



The Truth about Traceability and PTI Compliance

By Todd Baggett

Produce growers, packers and shippers across North America are working to understand new traceability requirements and PTI compliance. Stronger food safety legislation and customer demand are driving forces behind these industry improvements.

As with many new initiatives, especially those that include mandatory compliance, there are questions and points that need to be made clear.

To better understand traceability and PTI compliance, it's important to first take a step back and look at what the ultimate objectives are. PTI Compliance is designed to reduce your risk as a producer or shipper, make produce safer for consumers, and create a more efficient produce market.

Most growers packers shippers have proprietary internal traceability systems they use to track movement of product within their operation. The goal of PTI is to create standards that enable whole chain traceability.

Using a Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) and a lot ID, all product will be traceable to its source from the product's final retail or restaurant destination.

Here's the truth about what PTI really is:

- It ***is*** an initiative designed by the produce industry that will help reduce traceability time and increase efficiency.
- It ***is*** a system designed to efficiently track product from source to store. This increases market confidence and reduces the impact of costly recalls. It enables recalls of single lots as opposed to entire produce commodities.
- It ***is*** a way of capturing data that will improve supply chain efficiencies over time.
- It ***will*** require labeling every carton, RPC, or other container during packing. This labeling enables whole chain traceability.
- It ***will*** cut the time it takes to identify and remove tainted produce from the supply chain -- reducing health risks and minimizing the impact of recalls.

- It ***will*** reduce risk for each business in the supply chain, including retailers and restaurants, which in turn increases overall market confidence.

And what it is not:

- It is ***not*** an assessment of your current internal traceability system. Most operations have effective internal traceability systems. PTI provides consistent information in a common format across the supply chain.
- PTI is ***not*** a government or FDA run initiative. While it is true that government regulation is coming, PTI remains an industry initiative backed by retailers, grower shippers, and produce trade associations.
- It will ***not*** use proprietary coding systems to track produce throughout the supply chain. Instead, PTI requires the use of a GTIN and lot number for tracking.
- PTI is ***not*** about item-level traceability or the use of the dataBar on produce items.

Now that the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) has passed, companies throughout the produce supply chain will soon need to comply with mandatory traceability requirements. Making the decision to move forward with PTI compliance now positions you to meet these upcoming regulations. Using industry-based traceability standards means your customers will have more confidence in your product and your operation.

About RedLine Solutions

RedLine Solutions provides practical inventory and whole chain traceability systems for growers, packers and shippers. The company has over a decade of experience integrating barcode and wireless technologies to increase productivity in the field and cooler.

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