WHITEPAPER

Grocers and Meat Grinding - Technology Can Simplify the Record Keeping Process

Grocers and Meat Grinding - Technology Can Simplify the Record Keeping Process

The USDA's final meat grind rule (79 FR 42464) became official on June 21, 2016, adding a significant record keeping burden on supermarkets and grocery stores.

Since many stores grind four to five times a day on average, the manual logging required by this legislation is labor intensive and time consuming. In addition, failure to comply could result in penalties.

Technology to the Rescue

Grocers, by a wide margin, are most impacted by this ruling. Therefore, it is no surprise that a solution to manual record keeping comes from this industry segment.

In recent months, three major grocery chains have started using handheld terminals from Optical Phusion (OPI) to quickly scan a lot identifier as it goes for grinding. The data is automatically entered into ADC's Meat Grind Traceability Management software that is accessible from the network. The result - manual logging is virtually eliminated.

"The Zebra MC-9190 and Zebra MC-9200 handhelds with specialized meat grind software are making life easier for these stores and helping them comply with the final rule," explains Scott Arnold, OPI President.

Zebra MC-9200 Handheld

In addition to simplifying record keeping, handhelds are financially practical for the grocer. "If a store already has three or four devices with apps like backroom receiving and price auditing, the Zebras will run these applications as well as run solutions, such as ADC's Meat Grind Traceability Manager," Arnold notes. "The grocer saves money because the devices all use the same cradles, accessories and spare batteries."

ADC Meat Grind Traceability Manager

ADC's Meat Grind Traceability Manager module provides a tool for tracking all source products used in the production of ground beef by scanning and recording the different suppliers of primals and tube grind. Both grind and sanitation logging data is instantly available to retail personnel and regulators. The Meat Grind Traceability Manager is the most used meat grind traceability software in the supermarket industry with over 65,000 active users.

Existing meat logging processes are mostly manual and require meat cutters to manually document individual source materials as they are processed. This method has proven to be both time-consuming and inaccurate. ADC's Meat Grind Traceability Manager automatically records all source materials as well as all grind and sanitation activities, providing electronic accountability for all grind that processed in the meat department.

The Meat Grind Traceability Manager allows a meat cutter to easily identify sources and sanitation records for any produced product. If a recall occurs, users can pull reports that includes the sources of the ground meat in question along with the dates of production to aid in the recall process.

ADC Meat Traceability Manager
Main Menu Screen

Stores Impacted

The USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has identified four groups of businesses impacted by the final rule: *

- Supermarkets and grocery stores - 21,543 large stores with more than 500 employees, 44,504 smaller stores with less than 500 employees.
- Warehouse clubs and supercenters - 5,124 large, 40 small.
- Meat markets - 123 large, 5,105 small.
- Official, federally inspected establishments - 12 large, 1,132 small.

Record Keeping Requirements

The final USDA rule is very specific on what information must be logged when grinding. On a Fresh Ground Beef Production Log/Tracking form, facilities must clearly identify the following:

- Sources supplying material that is used to prepare each lot of raw ground beef product.
- All supplier lot numbers and production dates.
- Names of supplied materials, including beef components and any materials carried over from one production lot to the next.
- Date and time each lot of raw ground beef product is produced.
- Date and time when grinding equipment and other related food-contact surfaces are cleaned and sanitized.

Benefits of the Legislation

Despite the burden imposed on supermarkets and grocery stores, the meat grind rule offers strong consumer and industry benefits. The FSIS, which investigates reports of consumer foodborne illness, says, "This rule is necessary to improve our ability to accurately trace the source of foodborne illness outbreaks involving ground beef and to identify the source materials that need to be recalled."

According to the FSIS, a number of benefits will accrue from fast, accurate tracking. These include averting foodborne illnesses from contaminated ground beef, experiencing less costly outbreaks and increasing consumer confidence when purchasing ground beef. In addition, accurate source identification can lessen or eliminate grocer liability in the case of foodborne illness.

Voluntary Compliance Falls Short

The final rule that is now in effect is the culmination of efforts by the FSIS to have retail stores voluntary keep accurate meat grind records. It has not worked.

The FSIS says, "Voluntary recordkeeping by retail stores that grind raw beef has been insufficient as witnessed by the continuing outbreaks linked to pathogens in raw ground beef that cannot be traced back to the source."

In 2014, the FSIS set out to amend existing Federal meat inspection regulations. The goal was to require that all official establishments and retail stores that grind raw beef keep detailed records. After receiving 40 comments on the proposed rule from a wide range of industry segments, the end result is the law now on the books, with a key word being "require."

Penalties for Non Compliance

Under the final rule, FSIS compliance inspectors will verify that retail grinders meet the record keeping requirements in the rule. If not, the Agency may issue a notice of warning, or request the Department of Justice to initiate a civil proceeding to enjoin the defendant from further violations.

Facts to Remember

Here are some points to keep in mind concerning the meat grind rule:
- It does not specify the method for keeping records, only that records must be kept where the beef is ground.
- Records must be retained for one year.
- Required information must be made available to USDA officials upon request.

All comments, quotes and facts attributed to FSIS come from the Federal Register, Vol. 80, No. 244, December 21, 2015

ABOUT OPTICAL PHUSION

Optical Phusion, Inc. (OPI) is a kiosk and enterprise mobility integration company that helps customers manage the entire lifecycle of kiosk and wireless technology projects with application-based solutions for a range of markets specializing in retail, supply chain and field sales organizations. Its mobile device management solution supports a broad range of kiosk and enterprise mobile assets. OPI has implemented a variety of Kiosk systems for promotional Video presentation, Coupon Printing, Loyalty Registration and Price Verification. OPI's creative kiosk designs, quality manufacturing and experience with critical components will deliver a responsive solution to your needs, reduced total cost of ownership (TCO) and greater return on investment (ROI).

Optical Phusion, Inc. (OPI) Won 2014 Innovative Solutions Award for Its Consumer Price Scanner.

The award recognizes innovation in Customer Engagement Technology and is presented by Vertical Systems Reseller (VSR) magazine and the Retail Solutions Providers Association (RSPA). The honor is based on integrating products from multiple vendors to solve a problem and drive innovation while creating something unique in a retail solution.

Optical Phusion and Kiosks

As a leader provider of kiosks to retailers, including hundreds of installations in supermarkets, OPI is developing a package of electronic menu boards that grocery stores can use in conjunction with kiosks or as a stand-alone solution for nutritional labeling compliance.

ABOUT ADC

Founded in 1989, ADC authors and markets InterStore, an integrated Fresh Item Management software suite, for the grocery and fresh foods industries. InterStore is comprised of the InterScale Scales Manager, NutriGen Recipe Manager, M-Squared Meat Manager and the P-Cubed Production Manager. More than 130 supermarket chains and over 11,000 stores in 11 countries use ADC's software solutions. For more information call toll-free in the USA: 1.800.910.4232 or internationally: +1.813.849.1818 or visit www.AppliedDataCorp.com.
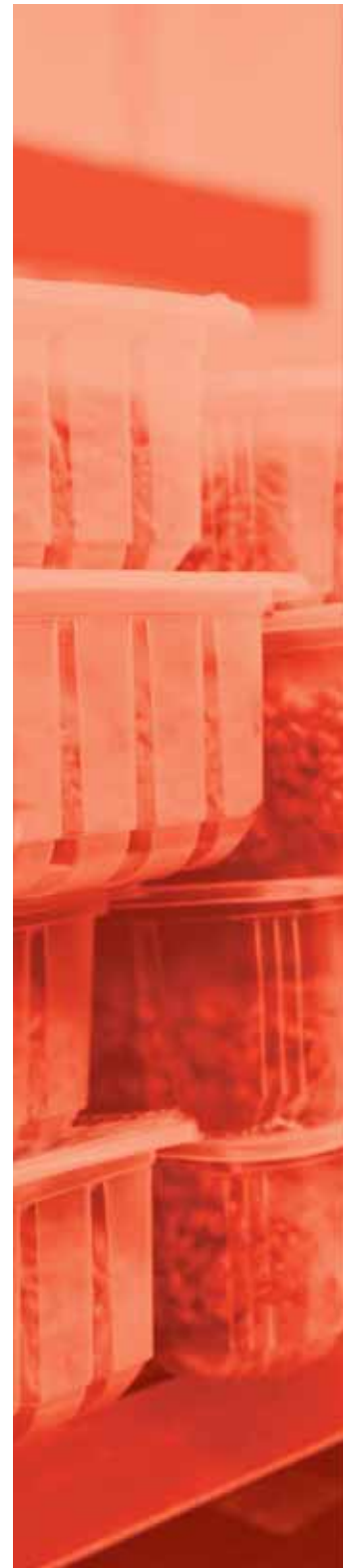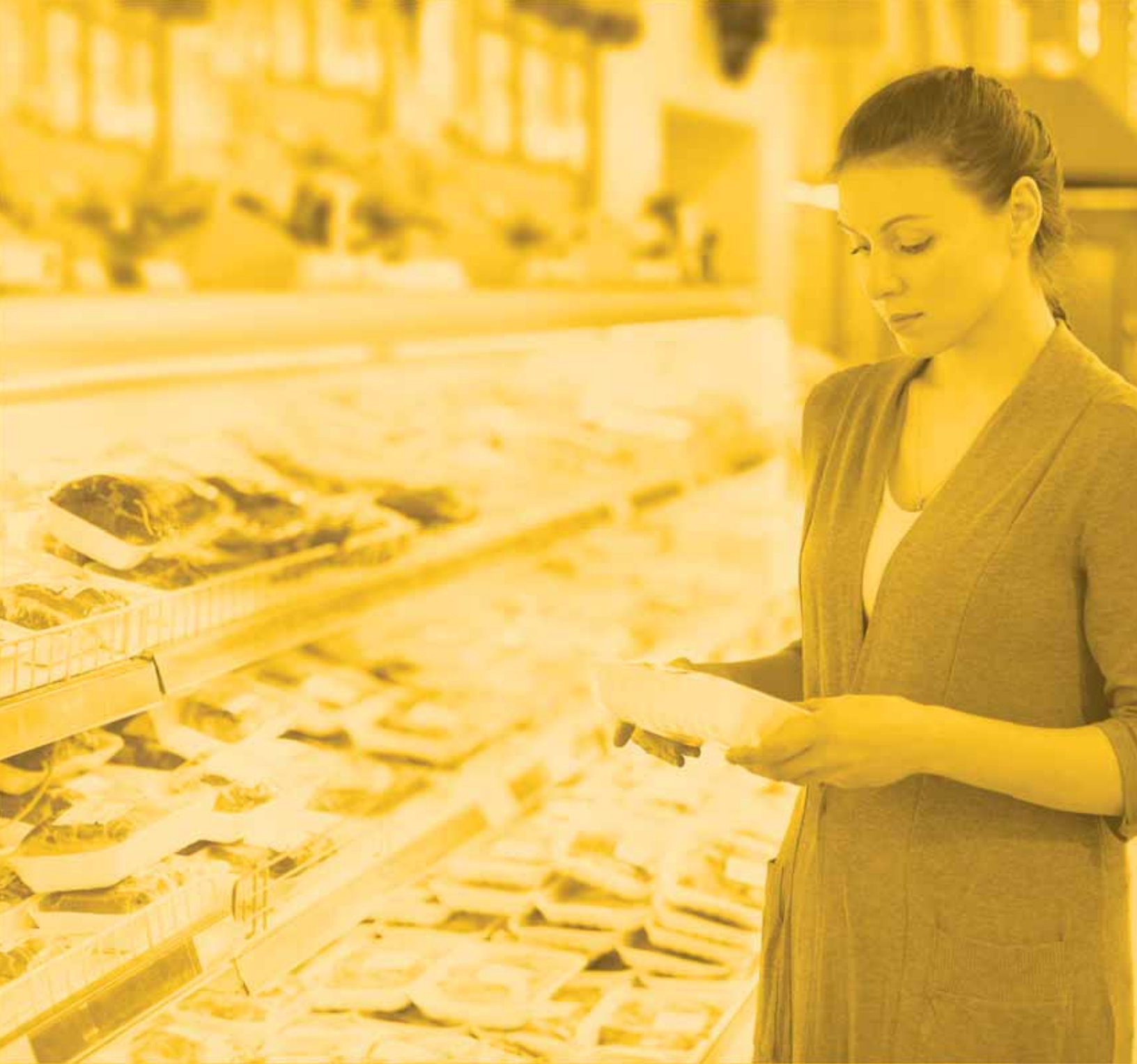
CALL US TODAY

For further information, please contact
Optical Phusion, Inc. at 978.393.5900 or
email info@opticalphusion.com.