

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR PRODUCE STANDARDS



PRODUCE PLU CODES

A Users' Guide – 2012

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Chapter One

Background

This paper contains rules for the international Price Look-Up (PLU) numbering scheme. The international PLU system is governed by voluntary cooperation of participating countries that are represented by national or regional representatives on the International Federation for Produce Standards (IFPS) Board of Directors.

PLU codes have been used by supermarkets since 1990 to make check-out and inventory control easier, faster, and more accurate. Fresh fruit and vegetable PLU codes are used to identify bulk produce (and related items such as nuts and herbs). For example, they tell the supermarket cashier whether an apple is a conventionally grown Fuji apple which may sell for \$1.29 per pound/kg versus an organically grown Fuji apple which may sell for \$2.29 per pound/kg. In some instances the codes are also differentiated by size (e.g. small, medium, large).

In 2001, the national users of PLU codes for produce met and formed a group to administer PLU codes at a global level. That group, now the IFPS, continues to address harmonization of the international PLU codes and also is a forum for other standardization efforts affecting the produce sector.

New PLU applications may be reviewed at a regional or national level before submission to the IFPS. The IFPS recognizes that a regional or national review group may exist to ensure this process. (Please see “Definitions” for more information on the composition of the regional review group.)

Please Note: This is a guide for PLU users. Additional information related to the IFPS is available at www.ifpsglobal.com.

New User Guidelines

- The PLU scheme for identifying produce sold in bulk/loose at retail was first introduced in North America and has spread to include use by retailers in Australia, New Zealand and countries in Europe.
- On the grower/packer/shipper side of the industry, any grower/packer/shipper shipping to any country utilizing the PLU codes for fresh produce needs to ensure they meet the expectations of their customers. This typically means that the 4 or 5 digit number must be printed on a small sticker (or by other means depending on the produce) and adhered to the individual pieces of produce.
- An individual, or unique, company prefix is not necessary for this scheme for identifying the individual pieces sold at retail. (Unique company prefixes are however required for other supply chain purposes. This is outside the scope of this document and users are encouraged to contact their national produce association or GS1 Member Organization for further information.)

- Foodservice operators/receivers do not typically utilize the PLU system since most of the produce they receive is used in food preparation but it is recommended that you discuss this issue with your foodservice customers.
- Utilizing the correct PLU is crucial as an incorrect number will lead to incorrect identification, and therefore pricing, of product at the Point of Sale (POS). If an incorrect number is noticed before the produce is placed in the supermarket, retailers may request that the shipper re-label the product or may re-label it themselves. In either instance it leads to additional costs in both material and staff resources.
- If a retailer chooses not to utilize the IFPS PLU numbers at POS, they are simply ignored.
- New users of the PLU code system can refer to the section, “Frequently Asked Questions” for further information.
- Growers, packers and shippers are reminded to check the PLU website, www.plucodes.com, before ordering PLU labels to ensure PLU information for their use is current.

Abbreviations

In this paper, the following abbreviations apply:

IFPS

International Federation for Produce Standards

IFPS Board

The Board of Directors of the IFPS

Definitions

In this paper, the following definitions apply:

Global PLU code

A code approved and assigned by the IFPS Board for use in any country utilizing the IFPS PLU.

GTIN

Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) is a GS1 identification number, commonly represented in bar code symbols, to enable electronic reading at point of sale, when being received at warehouses, or at any other point where it is required in business processes. A GTIN is used for the unique identification of trade items worldwide within the EAN/UCC system. A GTIN has a 14 digit structure though its data carrier (bar code) may contain only 12 digits (the UPC), 13 digits (EAN-13) or 8 digits (EAN-8). The GTIN is defined as a 14 digit number to accommodate all the different structures.

IFPS Member

IFPS membership is divided into two classes:

Ordinary Members: National trade associations or groups of regional trade associations acting in a broad representative capacity that are representing the interests of companies actively engaged in the fresh produce industry supply chain.

Associate Members: Any individual or organization associated with the fresh produce industry supply chain, but not operating as part of it.

IFPS National or Regional Review Group

Groups of national trade associations and/or industry representatives responsible for review of PLU applications before submission to the IFPS. Depending on the region this national review may then flow through a regional review group before submission to the IFPS.

IFPS Regions

For the purposes of IFPS PLU activities, the globe is divided into four regions: The four identified IFPS regions are: Asia/Pacific, Europe/Middle East/Africa, Latin America and North America.

Restricted Use PLU codes

A code approved and assigned by the IFPS Board for produce either a) restricted FOR use only in one specific country or group of countries or b) restricted FROM use in one specific country or group of countries.

Retailer Assigned PLU codes

A code approved and assigned by an individual retailer for use in their retail outlets only. Retailer Assigned codes are part of the master list of PLU codes which can be utilized in the IFPS PLU scheme.

Please note: In some countries retailers have opted for national coordination of these numbers.

Chapter Two

Scope of the System

IFPS Purpose

This document outlines the rules associated with assigning PLU codes to loose produce for international use and with information to enable introduction and use of PLUs in the supply chain.

For the purposes of PLU application consideration and recommendations to the IFPS, applications may be vetted through a national or regional review. Although all IFPS members will vote on new PLU applications, a review body may be used as a forum for additional industry input when considering applications and the criteria by which they are evaluated.

New PLU codes shall be considered for assignment by the IFPS following the rules defined in this document.

Candidates for Global PLU codes will be put forward to the IFPS by the Secretary General within a timeframe which allows for regional input as determined. Candidates rejected for Global codes can use “Retailer Assigned” codes.

Once final acceptance is made by the IFPS, the Secretary General will assign a new PLU code, within two weeks of IFPS approval.

Basic Scope

The PLU scheme shall apply to loose produce, with the following qualifiers:

- Produce is defined as: fruits, vegetables, dried fruit, herbs and flavourings, and nuts.
- Most sealed, containerized or packaged produce falls outside of the scope of the PLU scheme as they use a GTIN (barcode). There are some exceptions such as the example of grapes which are often packaged in a plastic bag with the PLU code clearly indicated on the bag. (The item is still sold as a variable weight item.)
- Excluded from the scheme is produce that has been additionally processed (e.g. stuffed vegetables, juices, purées, portioned product, etc). The main criteria for deciding exclusions are:
 - additional foods, other than produce, are added to the basic item of loose produce.
 - additional processes require techniques other than minimal cutting to create the finished food product. This is because, in some countries, such processes are treated differently for food hygiene and labeling regulation compliance.

- the IFPS needs to agree, on a case-by-case basis, on the amount of processing that is done in order to assign a PLU code (versus preparation).
- grade, quality or regional variation shall not be an attribute which justifies a different PLU code.
- geographic identification of growing region shall not be a justification for a Global PLU.
- produce that is identified by a trademark is not eligible for a unique PLU number.

Range of PLU Codes

The IFPS shall be responsible for determining the range of numbers that are allocated to the PLU scheme. This range will be sub-divided into two parts:

- Those codes which are applicable to the Global PLU list.
- Those codes which are applicable only in the Restricted Use PLU list for historical purposes.

The block of codes allocated for global use need not be in a contiguous block. The numbers range in the 3000 and 4000 series. There is no intelligence built into the numbers; i.e., no one 4-digit number represents anything in particular. It shall also be possible to re-define a previous Restricted Use PLU code to be a Global PLU code. This will simply mean that the PLU code will not change, and that the other three regions need to accept the code into their listings as part of the Global list.

Fifth (Leading) Digit Qualifier

The IFPS shall be responsible for deciding the assignment and definition of qualifying prefix digits for international recognition. At present, only three digits have been allocated:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 0 | Applies to all non-qualified produce and is generally presented without the leading "zero" digit. |
| 8 | Genetically modified |
| 9 | Organic |

Retailer Assigned Codes

Blocks of numbers have been left unassigned and are designated for use/assignment by individual retailers. These codes allow retail introduction of new products which do not meet the criteria for assignment of a Global Use code. The assignment and management of these codes is left entirely to the discretion of individual retailers and it is strongly recommended that suppliers using these codes ensure coordination in the event of more than one retail customer selling their new product. (Please see *When are "Retailer Assigned" numbers used?* in the section "Frequently Asked Questions".)

N.B. – Countries or regions may choose to coordinate usage of Retailer Assigned codes at a national/regional level. This decision is left to the discretion of the IFPS National or Regional Review Group.

Granularity

The IFPS shall decide the level of granularity (detail) that justifies a PLU code. Three levels of granularity shall be supported:

- To a produce type or commodity, with no sub-divisions (e.g. quince).

NOTE: There are a number of alternative and translated names for many produce types or commodities. The IFPS shall be responsible for deciding whether a type of produce shall be assigned a PLU code, but the individual IFPS members may use alternative names and may even group, or sub-group, types in their listings, because this structure has no effect on the fundamental assignment of the PLU code. Therefore, if market needs and national practices require it, it is possible to re-arrange the descriptive listings (e.g. PEPPERS into two sub-groups of CAPSICUMS and CHILLIES).

- The sub-division of a commodity or type into a low order classification that distinguishes between color, variety or some other significant feature associated with the type (e.g. TAMARILLO, Golden or TAMARILLO, Red).
- The further sub-division that distinguishes between size, (e.g. the sub-division of APPLES of some varieties into size classifications).

NOTE: The assignment of different PLU codes to distinguish between size shall not necessarily extend to all PLU codes of the same produce type or commodity.

If the IFPS decides to apply a size classification to a particular produce type or commodity, it shall determine the number of sizes that are applicable to that commodity, and shall also determine the boundary point(s) that shall be used to distinguish between one PLU code and another. The IFPS may allow different size boundaries between items that are on the Global PLU list and items that are only on a Restricted Use list. Whenever size PLUs are introduced for the first time or there is a transition from one number of sizes to another, the guidance given in Chapter 4 will be followed.

- It is important to note that the levels and division between commodities need not be uniform, as some will have only one level of granularity, while other commodities may have many levels (e.g. in some commodities various size breaks are necessary for retail identification, while in others size differentiation is unnecessary).
- It will be important to involve the retail community in each country in providing information and advice on the need for additional sizes, varieties, etc.

Request for a PLU Code from the IFPS

A request for the assignment of a Global PLU code shall be made by the applicant to the IFPS Secretary General. (A copy of the PLU Application is attached as Appendix I.) This request shall be made complying with the following conditions:

1. All of the rules defined by the scope of the PLU system shall be respected.
2. Where the IFPS has defined additional criteria, quantitative information about the candidate shall be provided.
3. It is desirable in developing this system to receive appropriate reliable data (e.g. "thousand tons")

Managing PLU Code Transitions

There will be situations where PLU codes may change due to transition from one set of size definitions to another. It is also possible that, should industry decide codes are obsolete, they may be completely withdrawn. There are some general implications on the "lifespan" of the various PLU codes affected in such scenarios.

1. The new PLU codes become effective immediately, i.e. the PLU codes may appear any time after publication of an updated PLU list. For practical purposes, different produce will require different transition periods for the introduction of the new PLU code to be complete. For example, a new variety could be implemented during the next packing season, but introducing new size definitions could require sorting and packing equipment to be upgraded. The IFPS could indicate a transition period based on knowledge of the issues involved.
2. The old PLU code would have an expiry (or withdrawal) date based on the transition period. For practical purposes, if the IFPS defines an expiry date for a PLU code to be withdrawn, this then defines the transition period by which the new PLU code(s) should be fully operational.
3. Old PLU codes may be re-used, however, PLU codes should not be re-used until 18 months from the date of withdrawal of their previous use. Note: this will be done only if extremely necessary.

Chapter Three

Restricted Use PLU Codes

Introduction

During the migration from a regional to global PLU list, some legacy codes were maintained as Restricted Use PLU codes. As noted earlier, a Restricted Use code is a code approved and assigned by the IFPS Board for produce either a) restricted FOR use only in one specific region or b) restricted FROM use in one specific region. These Restricted Use codes were originally regional codes designed to recognize the market specifications in a region which either a) requires a code for use in a region – but would not be of use in the other regions or b) is unable to accommodate the use of a code in that region due to sizing variations or other commercial reasons which preclude its use.

It is important to note that many Restricted Use Codes address legacy issues relative to traditional use of codes, often in North America. Many of the codes originated in North America where these codes have been firmly entrenched in retail and supplier systems and equipment design for many years. The economics of change would have serious commercial impact and other regions determined that, where certain economic consequence would arise, the requirements in the region should be respected.

N.B. Because Restricted Use Codes address legacy issues only, the IFPS will not entertain new applications for Regional Use Codes.

Examples of Restricted Use Codes follow:

- Restricted FOR use on products grown in North America, East only:

4318 – Melon, Cantaloupe/Muskmelon, Small

4319 – Melon, Cantaloupe/Muskmelon, Large

- Restricted FROM use on products grown in North America:

3425 – Tangerines/Mandarins, Ellendale, Small

3426 – Tangerines/Mandarins, Ellendale, Medium

3427 – Tangerines/Mandarins, Ellendale, Large

Chapter Four

Defining Size

The Size Parameter

Various issues exist with the basic parameters associated with the definition of size:

- count per container versus measured size
- diameter or linear measurement versus weight
- metric units versus imperial units

The most appropriate parameter should be used for the type of produce, taking into account the international implications and conventions. The long term goal should be towards a harmonised base where, for example:

count X = metric Y = imperial Z are close, even true, equivalents

It has to be understood that the number of sizes addressed by PLU could be less than the real number of precise sizes used for trade purposes, especially for legal or commercial purpose at the carton level.

Migration Issues

With respect to migration, if the IFPS approves the need to move from a non-specific to a specific two-size (or three-size) option, the following procedure for PLU assignment will be followed:

The code currently assigned to the non-specific size commodity will transition to the number for the most common size, as determined by industry. New codes will be assigned to the additional size break(s). For example:

Currently there is one size for Apples/Belchard:

3339 Apples/Belchard

Should a request for two size definitions be approved, the following may occur:

3339 Apples/Belchard Small 100 size and smaller

xxxx Apples/Belchard Large 88 size and larger

(where “xxxx” refers to a number as yet unassigned)

Chapter Five

Review Process for PLU Applications

All PLU applications are reviewed by the IFPS members prior to voting. In some regions, national or regional groups may provide input to the IFPS members from their region as expert advice on the validity of a new application in the context of the criteria outlined in the application. The following regional model utilized in North America via the PLU Assignment Committee provides a framework for industry consultation and may be used as a model when creating national or regional review bodies for PLU application consideration. This entire process takes approximately 10 – 12 weeks.

North American Regional Model

The application is reviewed for completeness and accuracy of data by the PLU Assignment Committee Staff Liaison. The application is then distributed to the appropriate commodity subcommittee.

All members of the appropriate commodity subcommittee have at least two weeks to review and vote, in writing, on all applications. Members of the subcommittee vote on applications by either approving, declining, or abstaining. If there is a split vote, a conference call may be held with all subcommittee members so that all points of view are addressed. A re-vote will be taken on the conference call. The vote will be documented along with appropriate perspectives related to any controversy regarding the application. This information is then forwarded to the PLU Retail Review Group composed mainly of retail representatives.

The PLU Retail Review Group also has at least two weeks to review PLU applications along with the subcommittees' votes and comments. The Review Group follows the same voting procedure as outlined above and the recommendations are forwarded to the PLU Assignment Committee.

The PLU Assignment Committee considers the recommendations from the subcommittees and Review Group and proceeds to the vote. The result of the vote is given to the relevant IFPS members from their region for their input at the meeting of the IFPS.

IFPS Decision

Once a PLU has been approved by the IFPS, the new code and description are forwarded to the applicant in writing. The new PLU code and description are also posted on the IFPS web site.

When a PLU application is declined by the IFPS, the IFPS Secretary General will send written notification to the applicant and state the reasons for rejecting the PLU application. The Secretary General shall also suggest appropriate alternatives (e.g. retailer assigned codes).

Chapter Six

PLU Best Practices

This chapter details suggested global best practices and attendant information for utilization of IFPS PLU codes.

Background

The use of PLU codes is voluntary, as is the means by which this information is designed and printed on labels. This section contains suggested best practices for consideration when designing and printing PLU labels based on the experiences to date of countries currently utilizing the PLU system for produce. Legislative, regulatory and commercial requirements may differ from country to country and it is incumbent on users to ensure that the PLU labels utilized adhere to the requirements within the marketplace for which the product is intended. This list is not meant to be exhaustive and it may be that individual trading partners will suggest or require other considerations.

Specifications for Printing Standard PLU Codes

1. Use all four (or five if applicable) digits of the code as legibly as possible.
2. For maximum legibility at the checkout, each digit in the PLU number should be a minimum 14-point type size. Where a larger label permits, use larger type (there is no maximum size); have a width no less than 1/3 its height; and be printed in high contrast to the background. An ideal is black print on a white background. (Certain type face fonts are preferable for the PLU number as they provide maximum “readability” and include Gill Sans Bold and Futura Bold.)
3. At all times remember that the numbers must be read quickly and accurately when viewed by a cashier through a clear plastic bag. Please print so the number is the largest type possible on the label.
4. Collateral Information – It is advisable to consider the primary function of the PLU label - accurate identification of the product - when making decisions relative to the design of the PLU label. Any peripheral information included on the label, such as brand identification, handling suggestions, country or region of origin, marketing slogans, should not be done so at the expense of the readability/legibility of the PLU number.
5. Growing Methodology Identification – Leading digit indicators (i.e. “9” or “8”) may be adopted for use on non-conventionally grown product such as organic and genetically modified/engineered items. (Please see “Frequently Asked Questions in this chapter.) Although the correct key entry of this leading digit, in combination with the PLU, offers the ability to identify these products (often sold at a premium price), experience has shown that cashiers often ignore this leading digit with a resulting loss in revenue at retail checkout. Consideration should therefore be given to a clear visual identification of organic, or genetically modified items through a visually obvious means such as bright colored labels or clear use of the word “organic”, etc. (taking into consideration the previous information relative to peripheral information).

6. Regional/Language Considerations – English is generally recognized as the language of commerce in much of the globe but there may be markets where special language requirements need to be taken into consideration. It is therefore advisable to make yourself aware of specific language requirements, or other regional requirements, when preparing labels. (For example, in the Canadian province, Quebec, regulations require that all information included on the PLU label is written in French if a French translation exists for the word(s).)
7. Adhesion of Labels – Certain commodities, such as stone fruit and tomatoes have skin which can present certain challenges for removal of PLU labels, often resulting in removal of portions of the skin with the label. Experience has shown that consumers are often vocal in their concern over this issue and it is therefore recommended that this be considered when determining the type of label or adhesive used. (Use of a functioning tab in the label shape may assist in label removal.) In addition, special segments of the population, including the visually impaired or elderly have raised concerns about the ability to find and remove the label. Again, this should be considered during label preparation.

Using the PLU Code

It is important to follow this guideline:

Don't use a PLU on any bagged product always sold at that weight and not weighed in the store for pricing. You may use a PLU with a corresponding barcode (EAN/UCC-13, UCC-12 or EAN/UCC-8) if the product can be sold either "by the each/per unit" or weighed for pricing.

It is **incorrect** to use both a barcode and PLU code(s) together on an item that can only be sold in a fixed weight form, such as a 1-pound bag of carrots. That bag of carrots is never sold in variable weight form: the cashier would never weigh it on the scale and determine its price based on a price per pound/kg. It is always sold just as is: a 1 pound bag of carrots and should carry the appropriate bar code.

Some retailers have indicated their preference for a barcode whenever possible on variable weight produce. This may vary from retailer to retailer and should be considered when preparing coding for product.

Benefits of Using PLU Standard Codes

Retailers who use standard codes report that these:

- Improve scan data and pricing integrity
- Enhance sales and profitability
- Reduce labor and supply costs because clerks no longer need to label items in the store
- Provide the building blocks for effective category management in the produce department

A shipper applying a standard PLU code to an item provides benefits to both the retail customers and the shipper.

Shippers who use the standard codes report that these:

- Help variety sales and pricing by removing inefficient practices of cost averaging similar-looking items at retail
- Make compiled sales data more accessible from retailers and services which compile retail sales data
- Make retailers more willing to carry additional varieties and recognize premium varieties or sizes
- Do require a significant conversion cost in packing line machinery because labeling must be done after sizing, not before

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is a Price Look-Up (PLU) code?

A. PLU codes are 4 or 5 digit numbers which have been used by supermarkets since 1990 to make check-out and inventory control easier, faster, and more accurate. They ensure that the correct price is paid by consumers by removing the need for cashiers to identify the product; e.g., whether or not it is conventionally or organically grown. They are primarily assigned to identify individual bulk fresh produce (and related items such as nuts and herbs) and will appear on a small sticker applied to the individual piece of fresh produce. The PLU number identifies produce items based upon various attributes which can include the commodity, the variety, the growing methodology (e.g. organic) and the size group.

The 4-digit PLU codes for produce are assigned randomly within a series of numbers within the 3000 and 4000 series. There is no intelligence built into the 4-digit code. For example, no one number within the 4-digit number represents anything in particular. The 4-digit codes are for conventionally grown produce. 5-digit codes are used to identify organic or genetically modified produce. The prefix of '8' would be placed in front of the 4-digit code for genetically modified produce and the prefix of '9' would be placed in front of the 4-digit conventionally grown code for organic produce. You will not see the 5 digit codes in the PLU codes database since they are simply prefixes added to the conventionally grown produce PLU codes.

PLU codes are assigned by the IFPS (International Federation for Produce Standards) after rigorous review at both the national and international levels.

Q. What is the International Federation for Produce Standards (IFPS)?

A. The International Federation for Produce Standards (IFPS) is composed of national produce associations from around the globe.

The long term objective of the federation is to improve the supply chain efficiency of the fresh produce industry through developing, implementing and managing harmonized international standards.

For further information about the IFPS, please visit www.ifpsglobal.com.

Q. Is it required to label produce with PLU codes?

A. No, the PLU system is voluntary and based on business needs. It is not regulated by a governmental agency. Specifically, no regulatory body requires a PLU sticker on loose produce. Labeling produce with PLU codes are typically required by the retail industry to assist with point-of-sale (POS) identification. In various countries, most medium to large retailers expect a PLU as part of conducting business.

Q. Why are some produce items labeled and others not?

A. Some items will be marked with PLU codes while others are not. One can't imagine green beans or mushrooms with stickers; however PLU codes may be used on signage or by another means for these types of commodities. Other items like apples or leaf lettuce are being either stickered or banded with a PLU code. The principal objective of PLU codes is to create a common code which becomes the building block for system wide communication of electronic data.

Q. How many PLU codes have been assigned?

A. Currently, there are over 1,400 global PLU codes assigned to produce and related items.

Q. How do I obtain a complete list of PLU codes?

A. At www.plucodes.com, you would 'Search PLU codes' and then select 'View All'. You then have the option to export the entire list to Excel and manipulate the list however you choose.

Q. How do I code an item that doesn't have a PLU code in the database?

A. If a code does not currently exist for the product, a Retailer Assigned PLU Code can be used or an application can be submitted for a new PLU code if the criteria are met.

Q. How do I apply for a new PLU code?

A. There is an application process and criteria which can be located by selecting the menu option under 'Produce Coding' for 'Apply for a New PLU'. It contains the assignment criteria along with the application and supporting documentation needed. PLU applications are reviewed on a set schedule; please refer to the application assignment criteria for submittal and approval dates.

Q. Is there a fee to apply for a new PLU code?

A. Yes, it costs \$250 per application. This helps defer administrative and processing fees.

Q. What is the review process for a PLU application?

A. The application is first reviewed for completeness and accuracy of data. The application is then forwarded to the member organizations of IFPS. Each IFPS member organization has a review process within its country for each application including commodity specific and retail review after which it is submitted to the IFPS Produce Identification Committee and then to the IFPS Board.

The IFPS Board of Directors makes the final decision on whether to approve or deny the application at quarterly board meetings.

Q. How long does it take to receive a response regarding an application submittal?

A. It typically takes an average of 3 months to receive a response from the IFPS.

Deadline for Submission	Deadline for Comments	Decision Date
November 1	December 15	January 31
February 1	March 15	April 30
May 1	June 15	July 31
August 1	September 15	October 31

Q. Are there any restrictions for applying for a new PLU code?

A. The product must be available to the entire global produce industry and available from multiple growers. Codes will not be assigned for a product that is controlled by one grower or by multiple growers that are controlled by a single entity.

Q. Is there a minimum production number required to be granted a new PLU code?

A. Depending on the commodity, there are production thresholds that the committees use as a reference when reviewing applications. However, they are only used as a means of guidance and not a determining factor for granting a PLU code.

Q. What is a Retailer Assigned PLU Code and how is it assigned?

A. Retailer Assigned PLU codes allow retailers to designate their own numbers for items that do not have a standard PLU code assigned. After a supplier makes specific arrangements with all retailers that will receive the item, a Retailer Assigned PLU Code may be used. We suggest that you get the agreement in writing for your records.

For some commodities where there are a large number of varieties, e.g., apples or oranges, a block of Retailer Assigned PLU codes are available to identify these varieties that don't currently have a PLU code.

Q. How do I code organically grown produce with a PLU code?

A. Add a '9' in front of the four digit PLU code for the conventionally grown item. For example, the PLU code for a standard yellow banana is 4011 where an organically grown standard yellow banana would be 94011.

Q. How do I code genetically modified produce with a PLU code?

A. Add an '8' in front of the four digit PLU code for the conventionally grown item.

Q. Are there any other prefixes that signify any other type of processing?

A. No, the only existing established prefixes are the '8' and the '9'.

Q. Do I need to put the name of the commodity/variety or company name on the PLU sticker?

A. No, the PLU coding system is a voluntary system and is used primarily for POS (point-of-sale) identification at the retailer. The only requirement for the sticker is the 4 or 5 digit number. If there is enough retail space on the sticker, you can place whatever else you'd like to place on the sticker.

Q. What font should I use for my PLU stickers?

A. You should follow these recommendations when printing standard PLU codes:

- For maximum legibility at the checkout, each digit in the PLU code should be a minimum 14 point type size. Where a larger label permits, a larger type may be used (there is no maximum size).
- With the introduction of DataBar on the label, the average point size recommended is between 10 point and 12 point.
- The PLU code should be printed in high contrast to the background. Black print on a white background is ideal. The higher the contrast, the better the legibility.
- At all times remember that the numbers must be read quickly and accurately when viewed by a cashier through a clear plastic bag.
- Please print the PLU sticker so the number is the most prominent element on the label. The PLU number should appear as large as possible on the label.
- A serif style font is generally more legible than a non-serif font.

Q. May I put the trademarked name on the PLU sticker?

A. The industry can put whatever they want on the sticker. The IFPS only controls the integrity of the number itself. If a packer chooses to add a brand name to the label, it is up to them to be certain that their receivers (buyers) will accept it.

Q. How do I differentiate growing regions with a PLU code?

A. The PLU system is a globally used system so unless specified, the code can be used for any growing region. If only one number is provided in the PLU list, use that one. If two numbers are provided (one with a restriction for a specific growing region), use the one that corresponds to the correct growing region.

Q. What do the restrictions mean on the list?

A. There are certain PLU codes which were originally assigned for a specific region outside or inside of North America when the system was first established. Although PLU codes are now considered global, they are, for various reasons, impossible to incorporate in markets outside of those restricted regions. For those PLU codes 'Restricted from ANY use in N.A.', the recommendation is to only use these codes for items grown and/or sold outside of North America. For those items restricted to be grown in a certain regions of North America, 'East' refers to items grown east of the Mississippi River in the United States or east of the Ontario/Manitoba border in Canada. 'Central' is considered to be Texas, Arizona and New Mexico. West would be considered California.

Q. How do I know what the size breaks are for particular size identification?

A. Select the 'More Info' link next to the PLU code and it will display the sizes or counts that correspond with the size description. There are typically 'small' and 'large' sizes of produce. Listed below are the sizes which typically represent those descriptions.

- For North America, 'Small' typically represents 100 size and smaller and 'Large' represents 88 size and larger.
- For the Rest of the World, 'Small' represents Average fruit weight < 150g and 'Large' represents Average fruit weight > 150g.
 - * The size (count 100 or 88) refers to the number of fruit or vegetables in a standard box most commonly in use in N. America.
 - * Average produce weight or diameter is not a minimum weight or diameter but the average weight or diameter of the items contained in the box irrespective of its size (capacity).
- There are also 'Medium' and 'Extra Large' sizes which would be defined in the 'More Info' link for each commodity.

Q. Where can the most recently added PLU codes be found?

A. There is a menu option underneath 'Produce Coding' for 'Recently Added/New PLU codes'. If you select that option, you will get a table of the most recently added PLU codes.

Q. Are there any language requirements for PLU labels?

A. This is determined by your target market. For example, in the U.S., there are no language requirements relative to PLU labels. However, in Canada, there are requirements around printing in French, but typically any additional information you choose to include on a PLU label is printed in English.

Please contact your receivers to understand any particular requirements in your target market.

Q. Canada and the United States have country of origin declaration or labeling requirements. Do I need to include the country of origin on my PLU label?

A. There is no Canadian regulatory requirement to put country of origin information on a PLU label. In general, Canadian labeling regulations require a country of origin declaration on pre-packaged product and shipping containers. In the U.S., regulations for Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) took effect in March 2009. It requires that retailers notify their customers of the country of origin for fresh produce. If the product is labeled with a sticker, the regulation requires that the majority of product in a retail bin/display needs to be labeled for compliance. Otherwise, the retailer can simply put up a sign in the store by the product. To ensure compliance with the regulation in the U.S., the USDA conducts in-store COOL reviews.

Q. Is it acceptable to add our company's website on the PLU label?

A. This is a marketing decision each company makes. However, be aware that, if the website contains any nutritional information on the product, and depending on the target market, it may trigger the country specific

requirements. Please contact your receivers to understand any particular requirements in your target market.

Q. How can I find out about an individual sticker or adhesive used?

A. To get specific information about a particular sticker, one should contact the company using the sticker.

Q. What is the DataBar and how does it relate to the PLU code?

A. The DataBar is the name of the barcode that acts similarly to the linear UPC (Universal Product Code). It is encoded with a 14 digit number called a GTIN (Global Trade Item Number). It was designed to fit on smaller items that are not large enough to use a traditional GTIN barcode; e.g., loose/bulk produce. This barcode, also called the Stacked Ominidirectional DataBar, can be printed on the same sticker on which the PLU code is printed.

Q. Will I still need to use the PLU code if I'm using the DataBar?

A. Yes, the PLU code will be the human readable portion of the label if the DataBar does not scan.

Q. Do I need to include the PLU code when creating my GTIN to be encoded in the DataBar?

A. No, since the GTIN is company specific and the prefix varies in numeric length, a company might not have the space to include the 4 or 5 digit PLU code in the 14 digit GTIN. If you have the space to use your company specific prefix and the PLU code as the item reference portion of the GTIN and still have the preceding '0' and the ending check digit, then you can use the PLU code if you want to. It is recommended you simply create your own GTINs as you see fit to capture all the bulk products in your item catalog.

Q. What is a QR code and can it be used in place of a PLU code?

A. A QR code is a Quick Response code. It is a 2 dimensional barcode and it is more similar to a UPC than a PLU code. Bar codes are usually linked to a database that the scanning device pulls information from (price, name, etc.) whereas QR Codes actually contain information. QR Codes do not need to pull data from a database because the information is embedded within the code.

Appendix I



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR PRODUCE STANDARDS PRICE LOOK-UP (PLU) CODE ASSIGNMENT CRITERIA

Updated April 2012

Please be sure you have thoroughly read through the criteria below and have attached the necessary documentation before submitting your application to the International Federation for Produce Standards (IFPS). Before you proceed, please refer to the PLU codes database, www.ifpsglobal.com/ProductIdentification.aspx, to verify that a code does not already exist for the product. In order to give the IFPS sufficient time to consider the application and assign a new number, please refer to the review schedule below when making your decision to submit an application.

Deadline for Submission of Application

November 1
February 1
May 1
August 1

Deadline for Comments

December 15
March 15
June 15
September 15

Decision Date

January 31
April 30
July 31
October 31

A processing fee of \$250 USD is required for each new application considered by the IFPS and is non-refundable. This fee will be used to defray administrative expenses incurred in processing the application. A separate application will be required for each new number requested. Please submit payment in the form of a check or credit card. Please see bottom of application for payment processing information. All fees will be payable at the time of application by the filing organization. Fees will be payable to PMA, the IFPS Secretariat.

Applications will be posted to the IFPS web site, www.ifpsglobal.com, for comments and feedback as part of the review process. The applicant's name and address will be removed along with the retail letters of support. All comments on pending applications must be submitted by the above deadline and will be sent via email to info@IFPSglobal.com. Applications will be reviewed at regional and national levels, including commodity specific and retail review, before advancing to the IFPS for final assessment. Comments by the industry posted to the IFPS website will also be considered.

CRITERIA FOR NUMBER ASSIGNMENTS

VERY IMPORTANT: No application will be considered unless the following criteria are met and the proper documentation is attached. If any of these criteria are not relevant to the application, please indicate this on the application. Please be sure to complete the application thoroughly and have all the supporting evidence required.

1. Commodity: Product must be a fresh fruit or vegetable, loose or bunched, sold by weight or by the unit, in an unprocessed form and sold at retail stores.
Note: Peeled or pre-cut fruits and vegetables are considered processed product, and, as such, will not be assigned a PLU code for use in the fresh fruit & vegetable department. The commodity name must be the name under which the product is grown; e.g. apples or mangoes.

2. Variety: The product variety must be widely recognized – for example, the Granny Smith apple is distinct from another variety of apple, such as Golden Delicious. Separate codes are assigned to varieties to allow items to be sold at different prices. This should be the growing name or cultivar if different from the marketing name if the marketing name is trademarked; e.g. Cripps Pink is the cultivar for the trademarked Pink Lady®. **Note:** If the item you are requesting a new standard code for is similar to an item that is currently assigned a code (e.g., you are requesting a new code for Round Eggplant and Eggplant is currently assigned a code), please attach an explanation of why your item is unique from the item that already has been assigned a code. The variety of the product must also be of distinct parentage. It cannot be a ‘sport’, ‘club’ or ‘managed’ variety of an existing variety that already has a PLU designation; e.g. the Pinata® and Evelina® apples are examples of sport varieties of the Pinova apple. Both the Pinata® and Evelina® use the PLU code for the Pinova apple. The sport variety is typically an item grown from the same tree parentage, but with a different characteristic, such as color.

3. Item Size: If a size break is necessary, indicate the product size (e.g. small/ medium /large /extra-large) that must be in compliance with the standard usage within the industry. Size information can be found in the FAQ section of the website, www.ifpsglobal.com/ProductIdentification.aspx or by selecting the ‘More Info’ section next to the corresponding PLU code for the specific commodity on the website. In most situations, there will be a North America and Rest of World size break.

4. Distribution/Marketing: The product must be available to the entire global produce industry and available from multiple growers. Codes will not be assigned for product that is controlled by one grower or by multiple growers that are controlled by a single entity. This criterion is especially important when considering patented products. **If the cultivar or variety is subject to patent or trademark protection, a PLU number will not be assigned to that patented or trademarked name.** Examples: Pink Lady® is a trademark for certain commercially grown Cripps Pink apples. Pink Lady® is cultivated, packaged

and marketed by multiple growers under license. However, IFPS recognizes only the cultivar for the item and therefore lists the item as Cripps Pink in the PLU code listing. Another example is the Jazz® apple which is the trademarked name but is issued a PLU code for Scifresh apples. In the case of the Del Monte Gold® pineapple, which is a patented variety, the product is exclusively cultivated, packaged and marketed by Del Monte and was therefore not eligible for a distinct PLU code. In situations such as this, there are blocks of codes within the IFPS PLUs which are reserved for use by retailers to enable grower/shippers to uniquely identify product in that special circumstance. For more information, visit

www.ifpsglobal.com/ProductIdentification.aspx

5. Production/Sales Volumes: Current annual and 5 year projected volumes are required for both actual production and sales. The source of these volumes must also be noted (e.g., commission or association data, internal estimates, etc.).

6. Countries of production: The product must be marketed in more than one country. We want to identify the global availability and potential growth across the world.

7. Product Photo – Photos of the product for which the application is being made must be provided. Photos can be provided electronically in a JPG 300 DPI format or on paper (minimum size 10 x 15 cm/4 x 6 inches). The digital image should be forwarded to info@plucodes.com. (Please indicate which application the image pertains to.) Any paper photos should be submitted with the completed application.

8. Retail Support Letters: Support letters are required from at least three different retailers, each operating 25 or more stores are required. Companies signing the support letter must be utilizing IFPS PLU codes in their retail operations. (Support letters signed by a retailer not using PLU codes within their store retail systems will be disallowed and the applicant will be asked to provide additional letters to support their application.) Please note: only authorized signers should sign support letters.

9. Intellectual Property (trademarks and patents): Supporting evidence regarding the global availability of the item is needed if the plant or individual fruit

or vegetable is patented or has a trademarked name. The PLU code will be assigned to the patented (master) variety. The product can be called a number of names, but will only have one PLU code on the sticker. For example, if you take the Pinova

apple, which is marketed under the Pinova, Pinata, Evelina, and Corail trademark names, all use the same PLU number. By issuing this way, the retail community know what they are really getting even when an apple is renamed.

All requests for a new PLU code should be submitted in writing using the attached form. Applications and associated documents can be sent electronically to info@IFPSglobal.com or mailed to the address on the application. If sending electronically, please be sure that the file is in PDF format and any pictures attached are in JPG format. Regardless of the outcome, every applicant will receive a written response detailing the decision, and, if approved, the new PLU number assigned. Once a number is assigned, it will be posted to the PLU codes database on www.ifpsglobal.com/ProductIdentification.aspx and the IFPS web site, www.ifpsglobal.com. If the application is declined, applicants can resubmit their application only if new evidence or additional information is included. If denied a second time, the applicant must wait two years before applying for the same item. Please refer to the PLU Application Review Process on the last page of the application for further details on the steps for application consideration.

Any questions?

Call +1 (302) 738-7100 or e-mail info@plucodes.com.

We are here to help!

International Federation for Produce Standards

c/o Produce Marketing Association

1500 Casho Mill Road

P.O. Box 6036

Newark, Delaware 19714-6036

Phone: +1 (302) 738-7100 Fax: +1 (302) 731-2409

www.ifpsglobal.com



PLU CODE APPLICATION

International Federation for Produce Standards (IFPS)

P.O. Box 6036, Newark, DE 19714-6036

Phone: +1 (302) 738-7100 Fax: +1 (302) 731-2409 Email: info@IFPSglobal.com

The information requested below will be used to evaluate whether a new PLU code should be assigned to the fresh produce product(s) detailed by you, the applicant. All information you provide will be considered by the IFPS in making its decision. By completing this form, you agree to adhere to the rules and procedures established by the IFPS as outlined in the Assignment Criteria Document.

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION

Date: _____

Name of Applicant & Title: _____

Organization/Company: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____ State /Province: _____

Postal/Zip Code: _____ Country: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Please be sure you have read the preceding **Assignment Criteria Document** before completing the application form. If you have any questions, contact your local IFPS member (a list of members can be found at www.ifpsglobal.com). Also verify at www.ifpsglobal.com/ProductIdentification.aspx that the product being applied for has not already been assigned. ***You must use a separate copy of this form for each individual number for which you are applying. Complete each section of this application. If a section is not applicable to your product, simply write (N/A) in the space provided. Please include all required (marked with an *) information. If you need additional space, please attach a separate piece of paper.***



*Commodity (Growing name of the fresh fruit or vegetable - must be provided in English)

Variety (Cultivar if applicable - must be provided in English) **MUST BE A NEW DISTINCT VARIETY**

Synonyms and/or common name(s) (including marketing or trademarked name)

*Latin/Botanical Name of Cultivar

Name in other languages (If known)

Parentage of Cultivar

*Is the item the result of the work of a breeding program?

*Is the product the subject of Intellectual Property (IP)?

If yes, please note that PLU codes are used in the global produce industry and will not be issued to products that are subject to proprietary ownership. Please complete the PLU Code Intellectual Property Acknowledgement Form (below) to support granting this item a PLU code.

Item Size (If applicable) Select One

Sm Med Large X-Large No Size

Sold at Retail By Each: _____

By Weight/Bulk: _____

*Countries of Production

*Global Production/Sales Volume (in lbs/kg):

Current Annual Production Volume:

of Cartons _____ Weight _____

5 Year Production Projections:

of Cartons _____ Weight _____

Current Annual Sales Volume:

of Cartons _____ Weight _____

5 Year Projection of Sales Volume:

of Cartons _____ Weight _____

Current # of Cartons/Country

_____ (country) _____ (#) _____ (weight)

_____ (country) _____ (#) _____ (weight)

_____ (country) _____ (#) _____ (weight)

*Source of Volume

Commission _____

Other _____ (please identify)

Government Data _____

Internal Research _____

Please Verify the Following Information!

Remember that incomplete requests will not be processed!

Before submitting your application, have you:

- ✓ Ensured that the item is unique and an existing PLU code cannot be used?
- ✓ Enclosed support letters from at least 3 retailers with a minimum of 25 retail operations?
- ✓ Filled out the PLU Code Application Form completely?
- ✓ Attached the PLU IP Acknowledgement form for any items which are patented or have trademarked property rights?
- ✓ Provided photos of product?

Payment Information:

☐ Check enclosed (U.S. funds drawn on U.S. banks only.) Checks payable to Produce Marketing Association.
Do not fax.

☐ MasterCard® ☐ VISA® ☐ American Express®

Total Amount To Be Charged: _____

Account # _____ Expiration Date _____

Cardholder's Name _____ Signature _____

PLEASE NOTE THAT PAYMENT IS NON-REFUNDABLE

Mail To: International Federation for Produce Standards (IFPS)
 c/o Produce Marketing Association
 P.O. Box 6036, Newark, DE 19714-6036
 Phone: +1 (302) 738-7100
 Fax: +1 (302) 731-2409
 Email: info@IFPSglobal.com



PLU CODE RETAIL SUPPORT LETTER

To: International Federation for Produce Standards (IFPS)
c/o PMA P.O. Box 6036, Newark, DE 19714-6036
Phone: +1 (302) 738-7100 Fax: +1 (302) 731-2409 Email: info@plucodes.com

REMEMBER: A minimum of 3 retail support letters are required for consideration.

I am writing on behalf of _____
(Name of Retailer)

Retailer Headquarters Address: _____

Number of Stores Operated: _____

We support the assignment by the IFPS of a new standardized Price Look-Up number for the following item(s):

We have marketed the above item for _____ years currently purchasing a volume of _____ cartons. We project to purchase _____ cartons in 5 years. Cartons each weigh _____ lbs/kg.

We understand that:

- The IFPS must receive requests from at least three retailers before it can consider this application. Companies signing this letter must be utilizing IFPS PLU codes in their retail operations and have a minimum of 25 store locations.
- My signature on this letter of support signifies that my operation is selling the item noted on this application and that it is being sold at a different price point than other similar items.
- I may receive calls from the IFPS and/or its committees regarding this application and my reason for supporting.
- The IFPS has the final authority to approve or decline any applications for new numbers based on its stated criteria.
- The IFPS staff will notify the applicant with the IFPS's final decision. It is the responsibility of the applicant to advise his/her retail buyers once the number is approved.
- All standardized PLU codes will be posted at www.ifpsglobal.com/ProductIdentification.aspx and www.ifpsglobal.com.

Signature _____ Date _____

Name _____ Title _____

E-mail Address _____ Phone/Fax _____



PLU CODE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Policy: PLU codes are issued by the IFPS for use by all global industry participants as a means of accurately and quickly identifying the price of products correctly at point of sale. The product must be available globally. As such, PLU codes will not be issued to products that are subject to any intellectual property ownership which restrict growth and sale of the item.

To provide the IFPS with relevant information regarding your PLU application containing a patent or trademark, please complete the following:

- Is this item available to multiple growers and sellers: _____ (If no, a PLU code will not be issued)
- Name of patented item: _____
- Is the tree or the item patented: _____
- Name of trademarked item: _____
- Name of item for which PLU code is being applied: _____
- Patent and/or Trademark Number: _____
- Date of Issuance: _____ Country of Issuance: _____
- Common Name: _____ Parentage of item: _____

Applicant Acknowledgement: The undersigned fully understands and agrees that should a new PLU code be issued for this product under this application that it will be under the name commonly used in the industry and not under the trademarked or patented name or description. I further acknowledge that this PLU code will be made available to the global produce industry on www.ifpsglobal.com.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Email: _____

Company Name: _____