



WORLD-CLASS LABEL SOLUTIONS

# STAR *Gazette*

## Ripe for Success—



### Sinclair iQ™ Making An Impact

There is an expanding market for retailers that focus on fruit and produce featuring just-off-the-tree ripeness, and it is becoming important for packers to seek consistently accurate ways of providing for this. Supermarkets are looking to packers to innovate and seek new technologies to replace dated or inaccurate destructive sampling techniques.

Sinclair iQ now has two perfect options to help packers ascertain ripeness. The iQ portable Bench Top is ideal for sampling ripeness throughout the supply chain, and a brand new option —“Total iQ Package” — is an iQ system complete with a conveyor. This one or two lane system comes ‘ready-to-run’ and is sourced and supported from Sinclair. Why did we decide to offer this package? Some customers preferred to have a ‘one-stop-shop’ for this type of unit

asking that Sinclair take the lead in sourcing, installing and supporting the complete system,—and we responded.

Sinclair also continues to offer the multi-lane Online system that sets us apart from any other firmness evaluating system. Others require you to buy a complete new line while the Sinclair iQ multi-lane system may be mounted right onto existing grading lines.

Sinclair’s low mass impact sensor technology is patented and proven on avocados, mangos, kiwi, stone fruit, apples and pears. Unlike other measures, Sinclair iQ provides an accurate measure on irregularly shaped produce as in the case of avocados and pears. For more information on iQ and ripeness testing, please contact your Sinclair account manager or stop by Fresh Summit booth # 4714 for a personal demonstration.

### CASE STUDY

## Kiwifruit Labeling

Not all fruit is created equal, and unfortunately some commodities are inherently more difficult to label than others. This is particularly true of stone fruit, pears, potatoes and kiwifruit. These commodities are often packed cold and/or wet; they may have a skin/surface that naturally repels labeling and some may have a small circumference which is problematic for labels to stay adhered.

In the next few issues we will feature a case study of how challenges to labeling these commodities were overcome. Due to

the global nature of Sinclair’s labeling reach, we are able to problem-solve in any area of the world and bring that learning to other areas in an effort to extend “Best Practices” learning.

Recently, a large kiwifruit packer was experiencing labeling difficulties: the labels were not applying to the wet fruit very well and they were coming off prior to packing. It was believed that the label adhesive was the culprit and changes need to be made. The problem was so severe that the packer started hand labeling the fruit despite knowing it would be cost-prohibitive, but it was the only option for obtaining the standard required by their retail customers.

After trying to resolve any possible technical issues by phone and e-mail, Sinclair

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## RSS-14 Produce Industry Pilot Update



RSS-14 stacked  
Omni-directional bar-code

GS-1 (formerly UCC) has organized a Core Team comprised of produce grower/shipper/packers, retailers and solution providers to participate in an industry pilot to gauge the benefits of using the RSS-14 bar-code on produce. Wal-Mart Stores and Loblaw Cos., Toronto, are both retail participants. The pilot is trying to determine the added value to category management, [the reduction of] shrink and traceability.

Apples labeled with RSS-14 bar-codes began shipping in mid-June and the test is being conducted in about 29 Wal-Mart stores in the northwest. Some varieties of RSS-14 bar-coded bananas, avocados and apples are currently in distribution to Loblaw’s.

The RSS-14 stacked omni-directional bar-

code is smaller than the traditional UPC and it encodes a 14 digit number called a GTIN (Global Trade Item Number). Labels that feature the RSS-14 bar-code also show the traditional PLU. It is believed that about 66% of North American supermarket scanners are RSS-capable, but POS application software and databases may need to be updated to accommodate the codes.

Recent store visits to some of the participating Wal-Mart stores have indicated that the cashiers feel comfortable scanning the bar-code and that the transaction transpires very quickly and efficiently. GS-1 plans on publishing results of the pilot by the end of this year. More information and some FAQs can be found on our web site.

## 2007 Fresh Summit Quickly Approaching

The 2006 Fresh Summit October 20-24 in San Diego is just around the corner. You’re invited to visit our booth #4714 to see the latest innovations in produce labeling. We will have live demonstrations of iQ, hi-speed RM6 automatic labeling equipment and much more. Please take a moment to stop by and say hello!

technical personnel were quickly dispatched to the pack house to complete a thorough examination of their post-harvest processes. A line audit was carried out that identified why labels were not being correctly applied and how and where they were being removed.

Working in partnership with the pack house staff, a number of line changes and operator procedures were suggested that resulted in labeling efficiencies to increase from less than 20% to around 90%! These suggested changes included: the daily changing of the bellows, keeping the kiwifruit as dry as possible, improvements to the kiwifruit brushing area to ensure that minimal hair removal took place, and the use of bellows dryers to allow the bellows

to be kept dry.

To ensure that the labels stayed on the fruit prior to packing, trials were carried out by covering the rotary brushes on the sizer drops and actually taking the brushes out and replacing them with cushioned chutes to prevent product damage. The removal of the rotary brushes and replacing them with cushioned chutes proved very successful and was implemented.

Achieving high labeling efficiencies at around 90% has allowed the customer to keep costs down while meeting their customer’s requirements. The ability to identify and implement the suggested changes exemplifies how Sinclair and pack house customers truly are partners in business that, together, can improve the bottom line.

## Sinclair Profile:

# Malcolm Steward

Based in the Norwich, England office Malcolm Steward is Technical Services Director. Working in the produce industry his entire life, Malcolm has the unique role of traveling the globe resolving pack house labeling problems and often finding a creative solution to technical difficulties in a professional, methodical manner. When a labeling solution is quickly required, Malcolm is at the beckoning call often leaving for the airport on a moment's notice. In the past six months this globe-trotting labeling expert has been to packhouses in South America, China, California, Italy, the Netherlands, and New Zealand.

Malcolm Steward has been involved with Sinclair since its formation in 1982.

Malcolm can be much like James Bond traveling to often remote locations and gaining access to operations where no one else has been! A popular, well-liked expert in the field, Malcolm meets with both prospective and current customers to discuss their labeling requirements. His extensive experience in pack house operations allows Malcolm to act as liaison by consulting with

global sales agents on logistics, processes and practices.

The industry is continuously evolving and Malcolm stays at the forefront of the latest trends. He often returns to the UK office sharing the customers' needs and working with the engineering and R&D departments to turn ideas into new product innovations.

Malcolm Steward has been involved with Sinclair since its formation in 1982. His dedication to our customers and the worldwide produce industry is undoubtedly a unique asset for which Sinclair is truly grateful.



## Consumers Prefer Tab-Lift™



Earlier this spring Sinclair initiated formal market research to determine consumer preference of its Tab-Lift feature compared to other tabbed labels in the market. In the test, consumers were asked to remove unmarked tabbed labels on side-by-side red delicious apples. Final results are now in:

- Consumers chose Sinclair Tab-Lift™ 5 to 1 over the competition
- 67% of consumers with children prefer Tab-Lift™
- 76% prefer Tab-Lift™ because it is "easier, quicker to remove"

Sinclair Tab-Lift™ labels are the favored choice because there is no adhesive under the tab making it easy to grab and remove the label.

Comments recorded from the research include:

"My kids can remove the sticker by themselves,--- and they love stickers."

"It doesn't leave a residue."

"The label has a convenient tab that makes it easier to remove"

While the Tab-Lift feature may seem

utilitarian, it actually has higher importance than once thought. Retailers have begun to recognize that consumer-friendly packaging like Tab-Lift drives sales.

To help consumers recognize this preferred choice, you can now look for the trademarked Tab-Lift arrow on the tab of many Sinclair Tab-Lift labels. This arrow conveniently helps consumers identify the premium, easy-to-grab Tab-Lift feature,--- another Sinclair added benefit for consumers and retailers.



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### CALIFORNIA

3115 S. Willow Avenue  
Fresno, CA 93725  
Tel 559.233.4500  
Fax 559.233.4501

### FLORIDA

7316 Commercial Circle, Unit A  
Fort Pierce, FL 34951  
Tel 772.429.0233  
Fax 772.429.0235

### WASHINGTON

2605 Chester Kimm Rd.  
Wenatchee, WA 98801  
Tel 509.665.6911  
Fax 509.665.9105



WORLD-CLASS LABEL SOLUTIONS

Sinclair Systems International, LLC  
3115 S. Willow Avenue  
Fresno, CA 93725