

STAR *Gazette*

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Sinclair Introduces Print on Demand Technology at Upcoming Fresh Summit Booth 1801

It won't be long before Fresh Summit kicks off in Orlando on October 25th - 27th.

This show will be particularly exciting as **we'll demonstrate Sinclair's latest technology--- Print on Demand Labeling.** This bolt-on technology allows you to print continuously variable information directly onto fruit labels--- **on time, on target and at full speed.**

DataBar Update: A Review of the Past Two Years

It's been over two years since the DataBar pilot transitioned into implementation mode, in June 2006. Since then, the amount of DataBar-labeled produce has steadily increased, particularly in the past 6 months. Barcoded apples and pears are being procured in sizeable number while barcoded avocados have climbed as well. As for tomatoes and peppers, it appears that an estimated 35% of this category out of Northeast (in North America) now use the DataBar code on their labels.

For the first time this past season, California stonefruit packers began using the DataBar, and on the eve of the '08-'09 season, various citrus commodities are poised to follow suit, including product from both California and Florida.

In North America, WalMart and Loblaws stores have been leading the way in Databar adoption at retail while Kroger stores have also been procuring DataBar-labeled product. Soon Wegman's will begin implementation as well. Retailers have reported that DataBar will help:

- 1) improve category management
- 2) improve controlling shrink
- 3) improve traceability and
- 4) improve accuracy and aid through-put at self check-out.

In the UK, Tesco stores have been using the DataBar also since June 2006, beginning with deciduous commodities, and this October, loose citrus will also feature DataBar-coded labels. Currently, other UK retailers are evaluating how they can integrate the DataBar with their fresh produce offering.

"The benefits of having product movement data by grower/shipper will be advantageous for both the buying and selling community," said Tim Gagnon, PEIB vice chairman and director for C.H. Robinson Company Worldwide.

DataBar seems to have come a long way since June 2006. With that, many changes have been made ---and continue to be made--- at Sinclair in an effort to react to customer changes in artwork procurement, and shifts in label size and equipment--- just to name a few. Who knows if

We'll also be demonstrating our SP labeling equipment using our new 6.0-29 large-size label--- perfect for automated melon labeling. On the ripe-sensing front, our iQ technology will also be available, as we demonstrate its non-destructive method of firmness testing. **Come see us in booth # 1801** for everything new in produce labeling and firmness testing!

Are You Ready for COOL?

The USDA Interim Final Rule (IFR) went into effect September 30, 2008 which is now followed by a 6-month period for education and outreach. This COOL legislation requires that the country's origin of "covered commodities" which include fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables is provided to consumers.

- This declaration of origin can be a label (such as a fruit sticker), placard, sign, stamp, band twist tie, pin tag, or other clear, visible means.
- It makes no provision for exact placement, font size or color but it must be legible and conspicuous.
- Country, state and/or locality are permissible in declaring origin. Examples include Washington [apples]; Tampico [onions].
- The USDA recognizes in the IFR that 100% stickering is not achievable.

In summary, the USDA encourages collaboration between suppliers and

the industry has reached the first leg of its journey, but it appears we're definitely on our way. Much more information on the DataBar is available at http://www.sinclair-intl.com/pages/info_pages/GS1_databar_info.html

Improving Labeling Percentages: Essential Best Practices

At Sinclair we are always evaluating our labeling equipment performance in an effort to apply continuous improvement methodology.

Our Technical Service staff and R&D/Engineering team work closely both in house and in the field to understand and solve customer challenges in fruit labeling.

To help increase or maintain specified labeling percentages, we recommend the following Best Practices:

1. Per shift, dedicate an employee with the authority, such as a supervisor, to ensure the following is implemented.

2. Clean applicator bellows at regular intervals.

- a. Apples & Citrus: every 40-60 hours of run time
- b. Avocados: every 40 hours of run time
- c. Kiwi, Pears & Stonefruit: daily, or more frequently if the performance degrades

3. Clean bellows thoroughly and regularly.

- a. Ensure the main power is switched off
- b. Remove diffuser and bellows assemblies from rotary heads
- c. Disassemble bellows, diffuser and flapper valve
- d. Clean with dish soap, removing any build-up and grime, rinse thoroughly and let dry
- e. Powder bellows and valve
- f. Re-assemble, ensuring all seals are intact

4. Clean cassettes regularly - inspect at every roll change and clean as necessary.

5. Utilize proper cassette cleaning protocols.

- a. Wipe all rollers and surfaces that contact the labels or backing paper.
- b. Choose cleaners that meet your own food safety programs and do not damage the labeling cassettes.

6. Keep good maintenance records.

- a. Label equipment operator(s) should use a maintenance log (worksheet) to keep track of all day-to-day maintenance, type of activity, date and time.
- b. Post log near labeling area for convenient access.

Please remember: never use torn bellows, and report all worn bellows and damaged cassettes to Sinclair.

retailers in working together to implement and understand the elements of COOL legislation so that compliance may be achieved. COOL FAQs and information is available on our website - just click www.sinclair-intl.com for more info.

Additional information may also be found at www.pma.com

Sinclair Offers Label Operator Training

As part of our ongoing commitment to quality and service, Sinclair is beginning a new program offering label operator training on-site, in YOUR packhouse. After the initial roll-out in North America, this program will then be made available globally.

This training is conducted by our global team of technical experts to provide your label operators the skills to help optimize your Sinclair labeling equipment's performance. Learn how to increase labeling percentages and minimize downtime with this valuable training.

To take advantage of Sinclair's label operator training, contact your Sinclair Service agent or contact us through http://www.sinclair-intl.com/pages/contacts_main.html

iQ--- A Real Value for Fresh Cut Programs

Sinclair technology has been instrumental in assisting category managers and retailers develop Ripe and Ready avocado programs across continental Europe, South Africa, the UK and the US. Sinclair's iQ firmness tester enables 100% sorting--- not sampling--- of product by firmness line speeds upwards of 600 cpm. As well as improving product consistency, these systems also reduce the considerable product waste associated with destructive sampling.

A sensor mounted inside Sinclair's unique bellows delivery system returns an iQ firmness value which is transmitted back to the line for **separating product into up to six different firmness bands.**

Sinclair's system offers the ability to measure 100% of the fruit and divide whole batches into multiple grades or ripeness categories, controlled by an easy to use software package. The iQ system outperforms traditional hand sorting techniques in terms of through-put, accuracy and cost.

In providing the Total Solution--- the Sinclair iQ product line consists of three different applications:

- 1) the online system - able to mount in existing sizing equipment;
- 2) the total package - complete with carrier;
- 3) the BenchTop unit - which is portable and used for sampling and quality control.

Going forward Sinclair will continue to build on its successes, especially with kiwi and mango, as well as avocado. "With the growing importance of both ripe and ready and pre-cut product categories, systems that segregate fruit based on firmness or maturity are set to become indispensable to processors and suppliers," adds James Packham, Sinclair iQ Product Manager.

iQ systems around the world are supported in the field by a global network of fully trained Sinclair and agent staff, included with the Sinclair iQ package.

For more information, contact James Packham at jamesp@sinclair-intl.com or Alex Dietz at alex@d@sinclair-intl.com or log onto our website at <http://www.sinclair-intl.com/index.html>