Challenge

With the continuous quality improvement of Chinese products and living standard of residents, traceability, which is closely related to people’s life, has received widespread attention. How to efficiently trace food from “farm to table” is a topic of concern for government and business in Shunde District of China. Shunde District is the “Gourmet Capital of the World” recognized by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation). There are more than 20,000 food production and service units in this region, and how to reduce hidden dangers of food safety and build a supervision mechanism for the entire food safety chain was the main problem faced by Shunde Administration of Market Regulation.

Solution

With the objective to reinforce the status of the World Gourmet Capital, Shunde Administration of Market Regulation of Guangdong put in place a social co-governance mechanism for food safety. Since 2015, Shunde Administration of Market Regulation of Guangdong has cooperated with GS1 China and turned to GS1 China for advice. The National Food (Product) Safety Traceability Platform was set up that helped control procurement, production and distribution of products, such as oil, rice, flour, wine from more than 200 manufacturers. The Platform is based on GS1 standards - GTIN (Global Trade Item Number) with a production date and a lot number that enable traceability of products. Participation of manufacturers in the Platform does not require any investment or changes to their operational processes because GTIN and production date or lot number are widely used on pre-packaged food products.
**Implementation**

- Manufacturers input traceability data into the National Food Safety Traceability Platform that enables complete traceability based on GTIN (Global Trade Item Number) with a production date or a lot number. Data include details about manufacturers, suppliers, products, raw materials, processing, GTIN (Global Trade Item Number), production date / lot number, quality inspection reports, sales information.

- In order to achieve efficient full-chain traceability, Shunde Administration of Market Regulation asks companies to mark products names, barcodes (for example, EAN-13, ITF-14, etc.), and production date / lot number on product packaging.

- Companies provide inputs into an electronic file when products come and leave their warehouses, that captures a source and destination of the products. Input data is automatically saved and stored in third-parties’ supervision platforms. If trading partners want to collect product data, they can get relevant information through a barcode and production date or a lot number on a packaging box. The information includes manufacturer information, product description, quality inspection reports and sales information.

- Government officials can get information about any product through the Platform at any time. The Platform makes it possible to retrieve real-time traceability data of raw and auxiliary materials, products’ batch / lot numbers, quality reports, records of distributors, sales notices, and various analytics.

**Benefits**

- The National Food (Product) Safety Traceability Platform supported by government is instrumental to help companies meet legal requirements and regulations, improve companies’ responsibility for traceability and reduce risks.

- The National Food (Product) Safety Traceability Platform has strengthened government’s supervision over the food industry and has enabled real-time remote monitoring by government.

- The National Food (Product) Safety Traceability Platform allows consumers to access information about food products they buy and eat or report defective products. Details about products get retrieved by means of GTIN (Global Trade Item Number) being a key input in the Platform.

- The project has created a new pattern of social co-governance of food safety with governmental authorities, food supply chain operators and consumers involved.

With the 'Barcode traceability app’ or the ‘Barcode traceability WeChat app’, one can scan the EAN-13 barcode (or type a GTIN in the Platform) and get information about the company and the product. By choosing a lot number, it is possible to get details of raw materials procurement information, quality inspection information, sales information, etc.
National Food (Product) Safety Traceability Platform (http://www.chinatrace.org/) is a food quality and safety traceability application demonstration project led by The National Development and Reform Commission, which is developed and maintained by GS1 China. The Platform is based on GS1 standards and uses technology to customize traceability units and events to the level of product item, lot and serialization. Also, the Platform improves and integrates existing resources, such as GTIN database, it retrieves public queries, complaints and triggers automatic reports alerting of potential issues.

The Platform is linked to other multiple governmental traceability supervision platforms of Guangdong province, Jiangsu province, Xiamen city, as well as to third-parties’ traceability platforms, such as the traceability platform of JD.com, to share traceability data. All the data are available through these connected traceability platforms and apps to protect and reinforce consumers’ right for quality and safe food.

About National Food (Product) Safety Traceability Platform