



Produce Traceability Initiative Best Practices for Formatting Standard Case Labels

The goals of creating best practices for the labeling of produce cases include:

- using a barcode already being used in the food industry;
- using existing GS1 standard elements inside the barcode;
- minimizing the amount of information shown on the label;
- minimizing the size of the label;
- accommodating multiple box sizes;
- determining what information is necessary on the label; and
- determining what information should be on the label versus what should be shown on the case in a human readable format (e.g. supplier/responsible party's address, etc.)

Reference the following Case Label diagram while reviewing the Best Practices.



NOTE: The information depicted above is the minimum needed for traceability purposes at the case level; certain target markets may also have other master shipping container labeling requirements.

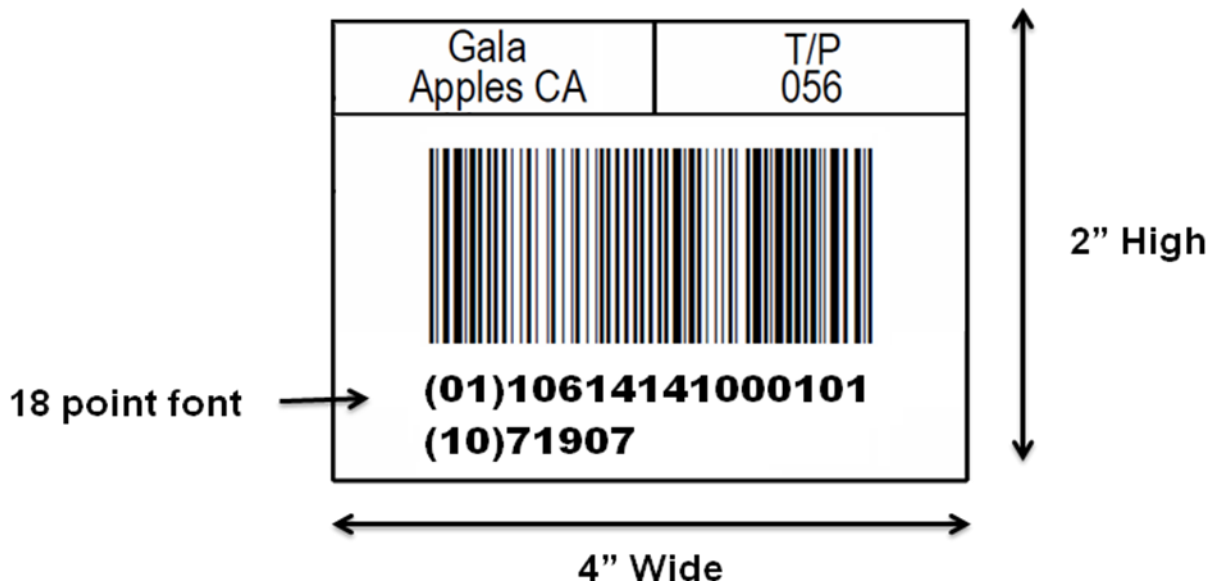
Case Label Best Practices

1. Use the GS1-128 barcode (which holds up to 48 characters of information). The barcode should be shown on the bottom of the label.
2. The barcode should be printed onto a label and then the label affixed to the case. It is not recommended to print the barcode directly on corrugated material as in doing so it will compromise the ability of the barcode to be read consistently.
3. The only information that needs to be encoded in the GS1-128 barcode is:
 - The Application Identifier for the GTIN (01), followed by the GTIN itself
 - The Application Identifier for the Lot/Batch # (10), followed by the Lot or Batch # itself.

NOTE: If the Lot/Batch # is not unique by pack or harvest date, you must include the pack/harvest date as well. The Application Identifier for the Pack/Harvest date is (13).

4. Show the human readable GTIN and Lot/Batch # directly below the GS1-128 barcode. The GTIN should show on one line and the Lot/Batch # should show on the line underneath the GTIN. The font size must be at minimum 18.
5. Using serial numbers either in place of the GTIN or in place of the Lot/Batch # is in direct violation of the PTI principles. The amount of extra storage needed to store a different number for every case would increase exponentially, as well as rendering the use of the Hybrid Pallet Label to be unusable. In that scenario, receivers would have to scan each and every case. This was adamantly opposed.
6. As supplier name and address should already be shown on the case, it is not necessary to include this information on the label. However, this supplier information should be shown on the same facing of the case as the label.
7. Country of Origin should be printed directly on the case or stickered on the same facing of the case as the label.
8. The commodity and additional description (e.g., Variety, Variety Group, Color) must appear on the label above the GS1-128 barcode. Otherwise, this information must be printed or stickered on the same facing of the case as the label. The font size of this information must be large enough for warehouse or store personnel to easily read.
9. The pack configuration (e.g., 10/4-lb bags) must appear on the label. Otherwise, this information must be printed or stickered on the same facing of the case as the label. The font size of this information must be large enough for warehouse or store personnel to easily read.
10. If the Lot/Batch# is not unique by Pack/Harvest Date, the Pack or Harvest Date should be encoded in the barcode in addition to the GTIN and Lot/Batch #. Use Application Identifier (13) to indicate the Pack or Harvest Date. It should also be shown in human readable form below the barcode as well.

11. When using returnable plastic containers (RPCs), conveying all the required information via a card that appears on the RPC is preferable to having separate stickers for individual pieces of information.
12. The case label must appear on at least one side of the case.
13. Find following the **minimum** specifications for the case label and barcode that is on the label.



NOTE: The following diagram on Barcode Specs is disproportionately shown in order to clearly depict size specifications.

Barcode Specs

