



## Produce Traceability Initiative Traceability at the Item Level

The Produce Traceability Initiative initially focuses on *case*-level traceability, with a strong provision to move to the *item* level. The reasons for this initial case-level focus are as follows:

- All companies in the distribution chain (both grocery and foodservice) handle the case. However, this is not true for the item, as most cases are never opened while the product is being transported from one location to another. Therefore, case-level identification and marking are applicable to every company handling the product.
- There is plenty of room on cases to accommodate what is needed for traceability. This includes the printing of barcodes or the application of a case label.
- For most bulk produce items, there is not enough room for accommodating what is needed for traceability on the individual piece of fruit or vegetable, as most bulk produce items can only accommodate a price look-up sticker. For some bulk items, even a sticker is impossible (e.g. loose green beans, loose mushrooms, radishes, etc.). As such, some issues still exist for loose bulk items that still need to be explored.
- Operationally, the addition of Lot/Batch # at the item level would create enormous costs and severe slow-down in production.
- The amount of work needed to address traceability at the case level is going to be a substantial first step. In the meantime, we will continue to explore ways of addressing the issues related to item-level tracking.

For these reasons and more, the PTI initially focused its efforts on case-level traceability. The Produce Electronic Identification Board (PEIB) has been given the task to continue to find ways to address item-level traceability.