

# Produce Traceability Initiative

## Cliff Notes from June 12, 2008 Meeting

Representatives from both the USDA and AAFC (Agriculture and Agri Food Canada) gave presentations to the committee on the importance of whole-chain traceability. They shared their support for the work the industry is doing via this initiative on traceability and encouraged accelerated timelines.

Representatives from both the IDDBA (International Dairy/Deli/Bakery Association) and NCBA (National Cattlemen's Beef Association) also gave presentations giving a status of where traceability is in their respective sectors in addition to their status in the use and incorporation of the GTIN. They were encouraged by the committee to become engaged in the effort to use standards for traceability in their respective sectors.

The committee heard a report from the subgroup working on a standard case label. After much discussion, consensus was to have, at minimum, the GTIN, Lot # and Pack/Harvest Date embedded in the 128 barcode. It must also appear in human readable form directly below the barcode.

Discussion was also had on the number of sides a label should appear on a case. After much discussion, consensus was to have it, at minimum, on one side of a case.

A report was also given stating that both the subgroup for a standardized case template and the subgroup for retailers both came to a consensus to use the "hybrid pallet label" option as the preferred Best Practice, with the ASN process being a second Best Practice. It was discussed that the hybrid pallet label would work for those who are not, and those who are, using the ASN and is therefore more inclusive. This would allow one pallet label for both processes. Discussion will still take place at the next meeting as to a solution that could be used when there is an excessive number of items on a pallet requiring an excessive amount of barcodes that would appear on a hybrid pallet label.

The committee then broke up into their three subgroups (buyers, sellers, distributors/wholesalers) to further define timelines for each major milestone. Those agreed upon milestones are as follows:

1. Brand owners must obtain their own GS1-issued Company Prefixes.
2. Brand owners must assign 14-digit GTINs (Global Trade Item Numbers) to all CASE configurations. It is highly recommended that companies use the GTIN Assignment Strategy as a guide to allow for consistency.
3. Brand owners must provide their GTINs (and corresponding data) to their buyers.
4. All parties must have the systems to capture and store GTINs and subsequent information.
5. Those packing the product are responsible for providing human-readable information on each case (GTIN, Lot #, Pack/Harvest Date (OPTIONAL if already embedded in Lot #)).

6. Those packing the product are responsible for encoding the GTIN, Lot # and the Pack/Harvest Date (OPTIONAL if already embedded in Lot #) in a GS1-128 barcode and human readable on every case of produce.
7. Each handler of the CASE must read and store the above information in conjunction with the one-step-up and one-step-down provision.

The committee identified timelines for each of the above milestones that is currently under review. These timelines will be finalized at the next meeting.

Next meeting date will be August 20, 2008.

Next Activities of the Produce Traceability Initiative:

- Finalize timelines for each milestone
- Finalize Action Plan
- Create a method and/or vehicle for public declaration showing support and incorporation of the Action Plan
- Discuss marketing and PR plan to educate and inform industry
- Work on a provision for item level traceability