



6 December 2004

BANANA TRACEABILITY GUIDELINES AIM TO INCREASE EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY

GS1, (formerly known as EAN International) a leader in facilitating efficient international business, Freshfel Europe, the forum for the fresh produce industry and ECBTA, the European Community Banana Trade Association announce today the publication of a new set of guidelines for the traceability of bananas throughout the entire supply chain. The “Banana Supply Chain Traceability Guideline” was developed with the objective to adapt EAN.UCC Standards for the immediate implementation by banana suppliers to the European Union for compliance with the traceability-related provisions of the General Food Law-Council Regulation (EC) NO. 178/2002.

Increasing consumer demands to know what they are eating and from where it has come, led the EU to introduce a number of regulations relating to food safety, with several others in preparation. The most important of these is the EU General Food Law, which is expected to come into force in January 2005. This requires each stage in the supply chain to have access to its upstream and downstream trading partner’s information.

Organisations that masterminded these new guidelines include Bonita Europe, Chiquita Europe, Chiquita Fresh North America, Del Monte Fresh Produce, Dole Europe, Fyffes, Simba (France), and Weichert & Co.

Mr Richard Pike, Quality Systems Manager for Delmonte Fresh Produce (UK) Ltd, in welcoming the new Banana Traceability guidelines said: “We have been pleased to have been part of an initiative led by respected industry groups to pool business knowledge and develop a mutually beneficial set of guidelines to help to ensure traceability and compliance with the new EU regulation. The publication of the new Banana Traceability Guidelines will help to standardise the approach to this issue across the industry.”

European Traceability Project Manager for Dole Europe S.A.S., working for Dole Europe Paris, Mr. Leon van der Vyver added: “Dole has always been active in the elaboration and implementation of common standards within the fruit industry. As such, Dole has actively participated in the elaboration of the banana supply chain traceability guideline, which our company strongly supports”.

Director for European External Relations and Quality Assurance for Bonita Europe, Mr. Ronan Raes stated: “Bonita Europe is proud to have been a member of the working group on traceability for the Banana Supply Chain. The initiative to bring people of the same trade around the table with the spirit of developing a common standard for that trade in order to comply with the EU Regulation 178/2002 will for sure result in an efficient and cost effective management of the issue in the industry.”

GS1 Chief Executive Officer, Miguel Angel Lopera added: “It is our business as a user driven organisation to provide platforms for collaborative agreements between business partners. We are delighted to have encouraged the Banana producers into our growing global operation by satisfying their specific traceability needs. I am sure that as they come to know us better they will appreciate that there are many more of our standards that will further improve the efficiency of their area of the global supply chain”.

Philippe Binard, General Delegate for Freshfel Europe, the forum for the fresh produce industry stated: “Freshfel and ECBTA, as industry associations were glad to host these discussions and continue with GS1 the international cooperation initiated in early 2000 to provide harmonized traceability tools to the industry. The release of these guidelines comes in a timely moment on the eve of the implementation of the new European legislation on food law and traceability which will come into force on 1 January 2005”.

The GS1 Banana Supply Chain Traceability Guidelines can be downloaded from GS1’s website at www.gs1.org, see EAN.UCC Applications/For Industries/Agriculture & Food/Banana. For further information, please contact your national GS1 Member Organisation, details of which are also available on the website.

For more information contact:

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GS1

The mission of GS1 and the Member Organisations is to create open, global, multisectorial standards based on Best Business Practices, and by driving their implementation, play a leading role in Supply & Demand Chain Management improvement worldwide

GS1 has member organizations in 101 countries. The EAN•UCC System is an integral part of the way business is conducted worldwide. Today, over one million member companies in 155 countries use EAN•UCC standards as part of their daily business communications, representing over 5 billion scanning transactions a day. The supply chain solutions offered by the EAN•UCC System include globally unique identification codes, data transport media and electronic commerce and communications standards. These tools support established industries as well as emerging markets.

Freshfel Europe

The mission of Freshfel Europe includes the following:

- Represent the interests of small, medium and large companies and associations in the fresh produce sector.
- Enhance the freedom of international trade and facilitate the distribution of fresh produce.
- Provide a networking platform where industry representatives from across the chain can meet, share views and gear positions to one another.
- Update members on recent legislative and commercial developments in the fresh produce sector.