

## **eProduce Software Helps Fresh Produce Supply Chain Companies Meet ISO GS1 Standards**

*Next Version Software, LLC, developer of eProduce, fresh produce business process management and tracking software, meets ISO GS1 compliance requirements as mandated by CPMA, PMA and United Fresh Produce Traceability Initiative Committee.*

March 16, 2009 (FPRC) -- DEMING, NM -- eProduce, fresh produce business process management tracing and tracking software, recently announced that its software exceeds first quarter regulatory requirements for increasing food safety measures outlined in the Produce Traceability Initiative, 'Action Plan.' With this initiative, companies in every step of the fresh produce supply chain are required to adhere to a common standard for produce traceability to help increase public food safety measures.

As part of the Produce Traceability Initiative, in addition to their own internal tracking tools, fresh produce growers, packer/shippers, distributors and wholesalers are adapting their current systems to successfully track three common pieces of information for each produce shipment. The three pieces of mandatory information for tracking purposes include: the Global Trade Item Number (GTIN), which identifies the manufacturer and product number of the shipment; the lot number identifying the specific lot from which the produce was selected; and the original pack or harvest date of the produce. Once these three pieces of shipment information are compiled, each handler of the produce can effectively and quickly search their ISO GS1 compliant internal traceability systems to access any necessary information about the path of a specific product, both where it came from and where it went.

The 'Action Plan' of the Produce Traceability Initiative includes several phases to allow all participants in the fresh produce supply chain ample time and resources to meet the new requirements. The first phase of the initiative requires firms to obtain a GS1-issued prefix in order to begin assigning the 14-digit GTIN numbers to all fresh produce product trade unit (cartons) configurations packaged by the end of the first quarter 2009. Brand owners must then communicate their GTIN information and corresponding data to their buyers by the end of 3rd Quarter 2009. Display of human readable information on trade units and encoded information (GTIN and lot number) in a GS1-128 barcode should be completed ending 3rd quarter 2010.

"The recommendations made by the Produce Traceability Initiative Steering Committee are not presented lightly. This is a comprehensive program to standardize industry traceability practices throughout the entire supply chain," states the Committee.

"Implementing these recommendations will require business process changes for all companies in the supply chain, with costs borne by all sectors. Yet, both the Steering Committee and association leaders believe this is a critical step forward to enhance total supply chain traceability to better serve our customers, to expedite tracebacks and recalls and more narrowly isolate potential recalls or other problems when they do occur," concludes the Committee.

eProduce, fresh produce business process management and food tracking software currently

complies with ISO GSI standards, for collecting, maintaining and sharing mandatory data requirements. Therefore, produce supply chain organizations using eProduce can easily implement barcode labeling and/or RFID hardware required for encoding and recording GTIN tracking information for immediate identification of fresh produce that could be suspected to contain a food borne illness.

“Many fresh produce supply chain companies have found eProduce to be a cost effective, essential tool in helping them meet the new Produce Traceability Initiative requirements, without upgrading or changing existing accounting software. We are pleased that eProduce is helping so many companies increase their overall traceability measures, therefore helping to minimize food contamination,” stated Anderson Grogen Sr., CEO of The Next Version Software. (eProduce) (<http://www.eproduce.biz>)

Produce traceability can affect virtually every participant in the fresh produce supply chain -- growers, packing facilities, distributors, wholesalers, trucking companies, and even the end consumer. There are several benefits of produce traceability, including the possible elimination of product category recalls and/or condemnation in which potentially hundreds of packing facilities and growers may be affected, causing millions of dollars in lost revenue. The Next Version Software's creation of eProduce enable fresh produce supply chain participants to immediately comply with current government regulations and Produce Traceability Initiative Committee recommendations by providing real-time, web-based, fresh produce business process management and trace-back software.

Along with meeting government regulations, eProduce also provides additional benefits to fresh produce supply chain users. Organizations using eProduce software are able to more effectively take control over their existing order fulfillment and management processes, which can help reduce costs. Additionally, by providing instant access to each shipment, many companies have found that eProduce actually helps increase their overall customer service levels by ensuring more orders are delivered accurately and on time.

“With the recent food recalls and contamination outbreaks over the past few years, it is essential that public safety become a number one priority with food chain organizations. By using eProduce, fresh produce growers, packing facilities, distributors and wholesalers are not only meeting compliance requirements, but are also helping their businesses run more efficiently to enhance risk management,” concludes Grogen Sr.

About eProduce: eProduce (<http://www.eproduce.biz>) was developed by Next Version Software, LLC in response to the US Bioterrorism Act 2002, which mandates protection of the nation's food supply. eProduce has mastered fresh produce traceability, country of origin labeling, carton and retail product level labeling and tracking, utilizing ISO GS1 traceability standards that use Global Trade Item Numbers, Serialized Shipping Container Codes and GS1 Data Bars -- enabling users of eProduce to perform fresh produce product trace-back to the “farm-to-fork”, literally within seconds.

### **Contact Information**

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### **Keywords**

[produce traceability](#)  
[food tracking software](#)  
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