

# TRACEABILITY AND FOOD SAFETY – FROM A GROWERS' PERSPECTIVE

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# ON-FARM FOOD SAFETY

- **As food safety and traceability programs have evolved, producers have had to dramatically change their processes and technology to keep up with the demands of customers and buyers.**
- **The security measures that have been implemented at our borders to protect the food supply and document the origin of fresh fruits and vegetables have showcased the importance of good traceability throughout the supply chain.**



# On-Farm Food Safety

- ◆ **Most farms and packing houses have implemented security measures to protect storages and maintain the integrity of all materials and people that come in direct contact with fresh produce.**
- ◆ **Additionally, producers have implemented date-coding schemes and equipment that meets the requirements of the various customers they work with.**
- ◆ **A large component of traceability at the farm level involves documenting the inputs to crops and the complete flow from field to fork.**



# Producer Requirements

- ◆ Producers must document every step including equipment cleaning and maintenance from planters to field trucks to packing equipment.
- ◆ All inputs, (seed, fertilizer, mulch, agricultural chemicals, packaging materials, etc.) must come from an approved source and be received as ordered.



# Documentation

- ◆ **Documenting all activities includes:**
  - **Production site records** – seeding information, field locations (maps, schematics).
  - **Application Records** -- applying herbicides, fungicides, pesticides, **must link to production site records.**
  - **Harvest Records** – date of harvest, by whom, how much, etc., **must link to application records.**
  - **Storage Records** – bin/box location, position in bin, quantity, etc, **must link to harvest records.**
  - **Packing Records** – what, how much, by whom, date/lot coding, etc, **must link to storage inventory records.**
  - **Transportation Records** – cargo inspection, truck I.D., Driver I.D., destination, etc., **must link to packing records (P.O., Date/lot code, B.O.L.)**



# **Demands on Producers**

- ◆ **As indicated, records must be kept for every activity and must link backward and forward.**
- ◆ **The demand on producer's time and abilities has grown continually as demands for traceability have become more complex and encompassing.**
- ◆ **Many producers are forced to hire additional staff to manage the added documentation and electronic data entry for their traceability program.**



# Mock Recalls

- ◆ **Some customers require producers/packers to implement a recall program where mock recall exercises must be carried out annually or even bi-annually.**
- ◆ **Mock recalls can be farm level or expanded to include both one up and one down...i.e.- supplier – producer – customer.**



# CanadaGap

- ◆ **The Canadian Horticultural Council launched the CanadaGap program on March 6, 2009 (formerly the On-Farm Food Safety Program – OFFS).**
- ◆ **CanadaGap will be benchmarked to internationally recognized Global Food safety Initiative (GFSI) requirements and GlobalGap.**
- ◆ **CanadaGap – certified producers and packers will be positioned to meet customer requirements for compliance with GFSI and GlobalGap standards.**



# CanadaGap

- ◆ All Canadian Fresh fruit and vegetable producers are now working toward meeting the requirements of the OFFS commodity manuals and are undergoing third-party audits by QMI-SAI Global.
- ◆ Under CanadaGap, producers are required to record all production activities from field location to harvesting and storing through the use of detailed records, bin tags, etc.
- ◆ Producers must assign lot ID's to all market produce. The Lot I.D. traces the origin of the produce and it's movement through a combination of letters and/or figures (e.g.- 14085gb).



# Packer Requirements

- ◆ Packers must record the date the produce was received from the grower (or packed from storage) and assign all market product with a pack I.D. (either on the primary or secondary packaging).
- ◆ The pack I.D. must link to the Lot I.D.
- ◆ The pack I.D. identifies the producer/packer and the date it was packed.
- ◆ Under the CanadaGap program, all record form templates are provided to document all the traceability components to assist producers/packers with complete traceability.



# Beyond the Producer...

- ◆ Where the CanadaGap program ends, other programs are in place to continue the traceability linkage.
- ◆ The Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA), the Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC), the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors (CCGD), and the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers (CFIG) have worked together to develop credible HACCP-based programs all along the supply chain.
- ◆ The best means of achieving the above goal was to recognize each other's national food safety programs.



# Working Together

- ◆ **The previously mentioned joint partners also agreed to promote food safety all along the supply chain for both domestic produce and imported produce.**
- ◆ **In order to achieve this objective the joint partners established a project to evaluate and assess the Canadian national food safety programs against any available programs in countries from which Canada imports.**



# Comparison

- ◆ **This study was extremely important to ensure that all produce entering the country should meet the same food safety standards as domestic produce.**
- ◆ **The study was a very important first step to achieving that concept.**
- ◆ **The joint partners are to be commended for their team work efforts!**



# Produce Traceability Initiative (PTI)

- ◆ **Canadian Producers must meet a variety of customer traceability requirements. Some of these requirements differ from existing practices and require a two-tier traceability.**
- ◆ **An example is where a customer requires a date-coding system that is different from what other customers require.**
- ◆ **This leads to added expense, additional time and frustration with documenting the traceability of separate programs.**



# Produce Traceability Initiative (PTI)

- ◆ **With global customers, the issue is compounded for Canadian fresh fruit and vegetable producers/packers.**
- ◆ **We know that 80% of imported produce consumed in Canada comes from the United States. It made sense for the Produce Marketing Association (PMA), the CPMA and United Fresh Produce Association (UFPA) to join together and adopt consistent traceability best practices throughout the produce supply chain.**
- ◆ **The PTI was created along with development of the Global Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Traceability Implementation Guideline.**



# GS1...

- ◆ **The Global Guideline includes all segments of the produce sector and all GS1 members.**
- ◆ **GS1 is a global organization of over 100 members that develops standards to improve supply chain management.**
- ◆ **GS1 Canada ensures that Canadian industries fully realize the benefits of global commerce.**
- ◆ **The PTI includes membership from over 40 companies including food service, retailers, growers, shippers and trade associations.**



# Canadian Suppliers

- ◆ In Canada, the PTI will be implemented only by those growers, packers, wholesalers who ship to U.S. retail or food service organizations implementing the PTI.
- ◆ Retailers will not implement the PTI at this time but will continue with current traceability systems.
- ◆ The above position will only change if the Government of Canada introduces regulatory requirements.
- ◆ The PTI mission is to have an effective electronic, whole-chain traceability program in place by 2012.



# The Milestones...

- ◆ The PTI has seven “milestones” or goals to be obtained by certain deadlines.
- ◆ **Milestone 1:** Each entity that exports to the United States (participating customers) must register for a GS1 company prefix. The GS1 prefix uniquely identifies a company anywhere in the world.
- ◆ **GS1 company prefix should be established as soon as possible.**
- ◆ **Milestone 2:** All entities that export produce to the United States (participating customers) must assign GTIN numbers to produce.



# Global Trade Item Number (GTIN)

- ◆ The Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) is the name given to a family of data structures composed of the company prefix (GS1) and,
  - ✓ Item Reference Number – simply a number assigned by the producer/packer to identify their produce (can include commodity name, variety name, pack size, etc.)
  - ✓ Check Digit – determined during the printing process to ensure “scan-ability” of the bar code.

**Milestone 2 should be implemented as soon as possible after Milestone 1 has been achieved.**



# The Milestones (continued)...

- ◆ **Milestone 3:** Provide GTIN numbers to U.S. customers participating in the PTI. Work is currently underway to create best practices to achieve this goal.
- ◆ **Milestone 3 is expected to be in place for fall, 2009.**
- ◆ **Milestone 4:** All program participants will be able to show “human-readable” information on cases (market-ready packaging materials). This information must be present on at least one side.
- ◆ **Milestone 4 is expected to be in place for fall, 2010.**



# More Milestones

- ◆ **Milestone 5:** All participants will be required to encode information in a bar code on the case (market-ready-packaging materials). GS1-128 Barcode format will be the standard used.
- ◆ **Milestone 5 is expected to be in place by fall, 2010.**
- ◆ **Milestone 6:** Will impact buyers, receivers and subsequent handlers. Participants must be able to read and store *incoming* or *inbound* cases (market-ready packaging materials).
- ◆ **Milestone 6 is expected to be in place for 2011.**



# and Finally...

- ◆ **Milestone 7:** Participants will have the ability to read and store information on *outbound* or *outgoing* containers/cases (market-ready packaging materials).
- ◆ The impact will be on everyone in the chain including distribution centres and end receivers (stores, restaurants health facilities, etc.).
- ◆ **Milestone 7 is targeted for implementation in 2012.**



# Current Climate in Canada

- ◆ **The Canadian market is not demanding the PTI milestones at this point.**
- ◆ **However, producers/packers should expect change and be proactive.**
- ◆ **Changes to regulations may leave producers who have not begun the PTI steps with no market access for their produce.**
- ◆ **Producers/packers should be currently implementing milestones 1 & 2 if exporting to the United States (and especially if supplying customers participating in the PTI).**



# The Future

- ◆ **Canadian producers continue to build on current supply chain traceability to meet customer requirements, government regulation, more effective means of documentation and production efficiency.**
- ◆ **As demands evolve, count on Canadian fresh fruit and vegetable producers to stay on top!**



**Thank you!**



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