

GS1 bar codes for food industry applications *continued*

Code



Application

EAN-13: Is replacing the UPC code in much of the world. Used as a point-of-sale bar code.

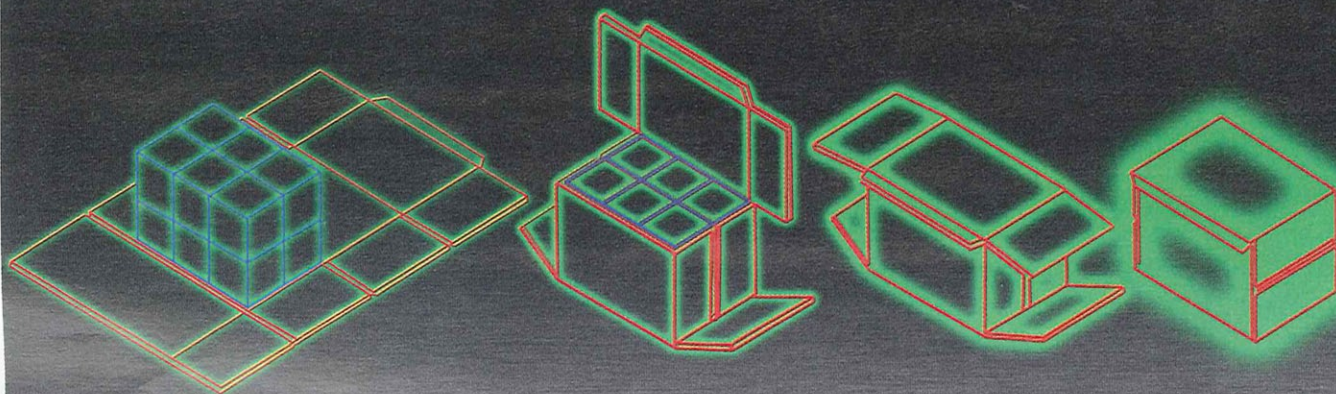
GS1-US standard requires common information to appear on produce cases, such as identification of the manufacturer or brand owner and product, lot number, and harvest or pick date. Because the information is in both human-readable and bar code format, it can be used by each member of the supply chain to easily track where the information, case and product is coming from.

Meat, poultry standards

The mpXML standards were introduced in 2010 by the Meat and Poultry B2B Data Standards Organization to address requirements for meat and poultry. The mpXML standards endorse use of the GS1-128 bar code for variable-measure products such as fresh meats because it enables manufacturers to include specific product information such as case weight and batch or lot data. Like the PTI, the mpXML standards require manufacturer or brand owner identification within the bar code. The standards call for adoption of the GS1-128 bar code by 2014.

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QR codes, too

Quick Response codes (QR codes) and other two-dimensional codes are expected to achieve widespread use this year—and for good reason. Consumers want immediate access to what's relevant and QR codes are being used to make that possible.

If you're not yet familiar with QR codes, they're similar to the bar codes used by retailers to track inventory and price products at the point of sale. The key difference between the two is the amount of data they can hold or share.

Bar codes are linear one-dimensional codes and can only hold up to 20 numerical digits, whereas QR codes are two-dimensional (2D) matrix bar codes that can hold thousands of alphanumeric characters of information. Their ability to hold more information and their ease of use makes them practical for all businesses.

When you scan or read a QR code with your iPhone, Android or other camera-enabled smartphone, you can link to digital content on the Web; activate a number of phone functions including email, IM and SMS; and connect the mobile device to a web browser.

Any of these desired functions are easily achieved by properly creating your QR code. It's a simple process of entering the appropriate data into the QR code generator, and it all takes just a few minutes.