

## Cliff Notes from February 22, 2008

Produce Traceability Initiative Meeting

Atlanta, GA

Representatives from over 40 companies and 8 trade associations met in Atlanta, Georgia as part of the Produce Traceability Initiative to continue work on an Industry Action Plan for external produce traceability. Find below a summary of key points made at the meeting. Should you wish to provide input on the following key points, please contact your trade association representative as follows:

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Attendees were divided up into three primary groups based upon their function in the supply chain: (1) suppliers, (2) distributors/wholesalers/brokers and (3) buyers. Each breakout group was to discuss the timelines and challenges associated with the following:

- Brand owners obtaining their GS1-issued Company Prefixes
- Brand owners assigning 14-digit GTINs to their cases
- Suppliers including GTIN, Lot # and Pack/Harvest Date in human-readable form on their cases
- Encoding the GTIN, Lot # and Pack/Harvest Date in a barcode that would appear on the case
- Subsequent handlers reading and storing the information contained in the barcode

The net result of the breakout groups was that further information/research would be needed on the following items before more discussions can ensue on milestones and timelines:

1. A guideline that suppliers can use to ensure some consistency when assigning GTINs on cases. The “GTIN Assignment Strategy” had been created by PMA specifically for this purpose and resulted from the GTIN Produce Pilot conducted in the fall of 2006. It uses standard product attributes of produce items to help organize and categorize products for GTIN assignment. This document was distributed to the Steering Committee for further review and discussion at the April 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.
2. A standard for case labels to ensure that one label can be used for the entire industry. A standard case label template had been created as a result of the PMA GTIN Produce Pilot conducted in the fall of 2006 and was distributed to the Steering Committee for further review and discussion at the April 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.
3. A quick summary of the pros and cons for both barcodes and RFID was distributed to the Steering Committee for further review and discussion at the April 11<sup>th</sup> meeting to help gain consensus on one technology or the other.
4. Clear definition of what is meant by “retailer commitment”. It was the desire of the suppliers to understand specifically what the buyers are willing to commit to in order to ensure the supplier investment would not be in vain. A separate conference call will be conducted prior to April 11<sup>th</sup> with key North American retailers that will discuss what

retailers are willing to commit to. A report of that conference call will be given at the April 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.

5. Clear definition of what we are asking the industry to do. This was distributed to the Steering Committee for further review and discussion at the April 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.
6. There was a desire to research another option in the form of serializing cases. As such, a sub-group was created to further explore this opportunity and will report their findings at the April 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The next meeting will be held on April 11, 2008 in Boston, MA.