

## FOOD TRACEABILITY GROUPS SOLICIT DISTRIBUTION PARTICIPATION

### America's Already Safe Food Can Be Made Safer Through Certification and Accountability

**NEW YORK** – Two groups that have been collaborating on credible traceability of food are soliciting foodservice distributors to join their effort.

VeriPrime, a Wichita, KS-based member-owned federation of producers, processors and retailers, and Agri Food Certification, the Meade, KS, certifying agent for VeriPrime, believe that the foodservice supply chain could benefit from assuring their operator-customers that they are providing food that can be traced back to its source.

“The benefit of certification is that a distributor can meet consumer demand for food is traceable to the farm and the source. That’s the one thing that distributors and operators know when they see the VeriPrime seal on food products. I recognize that distributors do not interface directly with the consumer but they do interface one or two layers removed from them and are still influenced by what consumers want,” explained Dr. Scott Crain, DVM, ceo of VeriPrime, in a recent interview with ID Access.



**DR. SCOTT CRAIN**

“Distributor can tell operators that when they see the VeriPrime label on the product, they know that the product can be traced back to the origin. It shows that the distributor has implemented the best practices and accountability procedures that are required for traceability,” noted Dr. David Farnum, DVM, director of Agri Food Certification during the conversation.

VeriPrime was created some five years ago to implement traceability in the food chain. It has put together a tracking standard with Agri Food, as the recently USDA-accredited certifying body. Agri Food certifies according to the international ISO Guide 65 standard for traceability, which states that participating companies have met the best practices and accountability procedures required to claim that their products are traceable.

“We certify anybody in the food or feed chain from producers of the product to retailers and operators,” Farnum said. “Application of ISO certification standards to the VeriPrime Traceability Assurance System is a natural and logical fit. This program derives its strength and credibility from independent third-party audit. We are committed to scrupulous review and enforcement.”



**DR. DAVID FARNUM**

Crain pointed out that the America food supply is the best in the world, however, inasmuch as CDC statistics demonstrate that consumers still contract foodborne illnesses, there is room to make the food safer. He and Farnum said certifiable traceability is the beginning of preventing more occurrences.

“We know that we could make food safer. Traceability is the cornerstone of food safety and a prerequisite for all existing and forthcoming food safety programs. This is the first step for the food industry to take toward safer foods,” he said.



**VERIPRIME  
CERTIFIED  
TRACEABLE**

Crain and Farnum said the VeriPrime Traceability Assurance System (VTAS) provides safer and certified traceable food products to American consumers. Certified traceable food products, including meat, seafood, fresh produce and grain, are tracked from “farm to fork” to ensure accountability throughout the food chain. Food retailers or operators electing to offer consumers certified traceable products can immediately start the process to begin delivering certified traceable foods to consumers, they said.

“For the first time consumers can be assured at a glance that the food they are purchasing is traceable to its source,” Crain said in a prepared statement. “Certified traceable food is the first and best step to safer food. Although America’s food supply is one of the safest in the world, VeriPrime Certified Traceable food will make our food safer from farm to fork.”

USDA-accredited Agri Food Certification extends certification to all elements of the food chain—compliant to USDA ISO Guide 65 Program as a third-party certification system in a manner based on internationally recognized methods.

The program is capable of certifying any kind of tracking system that supply-chain participants use, confirming that the systems function together across all users, Crain said.

“This is the first step in expanding into foodservice. We will be educating the supply chain that the system is available to its partners,” Crain said.