Bridging the Traceability R&D Gap: An Ontario Solution

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Trace R&D 2009 – Winnipeg, Manitoba
What is OnTrace?

• Not-for-profit, industry-led corporation dedicated to delivering food traceability systems & solutions
  – We build infrastructure/foundations for others to use
  – Focus in Ontario – fit into National traceability framework

• Two compelling mandates
  – Improve emergency management for government & industry
  – Drive innovation to strengthen industry competitiveness & food brand equity

• We are focusing first on primary production; yet our vision includes the entire food chain – and all products
OnTrace Goals

- Design & deliver traceability solutions to help industry & government better manage & respond to emergencies related to agriculture and food.
- Provide information, research & programs to enable agriculture and agri-food stakeholders to develop and use their own traceability solutions.
- Create the means for stakeholders to engage in a whole-chain dialogue (both human & electronic) about traceability & help them become more innovative and competitive.
- Become a self-sustaining business organization.
How is OnTrace Different?

- **Industry-led organization – not Government**
  - Voluntary industry commitment
  - Collaborative role with OMAFRA

- **Broadly based agriculture / agri-food focus**
  - Majority of Board of Directors are in agriculture
  - Broad cross-section of stakeholders

- **Whole-chain / whole-farm view to traceability**
  - ALL products . . . . Livestock and Horticulture
  - Entire chain from the farm through to the consumer
  - Not just emergency management, but also ‘Value Traceability’
What has OnTrace done?

- **Launched the Ontario Agri-food Premises Registry (OAPR)**
  - Built from concept to final system in less than 15 months
  - Public data combined with producer information
  - Voluntary contributions from producers continue to grow

- **Developed dialogue about traceability with partners – Collaboration**
  - Primary producers
  - Processors, Auction Barns, Feedlots, Packers
  - Distributors & Transportation
  - Retailers
  - Governments – Federal & Provincial

- **Developed industry solutions for use in “value traceability”**
  - Web-based membership information management system
  - Remote data collection tools
  - Traceability assessments & certification
What have we observed?

- Still relatively little ‘buy-in’ for traceability from industry
  - Consumers demand for ‘food confidence’ is rising – Who pays?
  - Awareness & communication of cost-benefit is weak
  - Practical information is scattered and hard to access

- Accessing reliable information & results of previous work is tough
  - Where do you go to research successes and lessons learned?
  - Who has already developed a solution that works and can be applied?

- Confusion still persists on the nature of traceability
  - Is it a tool? Is it just food safety?
  - ‘Big T’ versus ‘Little T’ traceability
  - Does it raise costs? Lower them?
  - Does it strengthen accountability? Increase liability?

Clearly a need for collaborative industry focus on traceability in agriculture and agri-food.
What are ‘Gaps’ in R&D?

- Traceability systems remain insufficient
- Limited interoperability standards; little connection to international work
- Collaboration and sharing of learning across jurisdictions and between industry sectors – Economic benefits?
- Opportunities for industry and government to practically prepare and strengthen our ability to manage emergencies
- Policy development on traceability and how it should be supported for emergency management
Addressing the R&D Gap

• **Focal point for traceability is needed – “Collaborative Centre”**
  – A “go-to” organization for traceability – Knowledge / Visibility / Networks
  – Encourage innovation, research, practical application, projects, education
  – Specifically address traceability standards & certification
  – Make traceability easier for industry and governments to use

• **Provincial organization with regional & national connections**
  – Dialogue across the agriculture & agri-food supply chain
  – Establish a common language – Standard way of addressing traceability
  – Enhance export development – Raise industry competitiveness
  – Solutions development & pre-commercialization help
  – Funding options?
Partnerships that Work

• Discussions with industry, OMAFRA, academia, and others

• OnTrace helping create Ontario strategy/plan for traceability
  – Industry Advisory Team helping build strategy & buy-in
  – Five-year projected costs and revenues – Self-sustaining in 2-3 years

• Partners: Intelliware Development Inc.
  Guelph Food Technology Centre
  University of Guelph
  Vineland Research & Innovation Centre

• 4 Key Business Areas identified
  – Meet needs of industry & governments into future
Vision for Traceability R&D

- Competitive Development
- Technology Transfer & Pre-Commercialization
- Industry Education & Outreach
- Emergency Management & Bio-security Protocol Development
- Traceability Collaborative Centre
What's next? Getting Started

• **Seek like-minded R&D partners and investors**
  – University of Guelph / Vineland Research & Innovation Centre
  – Private enterprises? Intelliware Development / BioEnterprises

• **Scan the market for similar centres**
  – Learning opportunities & networking
  – Competitive threats to Ontario business

• **Leverage existing infrastructures & allies to qualify customers**
  – Form a link to OIE and Codex Alimentarius
  – Alliance with Canadian data services providers
Short Term Steps

- Continue to extend Ontario Agri-food Premises Registry (OAPR)
  - Feedlots / Packing Houses
  - Sales barns
  - Processors
  - Transportation

- Education & Outreach
  - Raise understanding: Work with OMAFRA to deliver traceability courses
  - Series of workshops for primary producers through to processors
  - Establish the business case for each situation – FSTI funding

- Build support for collaborative centre focused on traceability
  - Looking for partners and willing participants
  - Network, research, projects, conferences
From Farm Gate to Dinner Plate®
Traceability Solutions for the Agri-Food Industry