

What is the industry problem and why should it be fixed?

Every year tens of thousands of cartons of imported meat are destroyed due to physical damage, or incorrect or missing shipping marks. These losses are spread across every step of the supply chain and have historically been considered a cost of doing business. This is a huge burden to industry with most losses being readily preventable. The increase in supply chain transparency driven by consumers, retailers and regulators means these losses can no longer be hidden and ignored.

Over recent decades, there's been a steady rise in use of computerised inventory and logistics systems as well as increased scanning of carton and pallet barcodes. These tools and systems greatly improve supply chain visibility by improving ways to pass product movement information efficiently along the supply and have become a contractual requirement by large supermarkets for logistics and retail.

What is the value of Meat Messaging to importers and the meat industry?

The MeatMessaging.com industry traceability portal has directly resulted in significant reduction in direct labour costs, fewer rejections and reduced product damage as well as greatly improving product inventory management and supply chain transparency. The MeatMessaging.com portal is free for registered users to use to access carton and consignment information. This information can be accessed simply by using a mobile phone to scan a carton barcode or be fully integrated into a company's IT system.

The benefits to importers include:

- Immediate overturning of shipping mark refusals,
- Immediate notification of refusals to exporter and processors,
- Traceback is linked to a certificate and shipment that can be traced in PHIS,
- Controls production lot information when samples are obtained by FSIS,
- Notifies IOR immediately of shipment and information about shipments.

Why use an industry portal?

The simplest and most cost effective solutions to achieve increased levels of supply chain traceability and transparency are through industry operated traceability portals. These portals act as cloud information storage where exporters upload noncommercially sensitive information about every carton in every consignment. Importers, inspection houses, grinders and other users can scan any carton barcode and instantly retrieve the movement history and product details. Significant work has been undertaken with regulators over the last 20 years gaining acceptance of GS1 barcoding and industry operated traceability portals. Regulators need evidence showing that industry traceability portals operate with independence and governance to ensure product integrity. The MeatMessaging.com industry traceability portal is an example of a regulator accepted industry portal.

Should an issue occur (e.g.: missing, incorrect or damaged port marks; damaged label production dates; or sample section for testing) that need to be resolved, importers and Government can access a single industry portal to verify consignment and product information. This is right down to the individual carton barcodes. The MeatMessaging.com industry traceability portal and related projects have resulted in the use of GS1 barcodes and the industry portal being supported by Australian Meat Notices and FSIS Directive 9900.5.

What do importers, inspection houses, and grinders need to use MeatMessaging.com?

All you need to use the MeatMessaging.com industry traceability portal is to register at MeatMessaging.com. There is no cost to register and no cost to search and access carton and consignment information. The MeatMessaging.com portal is funded by meat processing companies that upload carton and consignment information.

Future possibilities?

The increasing uptake of technology, barcoding, palletisation and industry data portals provide an environment where one day shipping marks and the requirement for stamping will be eliminated through the use of unique carton barcodes.