



Produce Traceability Initiative

Milestone 5: Encode Information in a Barcode

Q: What information must be encoded into a barcode?

A: The 14-digit GTIN and the Lot/Batch # must be encoded in the barcode shown on each case of produce. If the Lot/Batch # is not unique by Pack or Harvest Date, the Pack or Harvest Date must also be included in the barcode.

Q: What barcode must be used?

A: In order to ensure the barcodes shown on cases can be read by all linear scanners used in warehouses today, the standard barcode to be used is called a GS1-128 barcode. This barcode can hold up to 48 characters of information. The numbers that go inside the barcode are: (1) the GTIN and (2) the Lot/Batch # (see example, below).

Example of a GS1-128 barcode with both the GTIN and the Lot/Batch # encoded:



(01) 10072534123451 (10) 12340223ABC

Q: What are Application Identifiers?

A: Application Identifiers (AI) tell the scanner what information is to follow the AI. In the example above, the AI for the GTIN is (01), which tells the scanner that the number to follow is a GTIN. The AI for Lot/Batch # is (10), which tells the scanner that the number to follow is a Lot/Batch #. There are dozens of AIs used for various purposes. An extended list is available at www.gs1.org.

Q: Who needs to put a barcode on the case?

A: Those packing the case will need to put a barcode on each case of produce.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If a reconfigured case (e.g. repackaged, reformulated, mixed, etc.) is being shipped directly to an individual store or individual restaurant, it does NOT need to have a new barcode on the case. As you will note in Milestone #6, the individual store or individual restaurant is excluded from scanning inbound cases, and therefore a barcode is not needed on these reconfigured cases. This does NOT exclude the repacker in this scenario from creating a Lot or Batch # and tracking the original inputs from each source product.

Q: When should we have barcodes on all of our cases of produce?

A: Companies will need to begin putting barcodes on all of their cases of produce to meet suggested implementation by the end of the calendar year 2011. This is the same time period as Milestone #4, as it was unanimous that the human readable information would not be captured manually and therefore a form of automated capture (e.g. barcodes) would be needed.

Q: Is there a standard case label that can be used to apply this barcode and human-readable information?

A: Yes. Please refer to the PTI's "Best Practices for Formatting Standard Case Labels."