

Potatoes sent by barcodes

The use of the SSCC-code provides Nedato with important information for its customers.

Every year one hundred thousand tons of potatoes are sorted by Nedato, the Dutch Potato Farmers Organization. The potatoes are packed in specially designed role containers and are sent to the Distribution Centres of the Hypermarkets, the potato processing industry and restaurants by truck. Besides storage and production (wash, sort and pack) forwarding plays an important part in the daily activities. Nedato introduced the barcode to be able to check shipments, to improve their administration and most important to inform their customers about consignments to expect. Nedato belongs to the Dutch Potato Farmers Organization, which is more than forty years old.

This organization annually sells worldwide 300,000 tons of potatoes and is one of the largest players in this market. Within Nedato quality and food safety is top priority. HACCP certification is the basis for a good quality system. "For complete control we have invested in a track-and-trace system, which provides at the same time information for us as well as for the planners of the distribution centres. They know exactly with what content a truck reaches their DC's at what time of the day", manager Tijmen Reemst of Nedato says. "This is where we asked the help of Datalogic" According to Wim Gerrits, Account Manager Identification of Vierpool B.V. (Maarsse) "Each mini-container will be provided with an EAN Pallet label". Vierpool, already 10 years a reliable Quality Partner from Datalogic, took care of the identification- and registration system for Nedato. Pallets as well as mini containers will get a SSCC-Label (Serial Shipment Container Code), with which they are identified during distribution. Nedato bought automatic tracking & tracing equipment to scan the Serial Shipment Container Code (SSCC) on the roll-containers and CBL-Barrels.

Primary reason for the setting-up of this equipment is the request from of the larger retail chains to receive accurate shipping information. "On the one hand this coding of the pallets and the mini containers has been intended for the recipients, so that they know that they get the correct consignment. On the other hand the barcode is also used to check if the correct mini containers and respective pallets are loaded in the correct truck" Manager Tijmen Reemst adds. Many subcontractors of hypermarkets make use of the EAN pallet label (SSCC) and the corresponding information exchange by EDI (Electronic Data Interchange). The EAN pallet label is a worldwide used standard for label layout on pallets, role containers etc. Through the Application Identifiers within the EAN 128 code, additional information can be added such as 'batch-number', 'Best Before Date' and Article coding. Because of this the label gives, through the complete supply chain, unique information about the pallet or container. Nedato invested in label printers and scanners.

Labels are put on the pallets (Right upper case) or on the sides of the role containers. "Our mini containers get, both left and right the same label, because we load two or three containers at the same time on the forks of the forklift and take them into the truck", Manager Tijmen Reemst says. When the forklift drives into the truck, it passes a fixed scanner, mounted within a steel construction on both sides of the loading dock. The two scanners (connected in Master- Slave configuration) read the SSCC code from each container and transfer their data to the Host through a RS485 network. If the correct role containers for this truck are loaded, the scanner activates a green light. As long as the

total number of role containers to be loaded for this truck has not been reached and each loaded container is according to the initial order, the scanning station `continues to give green light'.

If a driver exceeds the total quantity or brings in a wrong container, the scanning station identifies this. Manager Tijmen Reemst says he is content with the new system. The scanning station and hand held scanners (PowerScan) have been in use since the end of 2007 and we have seen an increased efficiency in loading and also a reduction of picking failures – plus a better insight in planning and in administration. Moreover he has already experienced that the hardware from Datalogic, installed by Vierpool, shows no failures. “We now work jam free although we work in pretty heavy conditions”. Vierpool B.V. from Maarssen installed at Nedato six automatic scanning stations, in each of which two Datalogic DS6400 scanners with incorporated ‘oscillating mirror’ have been mounted. These make sure all labels will be read, even if there are differences in height or reading distance during the passage of the scanning stations.

The DS6400 scanner from Datalogic has been specifically chosen for its reading features. The width of the loading docks is fully exploited by the drivers. Reading from 0,5m to 1.8m is no problem for this scanner, thanks to the Flash Focus technology. On top of this, the incorporated ‘code reconstruction’ technology makes that also damaged, dirty or poorly printed codes, can be read.