

Good Food, Good Bar Coding

Food safety really matters to the world's biggest food company. And in New Zealand, Nestlé relies heavily on GS1 bar coding to support the product traceability that is so essential to food safety.

In this country, Nestlé produces a wide range of dehydrated soups, recipe mixes, stock powders and confectionery for local consumption and export to Australia and Asia. Products from its Cambria Park Factory, in Wiri, South Auckland, include time-honoured household brands like Maggi soups, gravies, sauces, recipe mixes and stock powders, and Life Savers, Allens, Black Knight and Wonka confectionery.

Worldwide the Nestlé philosophy is, "Good Food, Good Life". It reflects the 130 year-old company's dedication to making food with genuine health and enjoyment benefits to people. At Cambria Park, Factory Manager Graeme Smith says those four simple words reflect total commitment to product quality. "Consumers of

The company uses a third party logistics company to manage the distribution of its products in the New Zealand market. GS1 bar coding has become an important part of the interface between Nestlé and the distribution company.

Hundreds of pallets of product leave Cambria Park each week, all bearing GS1 logistics labels with GS1-128 bar codes that include product GTINs*, and production lot numbers and dates. The ITF-14 bar code on the carton or shipper is used to identify the product and manufacturer.

Nestlé exports around \$70 million in products produced at Cambria Park Factory to Nestlé affiliates in Australia and Japan. The bar codes applied at Cambria Park are used in the receiving markets to track products through their distribution systems.

"We see GS1 bar codes as a critical part of our food safety programme, and they are critical to managing the complexity of a factory and supply chain that involve hundreds of raw and packing materials and finished goods SKUs," says Mr Smith. "In fact, it wouldn't be possible to keep control of the materials and to keep the lot tracking systems working effectively without them."

The demand for new GS1-128 bar codes is endless, with Nestlé continuously improving and updating its product range. Each new product or product variation is identified with a new GTIN* that becomes incorporated in a new GS1-128 bar code when the product enters the distribution supply chain.

* A GTIN is a Global Trade Item Number allocated as a globally unique identifier to each product under the GS1 system.



Maggi and other Nestlé brands can be assured on the food safety aspects of what they are buying as well as consistency of quality," says Mr Smith.

"The ability to track materials right through our quality release and production processes to finished goods is an important part of our food safety management," says Mr Smith. "We apply bar codes to all lots of materials arriving at the factory. We then use these bar codes to track the material, and its quality status, as it moves through the factory. Using this system we can easily track where any particular lot of raw material has been used, and what batches of product it went into."

In the unlikely event that a problem was found with one of its products, Nestlé could quickly and easily track the batch right through the supply chain to a customer's warehouse or store.

