



Produce Traceability Initiative

Milestone 6: Read and Store Information on Inbound Cases

As the vital information needed for traceback is physically on the case, once the case leaves your facility and/or is discarded, the information will no longer be accessible. As such, it is mandatory that companies read and store this information in their systems.

This milestone pertains to reading and storing information from *inbound* cases.

Q: What information should companies read and store from inbound cases?

A: Companies should scan the information (e.g. GTIN and Lot/Batch #) contained in the barcodes off of each case of produce and store this information in their systems. If the Lot/Batch # is NOT unique by pack or harvest date, the pack or harvest date should also be scanned and stored.

Q: What additional information is needed to be stored?

A: In accordance with the Bioterrorism Act of 2002, and recognized international principles of traceability, companies must track one-step-up and one-step-down the supply chain (in the United States, this excludes individual restaurants or individual stores). Therefore the additional information needed to be stored and linked to each GTIN and Lot/Batch # includes information already available on the purchase order, bill of lading or invoice:

- Buyer/Receiver contact information
- Product description
- Quantity
- Unit of measure (e.g. cases, boxes, eaches, etc.)
- Transporter that brought the load to your company
- Vendor/Supplier/Sender contact information
- Date of shipment
- Ship from location (shipping information)
- Date of receipt

Q: Who needs to store this information?

A: Every company that receives inbound product (excluding individual restaurants and individual stores) must read and store this information into its computer systems.

Q: How long should they keep this information?

A: For the purposes of the PTI requirements in the United States, record retention should reflect the requirements of the U.S. Bioterrorism Act, which is two years. However, shippers should be aware of requirements in other countries outside of the United States.

Q: When should companies begin reading and storing case information off of each case of produce received?

A: Companies need to begin reading and storing the information off of each inbound case by the year 2011 to comply with the PTI deadline for this milestone.

Q: Are there best practices for reading and storing this information off of each and every case of produce received?

A: The Best Practices for this activity are found under Milestone #6 (Best Practices for Pallet Labeling) on the PTI website.