



Produce Traceability Initiative Best Practices for Communicating GTINs to Your Customers

(Revision 1.1)

About this Best Practice Guideline

Best practices are generally accepted, informally standardized techniques, methods or processes that have proven themselves over time to accomplish given tasks. The idea is that with proper processes, checks and testing, a desired outcome can be delivered more effectively with fewer problems and unforeseen complications. In addition, a "best" practice can evolve to become better as improvements are discovered. The Produce Traceability Initiative (PTI) is a voluntary U.S. produce initiative. The best practice documents are the recommendations created and agreed to by all facets of the produce industry supply chain and PTI Leadership Council.

Consent between trading partners may replace specific recommendations as long as the minimum traceability information requirements are met in good faith.

Revision History

This section itemizes the changes from the last published Best Practice.

Version No.	Date of Change	Changed By	Summary of Change
1.0	07/13/09	Supplier Subgroup	Original Best Practice
1.1	3/12/12	Master Data Working Group (MDWG)	Revised Formatting

Objectives

The following best practices are designed to assist brand owners and their customers in establishing standardized practices for communicating Global Trade Item Numbers (GTINs) and their corresponding information to customers, as defined in the Produce Traceability Initiative (PTI) Milestone 3. The Data Synchronization Template referenced here, and the related "Description of Fields Included in the Data Synchronization Template Worksheet," can be found on the PTI website.

We recommend you review all related materials – these best practices, the template, examples and descriptions – in their entirety prior to beginning implementation of the best practices for your operation.

Best Practices for Data Synchronization

1. Assign responsibility for conveying GTIN information.

The seller – and specifically those person(s) who fulfill buyers' orders – is responsible for providing information for each GTIN shipped to buyers, using the PTI-developed Data Synchronization Template (DST) to develop your company's customized data synchronization spreadsheet; this includes both product procured internally and externally. As the entity primarily responsible for order fulfillment, the seller has the responsibility to ensure that what is shipped to the buyer has been previously approved and is set up in the buyers' receiving systems for receipt well in advance.

2. Provide your data synchronization spreadsheet electronically well in advance before shipping product.

Your Data Synchronization Spreadsheet, listing each GTIN, should be emailed to each buyer customer. To ensure buyers have sufficient time to enter the information into their receiving systems, the spreadsheet should be sent well in advance before product is shipped.

If there is an urgent need to establish a new GTIN, the brand owner's responsible party should contact buyer(s) by phone, in addition to emailing an updated spreadsheet. It will then be a decision between trading partners as to whether a last-minute communication can be accepted. Remember, the intent is to have your GTINs set up well in advance of a shipment.

3. Provide buyers with spreadsheets for only those products that you ship to them.

Your customized data synchronization spreadsheet should be used only to communicate GTINs for the products that you are shipping to a particular buyer customer. It is not intended to be used to provide your entire product line. In other words, do not send a buyer GTIN- data for products you do not ship to that buyer.

4. Provide buyers with spreadsheets for products you procure from an alternate source.

If you procure product from another grower in order to fulfill a buyer order, it is your responsibility to ensure that the corresponding GTIN is communicated to the buyer. As with your own GTINs, this information should be provided well in advance of product shipments, to ensure buyers have sufficient time to enter the GTIN into their receiving systems.

5. Integrate third-party service providers.

When using a third-party service provider, if they have an existing utility to (1) upload GTIN information and (2) alert the buyer for approval, then that utility can be used to convey GTIN information to customers on the seller's behalf. If a third-party service provider does not have such a utility, then provide them with the PTI-developed Data Synchronization Template.

In this scenario, it is incumbent on the buyer to provide the supplier with their buyers' email contact information, so that the third-party service provider can convey the spreadsheet on the brand owner's behalf.