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COVERING FRESH PRODUCE AROUND THE GLOBE SINCE 1897

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INDUSTRY VIEWPOINT

Process improvements for profitability and safety

Has your business slowed down in the 'new economy'? Now is the perfect time to make improvements that will help you prepare for the next wave of growth and improve the profitability of your operation.

To help reduce industrywide cost and waste caused by product recalls, it is more important than ever to implement traceability procedures into your operation. More and more, companies are demanding proof of traceability of the products coming through your organization and into theirs.

Part of your receiving process is that when product arrives, it is identified in your system based on where it origi-

nated. You may potentially be combining this product with others (i.e., processing or packing) before selling and shipping it to customers. In this case, keeping track of the product all the way through your operation is critical. That way, if there is ever a recall, when a customer or supplier notifies you of the item's lot number(s), you can quickly identify where it came from and where it went.

Consider the June 2008 tomato advisory that lasted nearly four weeks, warning Canadian and U.S. consumers to avoid certain types of fresh tomatoes due to a potential connection to the *Salmonella Saintpaul* outbreak. If every-

one involved had had traceability processes in place, the advisory would still have occurred, but it would have been resolved much faster and prevented the wasting of many tons of tomatoes.

Speed of resolution contributes to profitability for produce businesses and confidence for consumers. Traceability for profitability and performance, regardless of company size, just makes good business sense.

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