



Re-assignment of Price Look-up Codes



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To keep members informed, we at PMA are committed to bringing you the latest news surrounding issues we're working on that affect the global fresh produce and floral industries most. One of those issues, pertaining to supply chain standards, is stemming from the increasing adoption of price look-up codes (PLUs).

As International Federation for Produce Standards (IFPS), for which I volunteer as Chairman of the Board, reported this summer, IFPS committed to transitioning the previously unused "8" prefix to accommodate an increase in varieties of fresh produce items as they enter the market. The transition comes at a time when the demand for the voluntary codes, used for price identification in retail, is increasing in North America, Europe, South America, Australia, New Zealand and more recently, Mexico. In addition, it is anticipated that South Africa and Brazil will be implementing the usage of the IFPS codes at retail in the near future.

The voluntary PLU system has been utilized by retailers since 1990 for pricing, inventory control and sales data. A change in the criteria used by IFPS to determine PLU code eligibility has made acquiring the unique codes somewhat easier—generally speaking, the main requirement is based on ensuring the item is a unique variety and is readily available for multiple companies to produce and

market to consumers. IFPS has also eliminated the stipulation that patented items were ineligible.

Though the '8' prefix (83000–84999) was once reserved for GMO produce items, the prefix was never used at retail. Stripping the prefix of this particular designation will yield 1,000 additional PLU numbers to be used in future years. This will not in any way impact the current use of the '9' prefix (93000–94999), which will continue to be used to indicate organic produce items.

It is important that we make the industry aware of this re-assignment of the '8' prefix well in advance. There is more demand for conventional produce PLU numbers and we've exhausted every attempt to secure additional number ranges to use. To date, we have never seen the 8 prefix used at retail. This is not a statement on the social or scientific acceptance of GMO items; it is simply that methods other than PLUs are being used to communicate regulatory and other information to consumers.

The IFPS does not anticipate issuing PLUs in the newly released 83000-84999 series for some time but it is important for the industry to understand the change that will occur in the future.

For more information about the use of PLU codes, please visit ifpsglobal.com/PLU or email plu@ifpsglobal.com. 