



Selecting a Traceability Vendor Provider

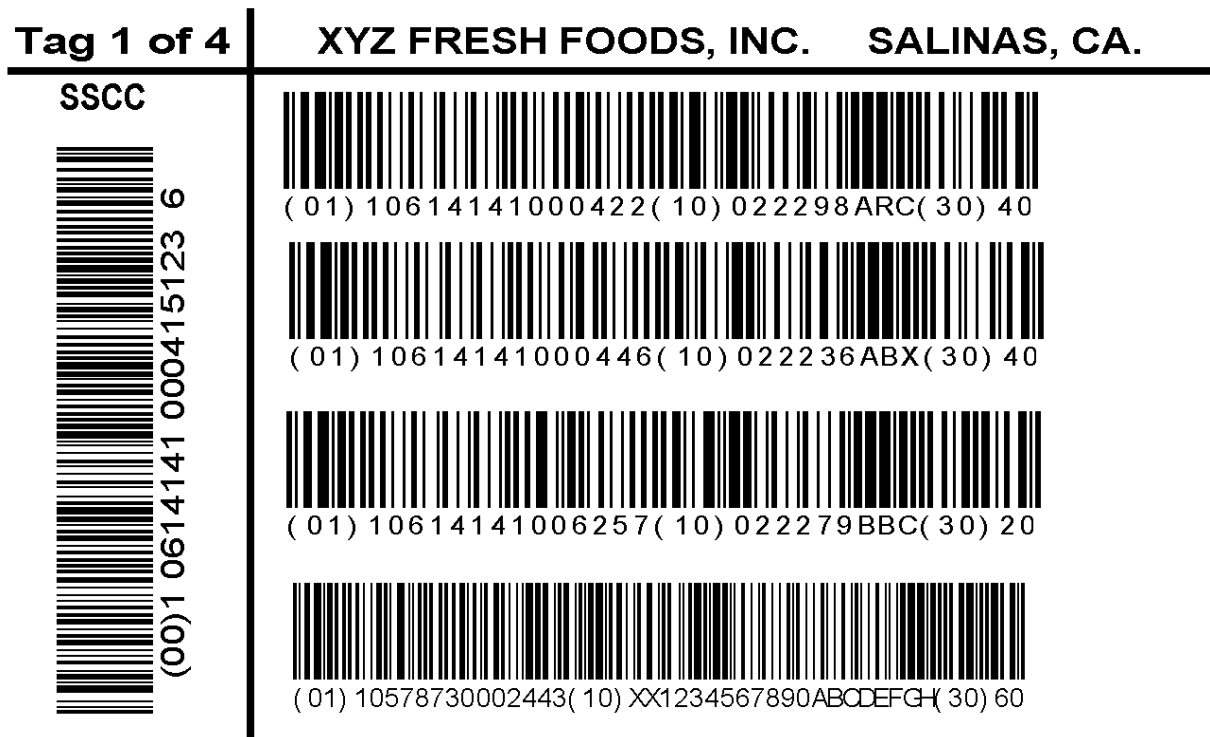
As the produce industry works to implement recommendations of the Produce Traceability Initiative, industry members may turn to the traceability vendor community for assistance. To be able to work effectively with potential vendors it is important to review and understand the documentation that can be found at www.producetraceability.org. With that information as background, the following is a series of questions that can be used to evaluate vendors who offer traceability services.

1. Are they able to store the Global Trade Identification Number (GTIN) from the case and retrieve it in a timely manner?
2. Are they able to store the Lot/Batch # from the case and retrieve it in a timely manner?
3. Are they able to store a Pack/Harvest Date from the case and retrieve it in a timely manner (if needed)?
4. Are they able to link these three pieces/fields of information in a database?
5. Are they able to link these three fields to:
 - Buyer/Receiver Name [from purchase order]
 - Product Description [item database]
 - Quantity [from purchase order]
 - Unit of Measure [from purchase order]
 - Shipment ID [from bill of lading]
 - Vendors/Supplier Name [from purchase order]
 - Date of Receipt [from purchase order]
 - Ship From Location [from bill of lading/invoice]
 - Ship To Location [from bill of lading/invoice]
 - Shipment Date [from bill of lading/invoice]
6. Do they use a GS1-128 barcode on the case?
7. Can they encode the GTIN, Lot/Batch # and Pack/Harvest Date (if needed) in the GS1-128 barcode?
8. Can they print this information in human-readable form on the case label?
9. Can they easily and quickly query your databases to find which orders/shipments contained specific GTIN and Lot/Batch #s?
10. Do they have “system” access to previous food safety audits needed in the investigation process?
11. Can they store all of the information that may be needed in an internal investigation of what might have happened to the product while within your facility (e.g., Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs), Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP), treatments, etc.)?
12. What is the vendor’s definition of “whole-chain” traceability? Is it one step up and one step down only, or does it include all handlers of the product along the supply chain?

13. Does their definition require all of your supply chain partners, including transportation providers, wholesalers, distributors and end buyers, to provide information to the traceability vendor in order for the trace system to work?
14. Does this system require a central repository of information in order to have “whole-chain” traceability?
15. Can they print a Standard Case Label? (sample follows)



16. Can they print a Hybrid Pallet Label? (sample follows)



17. Is the vendor making correct assumptions that are applicable and tested for your commodity?
18. Is the vendor making the correct assumptions that are applicable for your packing operation?

19. Does the vendor solution look down the supply chain to ensure your trading partners will accept the outputs from the vendor's solution?

NOTE: It is important that each company fully understands the assumptions made by the vendor, to ensure their solution is founded on principles that will (1) work for your company, (2) work for the industry as a whole and (3) provide whole-chain traceability. Whole-chain traceability covers each handler of the product (e.g. grower, shipper, packer, repacker, distributor, wholesaler, distribution center, store, restaurant).