Produce Traceability Initiative
Milestone 7: Read and Store Information on Outbound 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 this information off of the case and store this information in their systems.

This milestone pertains to reading and storing information off of *outbound* cases.

Q: What information should companies read and store from outbound 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 must also be scanned and stored.

Q: What additional information is needed to be stored?
A: In accordance with the U.S. Bioterrorism Act, companies must track one-step-up and one-step-down your supply chain. For U.S. companies, this excludes individual restaurants or individual stores. Therefore the additional information needed to be stored and linked to the GTIN and Lot/Batch # includes:
- Buyer/Receiver contact information
- Product description
- Quantity
- Unit of measure (e.g. cases, boxes, eaches, etc.)
- Shipment ID
- Vendor/Supplier/Sender contact information
- Date of shipment
- Ship to location
- Carrier that shipped the load from you

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: Who needs to store this information?
A: Every company that ships outbound product must read and store this information into its computer systems.

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

A: Companies should begin reading and storing the information off of each outbound case by the year 2012 to meet 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 shipped?

A: The Best Practices for this activity are pending; they will be provided at a later date. Please check back at a later date.