

FROM PORK

Bryan Foods turns to VAR for bar code compliance system.

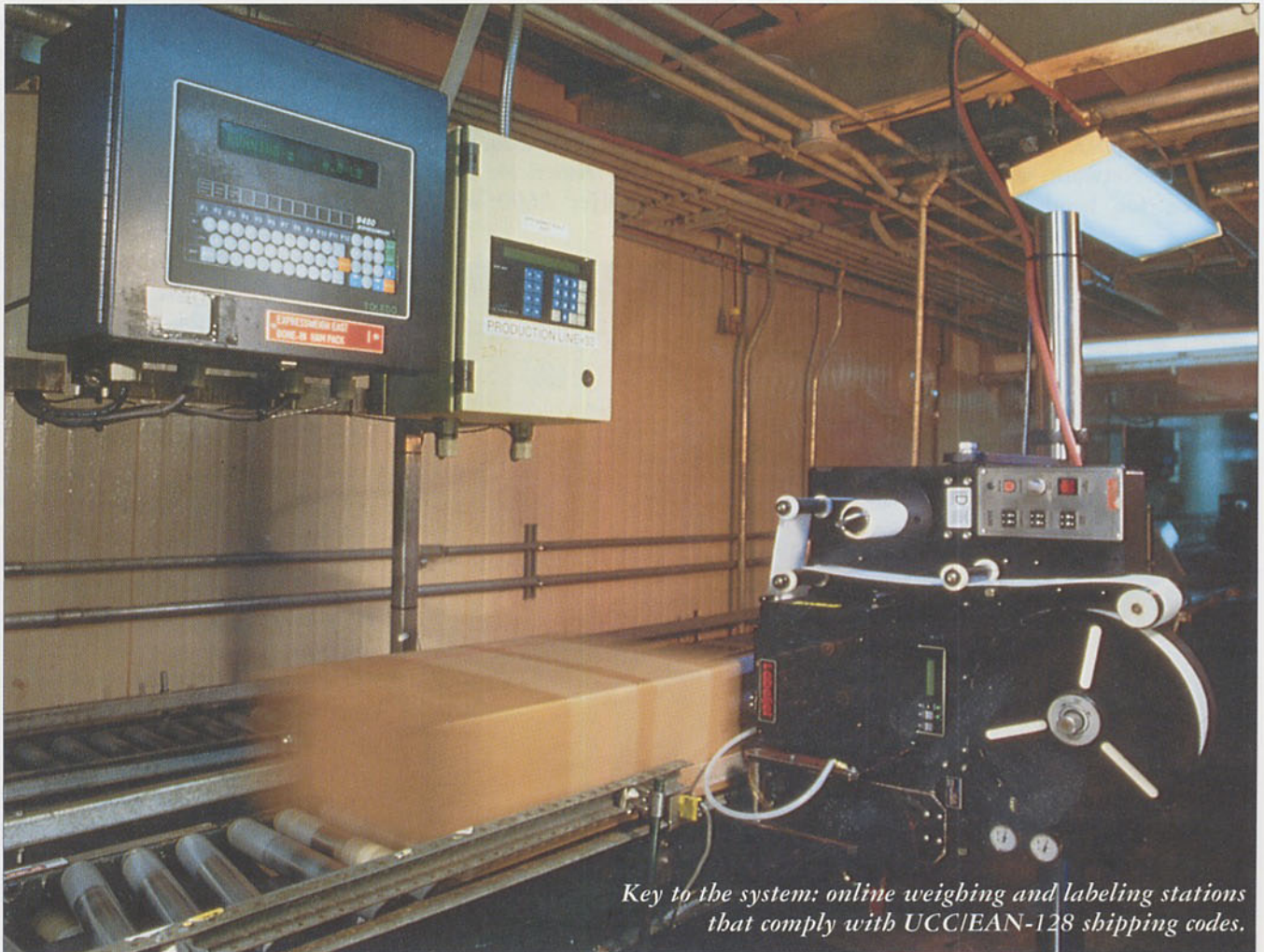
TO PALLET

BRYAN FOODS, THE large pork processor in West Point, MI, was in search of a state-of-the-art system to control produc-

tion and ideally, track its products from the warehouse door to the grocery shelf and restaurant table.

The company, a division of Sara Lee employing approximately 3,000

people, turned to ID Technology (Fort Worth, TX), the value-added reseller, for a bar code compliance solution that met both their Distribution Center (DC) and ven-



Key to the system: online weighing and labeling stations that comply with UCC/EAN-128 shipping codes.

CASE HISTORY

dor needs, and that automated the recording of finished goods production data inside the plant.

TO MARKET, TO MARKET

"In 1995, we needed more space," explains Scott Stewart, Bryan's Information Services tech-support manager. "We simply outgrew our facilities."

Following an evaluation of its production plant, Bryan decided to outsource its distribution function to Freezer Services, which built the new DC right across the street. Next, the third-party logistics supplier recommended a paperless inventory control and shipping system for put-away, pick/pack and warehouse management.

In addition to the requirements of its DC, Bryan felt it would be beneficial to provide UCC/EAN-128 bar codes on individual packages and pallets of bacon, ham, pork and lunch meat for all their customers. The company markets its products throughout the Southeast.

ID Technology provided the state-of-the-art LINX (Plano, TX) Data Terminal Network, which integrates stations for hand packaging and

labeling, automated fixed-weight labeling and automated catch-weight labeling in compliance with UCC/EAN-128 shipping container code standards.

Key to the compliance labeling system, Stewart notes, is an in-motion weighing and labeling application. Four production lines converge into two catch-weight labeling stations. At each of the production lines, an operator affixes preprinted bar code labels that correspond to product numbers.

At the labeling station, the LINX terminal receives the product number from the preprinted label via the scanner and transmits the weight from the scale. Data is sent to the printer/applicator which operates at the rate of 20 boxes per minute. A report on finished goods production is prepared by the LINX terminal on the PC and uploaded to an IBM mainframe. The record is available on the mainframe within 30 seconds of the transaction being recorded at the catch-weight station.

Each station consists of the LINX terminal, Microscan (Renton, WA) raster scanner, Toledo (Toledo, OH) scale and Willett America's (Fort Worth, TX) LabelJet 2600 series

printer/applicator driven by SATO America's (Sunnyvale, CA) print engine—all online to the LINX terminal.

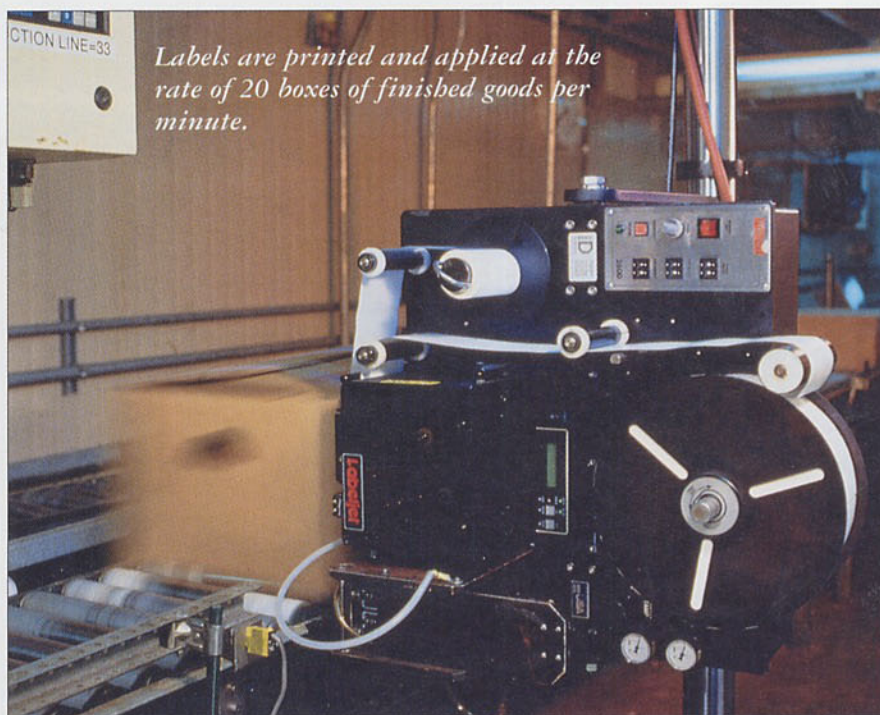
In this controlled environment, the conveyor moves the boxes of product across the LabelJet printer/applicator, which applies 3" x 4" product identification labels to each box. SATO's print engine was selected because of its high durability and reliability in harsh environments, since the entire system depends upon the print quality of the label. "We selected the best bar code printing technology available in order to minimize the risk of having to shut down production due to equipment failure," notes Stewart.

Bryan Foods also needed to identify and track hogs throughout its entire cycle. This would enable them to process the hog based on its quality.

Bryan and ID Technology implemented another LINX network that integrated vision systems, the so-called Fat-O-Meter, handheld bar code scanning and voice recognition. This system automates the tracking of hogs throughout the initial phase of the production process. The pork processor is now able to connect the content and weight of each hog with the vendor that provided it. As Bryan collects fat content and weight information, it automatically adjusts the processing of each hog to maximize yield and quality.

THE PONY EXPRESS

Labeling pallets of the same pork products is also required. This is handled at what Bryan calls the Pony Express line. This station consists of the LINX terminal, PSC's (Webster, NY) laser scanner and the LabelJet printer/applicator powered by SATO's print engine. The operator scans the product bar code and outputs the data and pallet identification to SATO's thermal transfer printer, which then produces the finished goods bar code product identification labels. Inventory-record data is then entered on the PC and uploaded to the IBM mainframe.



Labels are printed and applied at the rate of 20 boxes of finished goods per minute.

ID Technology also installed Teklogix's (Erlanger, KY) RF bar code system in the DC facility to automate warehouse picking and shipping transactions. The RF system was seamlessly interfaced into an IBM mainframe via Token Ring 3174 emulation. Operators scan the UCC/EAN-128 pallet labels as they pick the products, creating an Advance Ship Notice (ASN) to be transmitted via EDI to their third-party warehouse for final shipment. The system automatically compares information on the pallet label to information in the Purchase Order (PO) file, indicating an error if the number of boxes and weight of product shipped do not match the PO. The DC uses the information on the ASN to inventory the new stock and arrange for shipping and handling.

By automating its processes, Bryan reaped the following benefits:

- Increased efficiency—Products are bar coded and scanned for induction into the automated conveyor system, thereby increasing efficiency, tracking and control. The new system


eliminates traffic jams in shipping. Previously, operators used handwriting for marking product weight on boxes while trucks waited to be loaded.

*A third-party logistics
supplier recommended
paperless inventory
control and shipping.*

- Increased productivity—Products can be moved faster, easier and at lower cost.
- Increased accuracy—Eliminating data key-entry errors saves time and money.
- More efficient distribution—The bar code labeling system enables the DC to receive, put-away, and pick and pack more quickly and with greater accuracy.
- Real-time information—Bryan now has case-level production numbers to update product files on the mainframe computer in real-time, vastly improving ordering and

inventory control.

- Increased business—On-time, on-target deliveries reduced costs and provided the competitive edge needed to gain more business.

“Our company’s philosophy is to embrace EDI because of the rapid increases in productivity and profitability it provides,” comments Stewart. “We believe that continually adapting advanced technologies such as automation and bar coding will make us winners in the 21st Century.” 

—Submitted by SATO America

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