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## CLARINET ENSURES CODING ACCURACY AT PORK FARM BOWYERS

Pork Farms Bowyers, brand leader in the chilled savoury snacks market, is continuing its efforts to improve quality control with the introduction of a new software package from Claricom Ltd.

In an industry where stringent retailer requirements have resulted in heavy penalties for undetected coding errors, particularly among short shelf life products, Pork Farms Bowyers is committed to assuring its customers of continuing improvements to quality.



### Avoid the Potential for Error

Manufacturing Systems Manager Simon Almond explains, "CLARINET provides a carefully controlled system to enable us to avoid the potential for error by taking responsibility for the integrity of the pack information out of the hands of the operators and transferring it to Technical and Quality Assurance.

"In this way, all the operator needs to do is key in the batch number and the coders will automatically print the details which have been logged in and signed off centrally. Any coding equipment which is connected to the system, including different machines installed in the future, will operate in this way, providing consistency across the production lines."

The problems of coding errors are predominantly due to human error, but can also be due to the so-called "intelligence" within some coding and labelling equipment. Effective technical control of product coding therefore requires central control and determination of all information.

"The Claricom system is more sophisticated than alternative systems with, for example, an in-built calendar programmed with production dates and changes and even when Bank Holidays occur, all of which makes us much more efficient," explained Simon.

"The Claricom system therefore restricts the user to logical product life relevant to our business. It will prevent Use By dates that are shorter than Display Until dates, providing extra confidence for such critical information."

During the production process, product is flow-wrapped in packs and thermal transfer coders then add the price and sell-by date. Prior to the installation of the software, this information was keyed into the machines manually by operators on the production line, which gave rise to occasional errors. CLARINET removes the manual input.



The costs of coding errors are also much greater than the potential compensation to retailers. They include wasted product, wasted material, reduced efficiency, lost distribution costs and lost business opportunity.

By connecting all the coding equipment, the system guarantees the most efficient means of both factory automation and control, and effective centralised data collection and management. This control can help to meet legal and regulatory conditions and specific traceability requirements of the major retailers.

"We have much better visibility of what is happening on the line as data is readily available which can be fed back to managers and planners," continues Simon.

Currently Pork Farm Bowyers is also addressing the quality of its outer case bar codes, with the installation of Markem print-and-apply labelling machines, which along with on-line bar code reading equipment, will also be controlled by the CLARINET system.

### Committed to Excellence

"Pork Farms Bowyers is committed to excellence across the business and this new Claricom package coding management system will help us to continue delivering the best possible service to our customers," concludes Simon.

Designed to address all requirements from retailers' codes of practice on date coding, the CLARINET system can typically deliver an increase in plant efficiency of up to 30%. Through a reduction in product and packaging waste and avoidance of product recalls due to coding errors, Pork Farms Bowyers expects that CLARINET will be able to achieve payback and return on the investment within 6 months.