

RedLine Cooler electronically tracks produce from field to packinghouse

By David Mitchell
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RedLine Solutions Inc. has built relationships with about 70 companies in the produce industry in the five years since introducing RedLine Cooler, an electronic solution that uses software and mobile, wireless hardware to track product from a company's cooler or processing facility to its customers.

Now RedLine is preparing to cover another part of the produce supply chain with RedLine Field. Chief operating officer Chris Davis said the Santa Clara, Calif., company is working with three Salinas,

Calif., growers on a three-month pilot program that will track product at the case level from the field to the cooler.

Davis declined to name the participating grower-shippers but said the pilot program will involve putting Global Trade Item Numbers and lot numbers on cartons for at least half a dozen crops, including leafy greens and other vegetables.

"The easy part is putting labels on," Davis said. "Figuring out how it's going to affect their farming process is what we're looking at. Some companies are saying, 'Here's our software,' and that's it.

We think this is new and different enough that we need to run tests with this in the field and understand exactly what their needs are."

Davis said the pilot will be evaluated with three harvesting methods: a handpicking, mechanical harvesting and mechanical harvesting with value-added components, such as bagged hearts of romaine.

The project was scheduled to start in mid-June and run through September. Davis said the company plans to launch its offering Oct. 2-5 at the Produce Marketing Association's Fresh Summit in Anaheim, Calif.