



BellHawk in Food Processing Applications



BellHawk is used by food processors to electronically capture the materials tracking and traceability data required by the Safe Quality Foods Act, as well as to meet the requirements of the FDA, USDA, HACCP and SQF Certification.

Many food processors still use paper forms to record which ingredients went into which batches of products (and some do not even do this) and then use a “Julian” date lot number on their products for tracking and traceability. This process is no longer adequate.

An increasing number of food processors that sell to “big-box” retailers, such as Wal-Mart and Costco, are being held to dramatically shorter times for performing mock (and real) recalls. The FDA is now requiring the big-box retailers to perform mock recalls in 4 hours. They have also insisted that these big-box retailers ensure that all their suppliers meet the demands of the safe quality foods act and the FDA demand for a 4 hour maximum mock recall time. As a result, Costco has now started requiring its suppliers to produce traceability data within 1 hour.

These one hour mock recalls can no longer be done by keeping paper records. The data has to be entered into a computer and processed into a form whereby defective products can be rapidly traced back to possibly contaminated ingredients, as well as to who worked on the batches using which machines, in the case of suspected bioterrorism. This same data has to be in electronic form in order to quickly trace forward from contaminated ingredients to all the products that it went into and which customers and distributors they were shipped to.

To manually take all the paper records and enter them into a computer and then process them into a form suitable for rapidly performing “one step back” and “one step forward” materials traceability can typically take the equivalent of between one and three people doing this overhead “non-productive” work. Also the use of paper forms and subsequent manual keyboard entry is very error prone. These errors can take a lot of time to track down and can impede the accuracy of recalls.

If a food processor cannot quickly perform a real recall then the standard rule of the FDA and USDA is to order them to recall and destroy everything in the supply chain. This typically puts the food processing plant out of business.



BellHawk solves this problem by replacing the use of paper forms, and the subsequent manual keyboard entry into Excel spreadsheets or other computer programs, with the use of barcode scanners and wireless mobile computers.

This point-of-action data capture by process operators and material handlers is then immediately processed into a form suitable for performing mock (and real) recalls and stored in a history database. At the same time users are given point-of-action warnings if they are about to make a data collection mistake or an operational mistake, such as using the wrong, possibly defective, expired or contaminated materials in a mix batch or a packaging operation.

As a result, BellHawk is able to prevent expensive mistakes and immediately provide one-step-forward and one-step-backward defect tracking and product recall data at the click of a keyboard. As BellHawk is web-browser based, this information can be provided at anytime, anywhere there is an Internet connection, including directly by the compliance staff of big-box retailers.

As part of its materials tracking and traceability process, BellHawk individually tracks the receipt and put away of each containers of material from suppliers by lot number and expiration date. It also tracks the quality assurance status of raw materials and ingredients to ensure that only materials that have passed quality control inspection are used to make production batches.

BellHawk then individually tracks each container of product mix, its quality control inspection, and its subsequent use in packaging different products. Finally BellHawk tracks the picking, packing and shipping of the finished products. In this way BellHawk captures complete end-to-end materials traceability history from each container of ingredients and each pallet of packaging materials to all the products they went into and the customers they were shipped to.

BellHawk also tracks which employees worked on each processing and packaging step and can also track which machines were used. As a result, product defects due to operator error or machine malfunction can be included in the tracking and traceability process.

As a byproduct of all this tracking and traceability data capture, BellHawk is able to provide real-time business intelligence to customer support people and to materials and production managers as to the status of inventory and work-in-process. It can also capture accurate cost data for intermediate and finished products.

For more information about the BellHawk inventory and work-in-process tracking software platform, please visit www.BellHawk.com and view some of our demonstration videos about capturing food processing materials tracking and traceability data.