Cherry-Picked Precision:

Tracking the Perfect Harvest from Tree to Table

The need for traceability in the food industry has grown significantly, particularly in ensuring food safety, biosecurity, market access and avoiding food fraud. In the cherry industry, traceability systems are essential for tracking the journey of cherries from tree to table, ensuring product integrity, supply chain efficiency and transparency. This case study explores a traceability pilot project led by Cherry Growers Australia (CGA) in collaboration with Agriculture Victoria at CherryHill Orchards. The pilot integrated RFID and QR code technologies to streamline tracking and enhance consumer engagement.

The Challenge

The Australian cherry industry, valued at $190 million, with $80 million in exports to over 30 countries, depends heavily on its reputation for quality and safety. However, responding to quality, safety or biosecurity issues becomes difficult without robust traceability systems to ensure product integrity. Growers and exporters face challenges in automating their processes, preventing counterfeits and increasing consumer engagement.

The main objectives were:

1. Reliable traceability system from orchard to market, based on global GS1 standards.

2. Integrated RFID technology for traceability through harvest, packing and dispatch.

3. Implementing QR codes for consumer engagement and individual item tracking across domestic and export supply chains.

4. Real-time product visibility integrated with the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.

5. Safeguarding against counterfeiting.
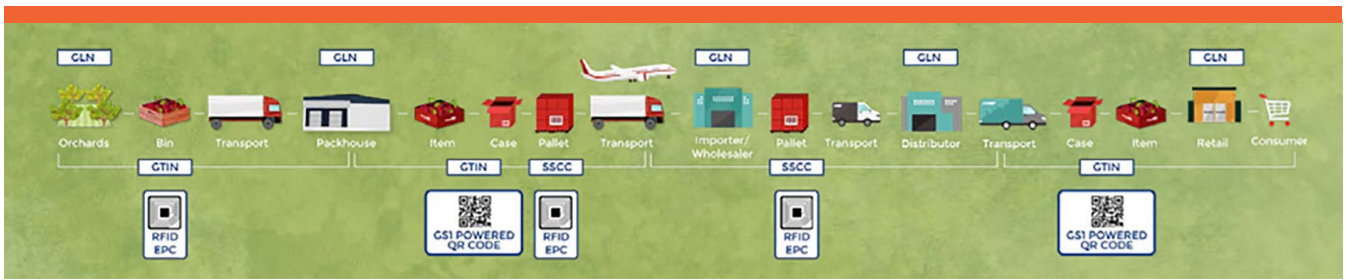
The Solution

Cherry Growers Australia and Agriculture Victoria initiated a pilot project at CherryHill Orchards, implementing both RFID and QR code systems as traceability solutions, based on global GS1 standards. RFID technology was used to track products through harvest, packing and dispatch, while unique GS1 Digital Link QR codes allowed for individual product tracking in domestic and export supply chains. Consumers and supply chain partners were encouraged to scan these QR codes, offering an engaging way for consumers and supply chain partners to authenticate the product and access product information.

"This project enhances our exports by developing full supply chain traceability, with the flexibility to be used with different varieties in multiple pack types and many different markets."

Stephen Riseborough, *CherryHill Orchards*

Cherry Hill's supply chain process using GS1 standards

The project addressed counterfeiting by utilising traceability systems that could identify and respond to counterfeit products quickly. Temperature loggers were also integrated to enable cool chain management. The integration of the ERP system ensured that data from the RFID and QR code systems provided real-time insights into the supply chain and enabled quick responses to incidents.

The Results

The pilot successfully demonstrated the effectiveness of combining RFID and QR codes in cherry traceability:

- **RFID Systems:** Enhanced product tracking through harvest, packing and dispatch.

- **QR Code Engagement:** GS1-powered QR codes enabled high consumer scan rates via interactive campaigns, fostering feedback through surveys for future product development.

- **Counterfeit Detection:** The pilot identified and addressed 21 counterfeit incidents, protecting CherryHill's brand and consumer trust.

The Benefits

The traceability systems showcased these benefits to the cherry industry and the broader agricultural sector:

1. **Increased Efficiency:** Automated RFID systems reduced manual tracking, increasing operational efficiency and building capacity for future business growth.

2. **Consumer Engagement:** QR codes boosted brand loyalty by enabling product authentication, storytelling and campaign participation.

3. **Product Integrity:** Supply chain tracking combatted counterfeiting and supported regulatory compliance.

4. **Data Management:** RFID and QR integration with ERP provided real-time insights for informed decisions and swift issue resolution.

The Future

This cherries pilot showcases a roadmap for adopting RFID and QR code technologies across agriculture industries. Refining these systems will enhance data management, counterfeit protection and consumer engagement, while their scalability using GS1 standards boosts transparency and efficiency in global food supply chains.

Watch the video or visit the Cherry Growers Australia **website** for more information about this implementation.

About CherryHill Orchards
https://cherryhill.com.au/our-cherries

Call to Action

This case study underscores the importance of adopting robust traceability systems in agriculture. With global markets demanding higher levels of food safety, sustainability and transparency, now is the time for growers, exporters, and industry stakeholders to embrace technology and data standards that ensure product integrity.

Investing in traceability technologies can protect your brand, enhance consumer trust and ensure compliance with the growing demand for authentic, safe, traceable and high-quality produce in global markets.

To learn more about how traceability solutions can be tailored to your operations, contact GS1 Australia.

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