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Safety in Numbers: How Label Coding Enhances Food Safety With Greater Traceability

*Sponsored content from our partner **Kwik Lok** (/sponsor/kwik-lok) on Nov. 15, 2019*

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More and more, consumers want to know more about where their food came from, while food and beverage suppliers want to be able to trace product through the chain for food safety purposes, both proactively and reactively. The U.S. Food & Drug Administration is putting its power behind product information, too, with the release of new traceability rules. If knowledge is power, today's consumers are more powerful than ever.

Today's transparency is also more all-encompassing than ever, going beyond lot or batch information. According to **Technomic's Take: 7 Key Trends for 2019** (<https://www.technomic.com/newsletters/technomics-take/7-key-trends-2019>), the notion of transparency is increasingly multifaceted, spanning sourcing and origins as well as corporate sustainability and social responsibility. Additionally, Technomic's May 2019 *Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility Report* highlights traceability as a key facet of product sustainability and safety.

As product information is better communicated through improved technologies, potential food safety risks and problems can be identified and addressed earlier. For example, 2018's nationwide recall and mass removal of romaine lettuce from store shelves and restaurant kitchens stemmed from uncertainty about the source of the potentially deadly E.coli pathogen; with the origin unable to be pinpointed, all romaine lettuce was considered a risk. However, had the product been coded and labeled with key information, food safety investigators would have been able to trace the tainted lettuce back to not just a growing region but also a specific farm and date of production or packaging.

Such coding and traceability are available for lettuce—as well as a variety of other products bound for human consumption—through advancements such as bag closure systems that not only keep food fresh but also trace food sources. Kwik Lok's closure systems, including its new environmentally friendly Eco-Lok closures that are in line with the demand for more transparent corporate and social responsibility, include labels with important product information such as barcodes and recall information. In addition to information that can be used for traceback in the event of a recall or potential food safety issues, bag closure labels feature details on product variety, weight, size, grade and ingredients, and they help a product stand out on the shelf.

Also reflecting the move toward more comprehensive transparency, Kwik Lok is combining closures and labels with a system that minimizes packaging. The new Kwik Link semiautomatic machine binds bunches of produce together, then adds closures and labels as a way to reduce packaging while providing detailed information for enhanced traceability. The broad range of applications for the Kwik Link system and labels include foods such as carrots, asparagus, spring onions, leeks, spinach, parsley and fresh flowers.

To learn more about bag closure labels and sustainable bag closures designed for improved traceability and food safety, including the new Kwik Link System, visit [kwiklok.com](https://www.kwiklok.com/printers/?utm_source=grocerybusiness&utm_campaign=content&utm_medium=content&utm_term=traceab) ([https://www.kwiklok.com/printers/?](https://www.kwiklok.com/printers/?utm_source=grocerybusiness&utm_campaign=content&utm_medium=content&utm_term=traceab)

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