



More Watermelon Shippers Adding HarvestMark Traceability Solution

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By Meg Major, Progressive Grocer

Other watermelon growers using HarvestMark include Coosaw Farms, Grower's Select, Melon 1, Mouzin, Premier and Sun State. Today, nearly 150 million produce products have been enabled with HarvestMark traceability, from berries and tomatoes to watermelons and peppers and more.

More major watermelon shippers will begin offering retailers and consumers the ability to obtain item- and case- level traceability information via YottaMark, Inc.'s HarvestMark solution for its entire watermelon shipment in 2009.

Brooklyn, N.Y.-based Melon 1, Texas-based Borders Melon Co. and Georgia-based Borders Melons East have are the latest companies to join the expanding list of watermelon growers and shippers implementing HarvestMark for the 2009 harvest season.

The moves by Melon 1 and Borders follows on the heels of the National Watermelon Association's recently published commodity-specific food safety guidelines, which include a recommendation for item-level traceability like HarvestMark.

"Unit-level traceability is especially critical for products such as watermelons that are often affected by commingling and loss of case-level identification issues," said Bob Morrissey, executive director, National Watermelon Association.

The HarvestMark solution gives individual watermelons a unique identity that links to growing, harvest, packing, and supply chain information. The HarvestMark Codes associated with each product can be entered into a Web portal for instant trace-back and trace-forward.

"At Melon 1, we look to help lead the industry in changing food safety and quality practices," said John Lapide, owner of the Brooklyn, N.Y.-based Melon 1. Noting that the migration to the HarvestMark solution will further "enhance our existing strong food safety practices by bringing traceability to each

individual watermelon,” Lapide said his company will now be able to bring its “retail partners the enhanced traceability they’re asking for [while] delivering new touch points to our supply chain partners and consumers.”

The Redwood City, Calif.-based HarvestMark’s traceability platform for fresh produce is compliant with GS1 standards and the Produce Traceability Initiative (PTI). The solution is currently being utilized by dozens of produce shippers across the U.S. and Mexico that have chosen the platform to easily deploy effective traceability across a wide range of produce products.

Thus far, nearly 150 million produce products have been enabled with HarvestMark traceability -- from berries and tomatoes to watermelons and peppers and more.