intended to be treated in this particular agro-food
562 industry, which significantly may increase the investment cost based on scaling-up rules.

563 Regarding other technical aspects, there are several advantages of the use of this commercial
564 iron-chelate respect to other commercial agents, such as EDDS, including: i) the photo-Fenton
565 process using Fe³⁺-EDDHA has showed to be able to improve the disinfection efficiency
566 respect to its not addition (H₂O₂/solar process), ii) the high stability of this iron chelate gives
567 to a higher 'lifetime' in solution than other chelating agents and lead to the presence of a residual
568 iron chelate concentration in the solar treated wastewater, which allows a subsequent
569 agricultural reuse in arid or semi-arid regions, contributing at the same time to solve two
570 important problems in this regions: iron chlorosis disease of crops and water scarcity and, iii)
571 among the different iron chelating agents authorized for agricultural use, EDDHA is the most
572 used by the farmers (56-79% are EDDHA chelates) due to it is the most efficient (high stability
573 in a wide range of pH) and therefore, the fact that its already use by the farmers (normally

574 added to the irrigation water) could contribute to the feasible real implementation of the
575 proposed processes.

576 Finally, it can be also highlighted that the integration of these solar processes in the fresh cut-
577 industry can be considered as a feasible and promising strategy to decrease its water footprint
578 due to several reasons: i) the successful disinfection performance of the solar processes
579 evaluated, ii) the low volume of wastewater generated by this particular agro-food industry (up
580 to 50 m³ per day) iii) the modular design of CPC reactors and the small area (ca. 250 m²)
581 required to treat such affordable amount of wastewater, iv) the clear benefits of irrigation of
582 vegetables with a regenerated water containing potential substances (such as the iron-chelate
583 and other organic substances and nutrients) that promote enhanced yields of the vegetables
584 production, reducing at the same time some cultivation costs for farmers and, v) the easily
585 adaptation of the proposed solar processes with the modular CPC reactor design for irrigation
586 due to this industries are commonly located closely to the cultivation fields, reducing therefore
587 the requirements related with water storages and distribution systems

588

589 **4. CONCLUSIONS**

590 The three solar processes studied (H₂O₂/solar, Fe³⁺-EDDHA/solar and Fe³⁺-
591 EDDHA/H₂O₂/solar) has shown to disinfect successfully a water matrix with a high turbidity
592 content (100 NTU) at pilot plant scale for the first time.

593

594 The Fe³⁺-EDDHA/H₂O₂/solar process using low reagents concentrations (2.5/20 mg/L of Fe³⁺-
595 EDDHA/H₂O₂) has shown the highest treatment capability reducing ca. 40 % the OMCs load
596 and attaining > 5-log reduction value for both pathogens with an accumulated solar energy of
597 8.41 kJ/L or 60 min of solar treatment time.

598

599 The high disinfection efficiency obtained by the three solar processes at the best operational
600 conditions (H₂O₂/solar: 20 mg/L; Fe³⁺-EDDHA/solar: 2.5 mg/L and Fe³⁺-EDDHA/ H₂O₂/solar:
601 2.5/20 mg/L) accomplished the microbiological quality established in urban wastewater reuse
602 law, including the Spanish Royal decree 1620/2007 (<100 CFU/100mL). Moreover,
603 H₂O₂/solar and Fe³⁺-EDDHA/H₂O₂/solar processes also fitted values of the new European
604 proposal (Procedure 2018/0169/COD) (<10 CFU/100mL). These results have significant
605 implications due to their capability of enabling the intended treated wastewater reuse for
606 irrigation in agriculture with the incorporation of the iron micronutrient as an advantage.

607

608 The ecotoxicity findings suggest that the SFCWW treated by solar processes might not affect
609 the ecosystem's health. Nevertheless, this study was based on the toxic effect of only one
610 organism and more research using different tests should be performed to know the potential
611 toxic environmental effect of the solar treated water.

612
613 The estimated treatment cost obtained are high to be applied at industrial scale, but the
614 possibility of reusing the treated SFCWW directly for irrigation with an iron micronutrient that
615 farmers already used could contribute to the reduction of the water footprint in the fresh-cut
616 industry and the reduction of water scarcity and iron chlorosis in arid or semi-arid regions,
617 making this solar treatment a promising option.

618

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624

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- 774

775 **Captions**

776 **Table 1.** Bacterial inactivation kinetic constants.

777 **Table 2.** Initial and final reagent's concentrations measured in SFCWW treated by all solar
778 processes.

779 **Table 3.** Techno-economic data of solar treatments.

780 **Figure 1.** *E. coli* O157:H7 (a) and *S. enteritidis* (b) inactivation by H₂O₂/solar.

781 **Figure 2.** *E. coli* O157:H7 (a) and *S. enteritidis* (b) inactivation by Fe³⁺-EDDHA/solar.

782 **Figure 3.** *E. coli* O157:H7 (a) and *S. enteritidis* (b) inactivation by Fe³⁺-EDDHA/ H₂O₂/solar.

783 **Figure 4.** Analysis of bacteria concentration in treated SFCWW after 24 h of storage.

784 **Figure 5.** Degradation profiles of ΣOMCs by H₂O₂/solar and Fe³⁺-EDDHA/H₂O₂/solar
785 processes.

786 **Figure 6.** Ecotoxicity detected by *A. fischeri* test in untreated and solar treated SFCWW
787 samples.

Table 1.

Treatment	[Fe ³⁺ :H ₂ O ₂] (mg/L)	<i>E. coli</i> O157:H7				<i>S. enteritidis</i>			
		k (L/kJ)	R ²	SL (kJ/L)	Q _{UV} (kJ/L)	k (L/kJ)	R ²	SL (kJ/L)	Q _{UV} (kJ/L)
<i>Fig. 1a/1b</i>									
Solar photo-inactivation*	-	0.529±0.104	0.832	-	56.56	0.243±0.011	0.983	1.57	56.56
H ₂ O ₂ /solar	2.5	0.400±0.038	0.947	-	13.60	k ₁ :0.413±0.043 k ₂ :0.065±0.005	0.948 0.979	-	25.20
	5	0.495±0.028	0.984	-	11.52	k ₁ :0.623±0.063 k ₂ :0.068±0.015	0.970 0.768	-	26.46
	10	0.510±0.103	0.796	-	11.60	k ₁ :0.543±0.061 k ₂ :0.062±0.020	0.940 0.754	-	17.05
	20	0.626±0.105	0.920	-	8.75	0.429±0.040	0.965	-	11.91
	40	1.099±0.203	0.825	-	4.89	0.554±0.040	0.954	-	10.34
<i>Fig. 2a/2b</i>									
Fe ³⁺ -EDDHA/solar	0.5	k ₁ :0.331±0.078 k ₂ :0.031±0.002	0.850 0.960	8.23	56.82	0.090±0.006	0.949	3.78	56.82
	2.5	0.417±0.026	0.992	19.12	31.41	0.229±0.029	0.939	13.51	37.81
	5	0.244±0.026	0.954	17.05	40.78	0.191±0.022	0.938	17.05	47.11
<i>Fig. 3a/3b</i>									
Fe ³⁺ - EDDHA/H ₂ O ₂ /solar	0.5:2.5	0.195±0.021	0.881	-	30.82	0.142±0.015	0.856	-	43.67
	2.5:20	0.706±0.093	0.876	-	8.41	0.673±0.082	0.893	-	8.41
	5:40	0.805±0.131	0.840	-	6.33	0.527±0.022	0.984	-	11.35

*Inactivation kinetic according to model 4, where residual bacteria population (N_{res}) for *E. coli* and *S. enteritidis* was 4 and 50 CFU/mL respectively.

Table 2.

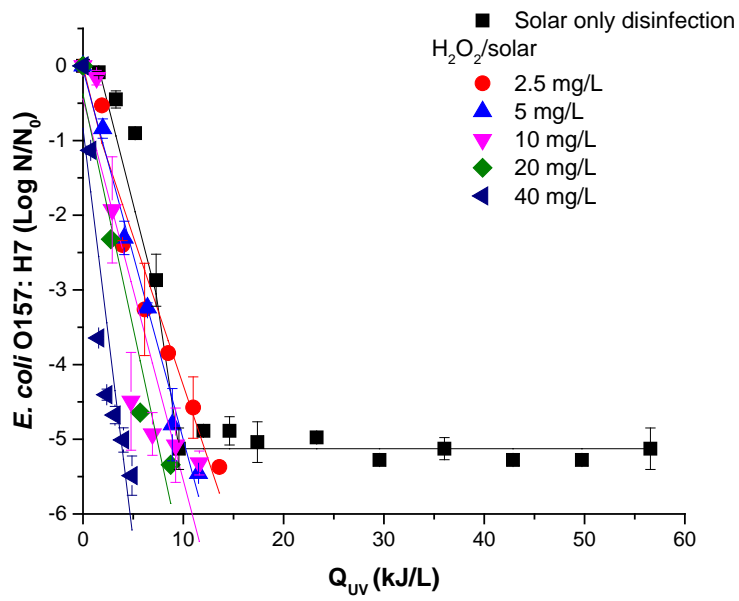
Treatment	[Fe:H ₂ O ₂] (mg/L)	[Fe] _{t300} (mg/L)	% residual	[H ₂ O ₂] _{t300} (mg/L)	% residual
Solar photo-inactivation	-	-	-	-	-
H ₂ O ₂ /solar	2.5	-	-	1.66	66
	5	-	-	3.13	63
	10	-	-	7.05	71
	20	-	-	14.30	72
	40	-	-	30.73	77
Fe ³⁺ -EDDHA/solar	0.5	0.15	30	-	-
	2.5	0.98	39	-	-
	5	2.64	53	-	-
Fe ³⁺ -EDDHA/H ₂ O ₂ /solar	0.5:2.5	0.06	12	0.46	9*
	2.5:20	0.42	17	1.66	8
	5:40	1.27	25	2.59	7

*Addition of 2.5 mg/L of H₂O₂ at 120 min

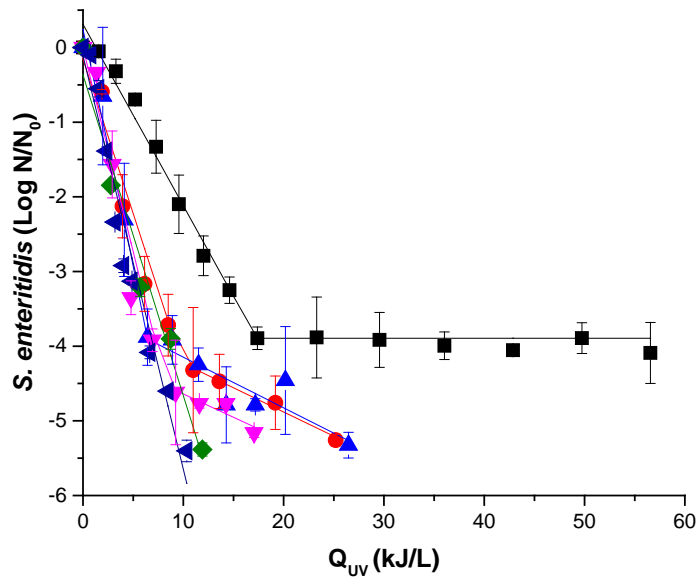
Table 3.

	Fe³⁺-EDDHA/solar		H₂O₂/solar		Fe³⁺-EDDHA/H₂O₂/solar	
	€m ³	%	€m ³	%	€m ³	%
Disinfection						
IC	2.18	94	1.34	89	0.95	86
OC						
Electricity	0.10	4	0.10	7	0.10	9
Reagent	-	-	0.03	2	0.03	3
Maintenance	0.05	2	0.03	2	0.02	2
Total (€m³)	2.33		1.50		1.10	
Disinfection + OMCs						
IC	-	-	2.84	94	1.92	92
OC						
Electricity	-	-	0.10	3	0.10	5
Reagent	-	-	0.03	1	0.03	1
Maintenance	-	-	0.07	2	0.05	2
Total (€m³)	-	-	3.04		2.10	

Figure 1.

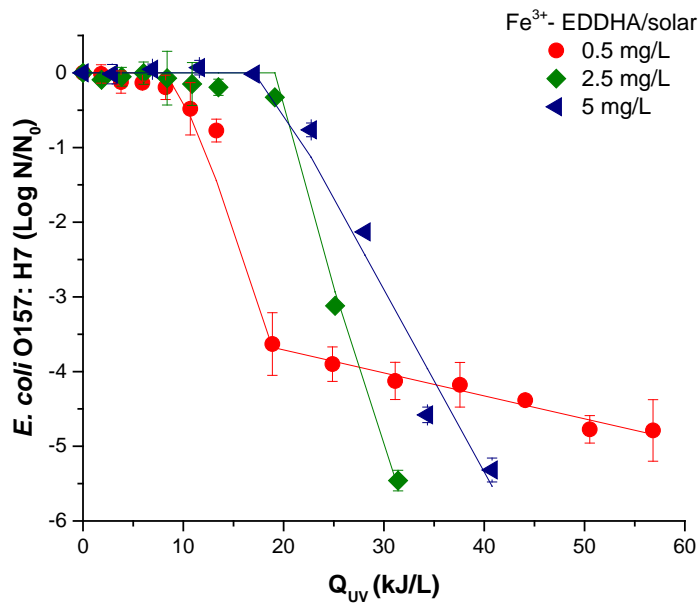


a)

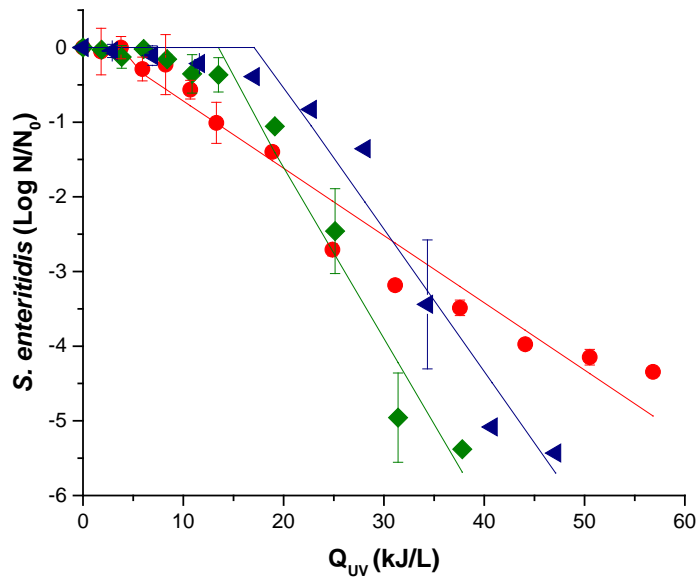


b)

Figure 2.

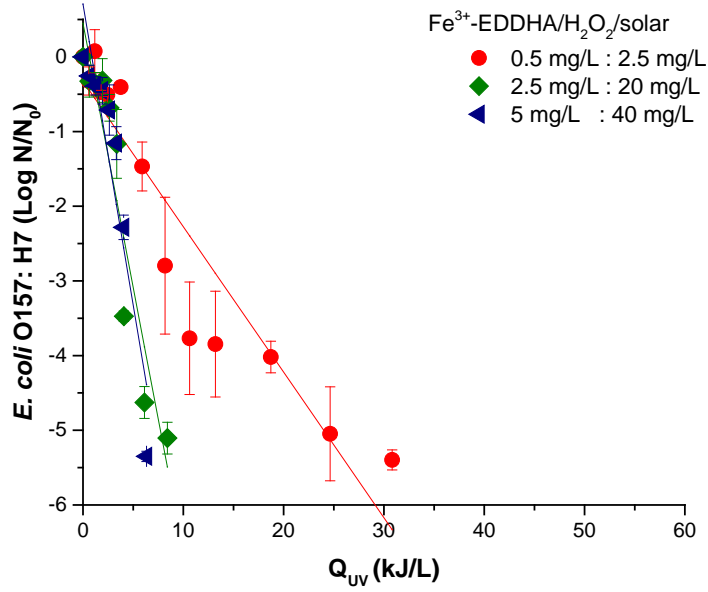


a)

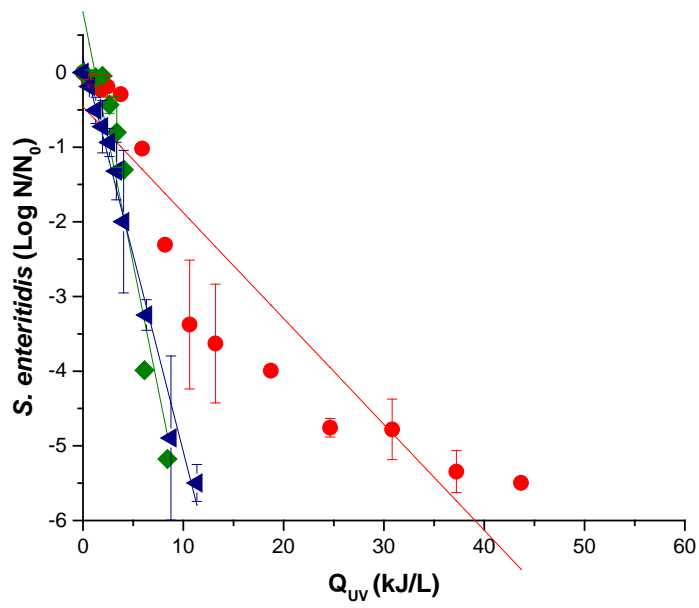


b)

Figure 3.



a)



b)

Figure 4.

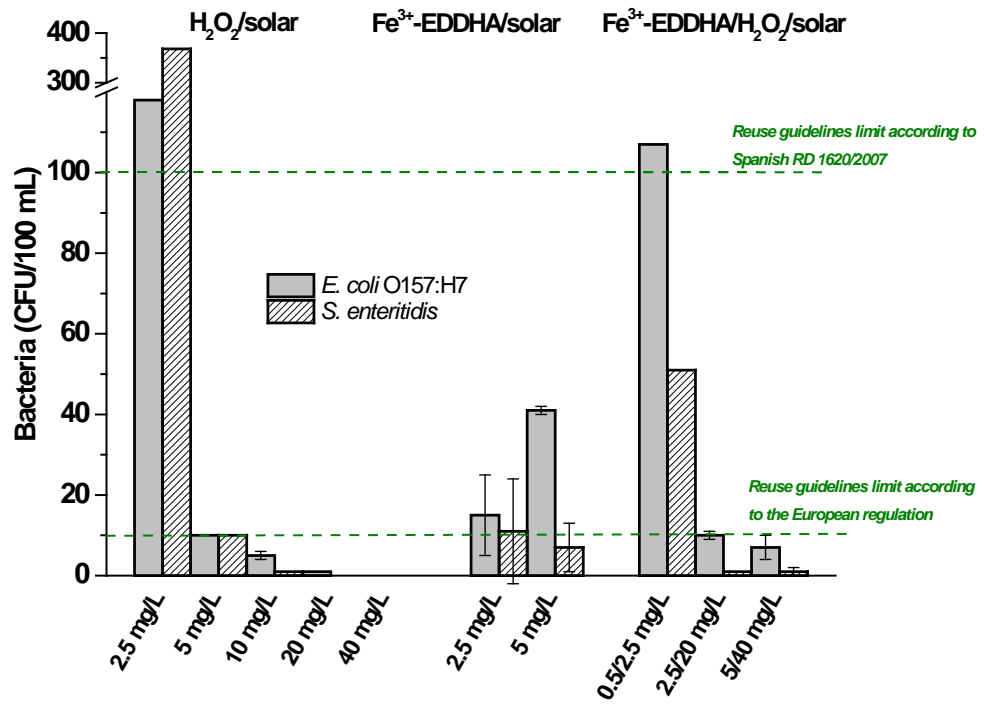


Figure 5.

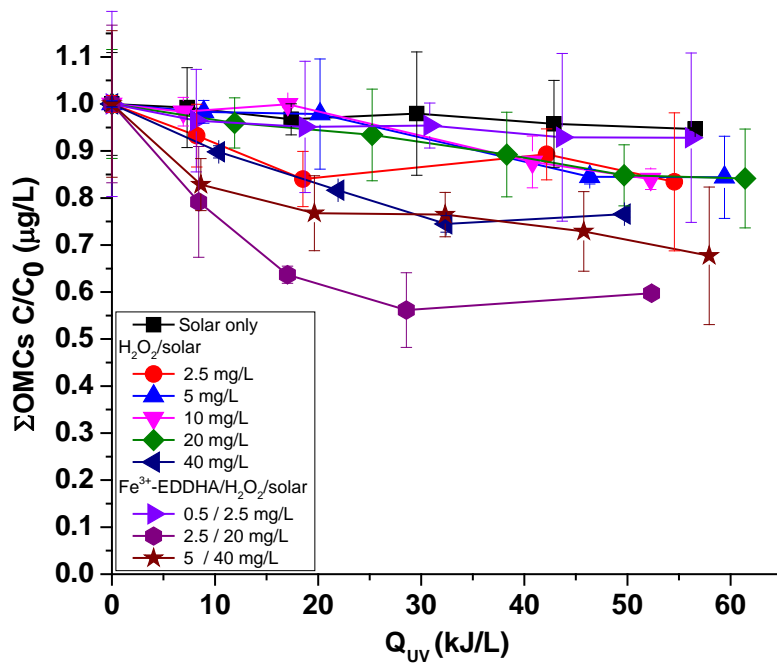


Figure 6

