



IFPS PLU CODES USER'S GUIDE FOR THE PRODUCE INDUSTRY

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Download the PLU Application [here](#).

Chapter One

Background

This document contains rules for the global PLU (Price Look-Up) code system for loose, fresh produce items. The global PLU code 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 retailers 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 retail cashier whether an apple is a conventionally grown Fuji apple which may sell for \$1.29 per lb./kg. or an organically grown Fuji apple which may sell for \$2.29 per lb./kg. In some instances, the PLU 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 for fresh, loose produce items and is a forum for other standardization efforts impacting the produce sector.

New IFPS PLU applications are 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.

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

Definitions

In this guide, the following definitions apply:

PLU code

PLU stands for Price Look-Up. IFPS PLU codes are used on produce items that are sold loose or bunched, by weight or by each (i.e. an individual apple or bunch of greens). An IFPS PLU code contains 4- to 5- digits and is key-entered at point of sale (POS) in order to obtain the price. IFPS PLU codes are approved for global use and assigned by the IFPS Board for any country utilizing the IFPS PLU code system.

GTIN

Global Trade Item Number, or GTIN, is a [GSI](#) (Global Standards organization) identification number, commonly represented in a barcode, to enable electronic reading at point-of-sale (POS), 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 GSI system. There is a family of GTINs used to identify different items across the supply chain. The fresh produce industry uses the GTIN-12 (UPC), GTIN-13 (EAN-13) and GTIN-14 (GSI-128).

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 are responsible for review of IFPS 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.

Restricted Use IFPS PLU codes

Prior to the PLU code system becoming global, PLU codes were approved and assigned by the IFPS Board for loose 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. *Regional restrictions are no longer accepted.*

Retailer Assigned IFPS PLU codes

A PLU code is an agreed code between a supplier and an individual retailer. The PLU code is approved and assigned for use in that individual retailers' outlets only. Some Retailer Assigned codes are part of the master list of IFPS PLU codes which can be utilized in the IFPS PLU code system.

Note: In some countries, retailers have opted for national coordination of these numbers.

New User Guidelines

The IFPS PLU code system for identifying produce sold in bulk/loose at retail was first introduced in the U.S. and Canada but has spread to include use by retailers in Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Norway, Sweden and Mexico.

- The use of IFPS PLU codes is voluntary.
- An IFPS PLU code is a 4- or 5- digit number used to identify loose or bulk produce. The number can be used in the following ways:
 - It can be placed on a small sticker on the individual item.
 - In some instances, such as grapes or cherries, the IFPS PLU code is printed on the outside of the open bag.

- If an item is too small, or the surface not appropriate to hold a sticker, the IFPS PLU code will be noted on or near the item but will be used in retail systems and at the point-of-sale (POS).
- IFPS PLU code system utilizes numbers in the ranges of 3000 – 4999, 93000 – 94999 and will expand to include the 83000 and 84000 series in the future.
- A prefix of '9' is placed in front of the 4- digit number (3000 or 4000) to identify the item as 'organic' creating the range 93000 – 94999 for organically grown produce items.
- On the supply side of the industry, any grower, packer, shipper shipping to any country utilizing the IFPS PLU codes system for loose, fresh produce needs to ensure they meet the expectations of their retail 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.
- Foodservice operators/receivers do not typically utilize the IFPS PLU code 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 IFPS PLU code is crucial as an incorrect number will lead to incorrect identification; therefore, leading to incorrect pricing of product at the point-of-sale (POS). If an incorrect number is noticed before the produce is placed in the retail store, 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.
- Growers, packers and shippers are reminded to check the IFPS PLU code database at www.ifpsglobal.com, before ordering PLU code labels to ensure IFPS PLU code information for their use is current.

Chapter Two

Scope of the System

IFPS Purpose

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

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

New PLU applications shall be considered for assignment by the IFPS following the rules defined in this document and included in the PLU application.

PLU codes are used globally and new PLU applications will be put forward to the IFPS within a timeframe which allows for regional input as determined. PLU applications rejected for an IFPS PLU code can use Retailer Assigned code.

Once final acceptance is made by the IFPS, a new IFPS PLU code will be assigned within two weeks of IFPS approval. The applicant will be notified electronically with a formal acceptance letter from the IFPS.

Basic Scope

The IFPS PLU code system applies to loose, fresh produce, with the following qualifiers:

- Produce is defined as: fruits, vegetables, dried fruit, herbs, and nuts.
- Most sealed, containerized or packaged produce falls outside of the scope of the IFPS PLU code system as they use a barcode which is identified with a GTIN. There are some exceptions such as the example of grapes which are often packaged in a plastic bag with the IFPS PLU code clearly indicated on the bag. (The item is still sold as a variable weight item.)

- Excluded from the IFPS PLU code system 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 an IFPS PLU code (versus preparation).
 - grade, quality or regional variation shall not be an attribute which justifies a different IFPS PLU code.
 - geographic identification of growing region shall not be a justification for a global IFPS PLU code.
 - produce that is identified by a trademark is not eligible for a unique IFPS PLU code.

Range of IFPS PLU Codes

The block of PLU codes allocated for global use need not be in a contiguous block. The numbers range in the 3000, 4000 and 83000 and 84000 series.

Conventionally Grown Identification

The 3000 or 4000 series number signifies that the item is conventionally grown, i.e. 3000-4999.

In the future, an **additional** range of numbers will be used, 83000-83999, for conventionally grown items.

Organic Identification

The prefix '9' combined with a 3000 or 4000 series number signifies that the item is organic. i.e. 93000 – 94999. In the future an **additional** range of numbers will be used, 84000-84999, for organically grown items.

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 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.

Granularity

- The IFPS shall decide the level of granularity (detail) that justifies a IFPS 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.
 - 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 IFPS PLU codes to distinguish between size shall not necessarily extend to all IFPS 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 IFPS PLU code and another. The IFPS may allow different size boundaries between items that are on the global IFPS PLU code list and items that are only on a Restricted Use PLU code list. Whenever size IFPS PLU codes 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).

Request for an IFPS PLU Code from the IFPS

A request for the assignment of a global IFPS PLU code shall be made by the applicant to the IFPS. A copy of the IFPS PLU Application is listed on pages 23–38.

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

| <u>Submission Deadline</u> | <u>Decision Date</u> |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| November 1 | January 31 |
| February 1 | April 30 |
| May 1 | July 31 |
| August 1 | October 31 |

A non-refundable processing fee is required for each new PLU application considered by the IFPS. The fee is \$1300 USD for a member of any IFPS Member Organization (refer [here](#)) or \$2300 USD for non-members. If an applicant is unsure of their status as a member, please contact the corresponding organization. A separate application will be required for each new code requested.

Chapter Three

Restricted Use IFPS PLU Codes

Introduction

During the migration from a regional to global IFPS PLU code database, some legacy codes were maintained as Restricted Use IFPS PLU codes. As noted earlier, a Restricted Use code is a PLU 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 PLU 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 PLU 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.

Note: Because Restricted Use Codes address legacy issues only, the IFPS will not entertain new PLU applications for Regional Use Codes.

Examples of Restricted Use Codes follow:

- Restricted for items grown east of the Mississippi River in the U.S or east of the Ontario/Manitoba border in Canada:

4318 – Melon, Cantaloupe/Muskmelon, Small

4319 – Melon, Cantaloupe/Muskmelon, Large

- Restricted from ANY use in Canada or the U.S.:

- 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 harmonized base where, for example:

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

It *must* to be understood that the number of sizes addressed by IFPS PLU codes 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 IFPS PLU code 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 PLU 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 and the small Belchard apple is the most common size used in the industry at the time)

Chapter Five

Review Process for IFPS PLU Applications

New PLU applications should be sent to [PMA](#) either by mail or through the [IFPS email address](#).

PMA staff reviews the PLU application for completeness and accuracy of data. Proof of variety uniqueness will be confirmed. Retail support will also be validated.

At this point, the PLU application goes into the formal review process which begins with the PMA Product Identification Committee (PID). After their review and comments, it is then forwarded to the IFPS members to complete their country/member review of all information. The IFPS member country representatives determine and conduct their review process for their own country. To learn more about your country’s specific review process, please contact your IFPS member organization.

There is an extensive and robust review process involving all segments of the supply chain and this information is provided to the IFPS members as additional information when considering new PLU applications.

The IFPS board reviews all materials and makes the final decision on whether to approve or deny the new PLU application.

Votes are communicated to the staff liaison to assign the next available PLU code, if approved. The staff liaison communicates the approval or denial to the applicant via letter delivered electronically via email within one week of receipt of the vote.

This entire process takes approximately 12 weeks.

IFPS Decision

Once an IFPS PLU application has been approved by the IFPS, the new PLU code and description are forwarded to the applicant in writing. The new IFPS PLU code and description is also posted on the [IFPS web site](#).

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

Chapter Six

IFPS PLU Code Best Practices

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

Background

The use of IFPS PLU codes is voluntary, as is the means by which this information is designed and printed on labels. This chapter contains suggested best practices for consideration when designing and printing IFPS PLU code labels based on the experiences to date of countries currently utilizing the IFPS PLU code system for produce. Legislative, regulatory and commercial requirements may differ from country to country and it is mandatory on users to ensure that the IFPS PLU code 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 IFPS PLU Codes

- Use all four (or five if applicable) digits of the code as legibly as possible.
- For maximum legibility at the checkout, each digit in the IFPS PLU code 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 IFPS PLU code label as they provide maximum “readability” and include Gill Sans Bold and Futura Bold.)
- At all times remember that the PLU codes 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.
- Collateral Information – It is advisable to consider the primary function of the IFPS PLU code label – accurate identification of the product – when making decisions relative to the design of the IFPS PLU code 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 IFPS PLU code.
- Growing Methodology Identification – The leading digit indicator “9” may be adopted for use on organic items. Although the correct key entry of this leading digit, in combination with the IFPS PLU code, 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 items through a visually obvious means such as bright colored labels or clear use of the word “organic”.
- 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 IFPS PLU code label is written in French if a French translation exists for the word(s). The French translation for existing IFPS PLU codes can be found on www.ifpsglobal.com.)

- Adhesion of Labels – Certain commodities, such as stone fruit and tomatoes have skin which can present certain challenges for removal of IFPS 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.
- Sticker Composition – Users should ensure that the IFPS PLU code stickers used comply with both target market regulations and buyer requirements; this includes the adhesive(s) which come into direct contact with the product, specifically fresh fruit and vegetables. While IFPS PLU code stickers are not meant to be consumed, this may occur periodically (e.g. visually impaired consumers, small children, etc.) so it is also important that stickers pose no danger should they be occasionally consumed.

Using the IFPS PLU Code

It is important to follow this guideline:

- Do not use an IFPS PLU code on any bagged produce that is always sold at that weight and not weighed in the store for pricing. You may use an IFPS PLU code with a corresponding barcode (EAN-13 or UPC) 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 IFPS PLU code 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 EAN-13 or UPC 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 IFPS PLU 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

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 not require a significant conversion cost in packing line machinery because labeling must be done after sizing, not before

Frequently Asked Questions

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

The International Federation for Produce Standards (IFPS) is composed of national and international 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.

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

IFPS PLU codes are 4- or 5- digit numbers which have been used by retailers 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. PLU codes 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 IFPS PLU code 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 IFPS PLU codes for produce are assigned randomly within a series of numbers within the 3000 and 4000 series. The 4-digit codes are for conventionally grown produce. The prefix of '9' would be placed in front of the 4-digit conventionally grown code for organic produce. In the future, the IFPS will begin assigning IFPS PLU codes utilizing the 83000 and 84000 series; however, unlike the "9", the leading digit "8" will have no significance.

IFPS PLU codes are assigned by the IFPS after rigorous review at both the national and international levels.

Is it required to label produce with IFPS PLU codes?

No, the IFPS PLU system is voluntary and based on business needs. It is not regulated by a governmental agency. Specifically, no regulatory body requires an IFPS PLU sticker on loose produce. Labeling fresh produce with IFPS

PLU codes is typically required by the retail industry to assist with point-of-sale (POS) identification. In various countries, most medium to large retailers expect an IFPS PLU code as part of conducting business.

Why are some produce items labeled and others not?

Some items will be marked with IFPS PLU codes while others are not. One can't imagine green beans or mushrooms with stickers; however, IFPS 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 an IFPS PLU code. The principal objective of IFPS PLU codes is to create a common code which becomes the building block for system wide communication of electronic data.

How many IFPS PLU codes have been assigned?

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

How do I obtain a complete list of IFPS PLU codes?

A list of IFPS PLU codes is available at www.ifpsglobal.com. Menu step you through the selection process and provides users the option to 'View All' and then export the entire list to Excel and manipulate the list however you choose.

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

If a PLU code does not currently exist for the item, a Retailer Assigned IFPS PLU code can be used or a PLU application can be submitted for a new IFPS PLU code if the criteria is met. Before using Retailer Assigned IFPS PLU codes, please refer back to the information in Chapter 2 on these codes.

How do I apply for a new IFPS PLU code?

The IFPS PLU Application is available [here](#). IFPS PLU applications are reviewed on a set schedule; refer to the PLU application assignment criteria for submittal and approval dates.

Is there a fee to apply for a new IFPS PLU code?

A non-refundable processing fee is required for each new PLU application considered by the IFPS. The fee is \$1300 USD for a member of any IFPS Member

Organization (refer [here](#)) or \$2300 USD for non-members. If an applicant is unsure of their status as a member, please contact the corresponding organization. This helps defer administrative and processing fees and support the IFPS in its global activities.

What is the review process for an IFPS PLU application?

The PLU application is first reviewed for completeness and accuracy of data. It is then forwarded to the member organizations of IFPS. Each IFPS member organization has a review process within its country for each application. The IFPS Board of Directors makes the final decision on whether to approve or deny the application.

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

It typically takes an average of 3 months to receive a response from the IFPS. Please refer to the table below for actual submission and decision dates.

| <u>Deadline for Submission</u> | <u>Deadline for Comments</u> | <u>Decision Date</u> |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| November 1 | December 15 | January 31 |
| February 1 | March 15 | April 30 |
| May 1 | June 15 | July 31 |
| August 1 | September 15 | October 31 |

Are there any limitations for applying for a new IFPS PLU code?

The product must be a unique variety and available to the entire global produce industry. Please refer to the Criteria for PLU Code Assignments section on the application for further information.

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

No but production data submitted as part of the IFPS PLU application is considered when determining the need for a new IFPS PLU code. This information is used only as a means of guidance and not a determining factor for granting an IFPS PLU code.

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

Retailer Assigned codes are provided so that there is flexibility in the coding system. Retailer Assigned IFPS PLU codes allow retailers to designate their own numbers for items that do not have a standard IFPS PLU code assigned. After a supplier makes specific arrangements with all retailers that will receive the item, a Retailer Assigned IFPS PLU code may be used.

Note: There is always a chance that the same Retailer Assigned code is used for different items by different retailers.

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

How do I code organically grown produce with an IFPS PLU code?

Add '9' in front of the 4-digit IFPS PLU code for the conventionally grown item. For example, the IFPS PLU code for a standard yellow banana is 4011 where an organically grown standard yellow banana would be 94011. In the future, the IFPS will begin assigning IFPS PLU codes utilizing the 83000 and 84000 series; however, unlike the '9', the leading digit '8' will have no significance. When this occurs, the 83000 series will be used to assign codes for conventionally grown produce items and the 84000 series will be used to identify the corresponding organic item.

Does the IFPS recognize any number other than '9' as the leading 5th digit?

No, retailers may use different numbers, but it is outside of the scope of the IFPS PLU code system.

What happened to the prefix '8' previously designated to identify GMO produce items?

As the adoption of PLU codes has gained traction, the IFPS has committed to transitioning the previously unused '8' prefix to accommodate an increase in varieties of fresh produce items as they enter the market.

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 one thousand additional PLU codes to be used in future

years. The 83000 series will be reserved for conventionally grown items where the 84000 series will designate the corresponding organic item.

Do the individual numbers in the PLU code indicate anything?

PLU codes are simply business tools used for inventory control, accurate price rings at the register and data to inform retailers what customers are purchasing. The codes are not intended to convey information to consumers.

The prefix '9' in front of a 4- digit standard PLU code is used to identify organically grown items, however, to be sure the item is a certified organic product, one should look for the USDA organic seal on the product.

To identify a specific growing method for a produce item, consumers should consult their produce managers at their retail stores.

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

No, the IFPS PLU coding system is a voluntary system and is used primarily for point-of-sale (POS) 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 but, as noted above, users are responsible for the due diligence required to ensure market requirements are met.

What font should I use for my IFPS PLU stickers?

You should follow these recommendations when printing standard IFPS PLU codes:

- For maximum legibility at the checkout, each digit in the IFPS 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).
- If the GS1 DataBar (Stacked Omni-Directional) barcode is printed on the label, the average point size recommended is between 10 point and 12 point. (More information on the GS1 DataBar is available at www.gs1.org/barcodes/databar)

- The IFPS 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 PLU codes must be read quickly and accurately when viewed by a cashier through a clear opaque plastic bag.
- Please print the IFPS PLU sticker so the PLU code is the most prominent element on the label. The IFPS PLU code should appear as large as possible on the label.

May I put the trademarked name on the IFPS PLU sticker?

Sticker content is left to the discretion of industry. 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.

How do I differentiate growing regions with an IFPS PLU code?

The IFPS PLU code system is a globally used system so unless specified, the PLU code can be used for any growing region. If only one number is provided in the IFPS PLU code 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.

What do the restrictions mean on the PLU code list?

There are certain IFPS PLU codes which were originally assigned for a specific region outside or inside of the U.S. and Canada when the system was first established. Although IFPS PLU codes are now considered global, they are, for various reasons, impossible to incorporate in markets outside of those restricted regions. For those IFPS PLU codes 'Restricted from ANY use in Canada or U.S.', the recommendation is to only use these codes for items grown and/or sold outside of Canada or U.S. For those items where codes exist to designate specific U.S. or Canadian growing regions, the geographical restrictions/designations are noted. *Regional restrictions are no longer accepted now that PLU codes are global.*

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

Select the IFPS 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.

Why does the IFPS PLU code list contain size information for North America and Rest of World?

Common use within the produce sector in North America is to utilize measurements in the Imperial System whereas the balance of the globe typically utilizes the Metric System for produce size measurement. For this reason, the IFPS requires that applicants provide size information in both Imperial and Metric measurement if size is a characteristic of their commodity application.

Where can the most recently added IFPS PLU codes be found?

At www.ifpsglobal.com, under 'Identification'/PLU Codes', there is a section for 'Recently Added/New PLU codes'. If you select that option, you will get a table of the most recently added IFPS PLU codes.

Are there any language requirements for IFPS PLU code labels?

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

Canada and the U.S. have country of origin label (COOL) declarations or requirements. Do I need to include the country of origin on my IFPS PLU code label?

There is no Canadian regulatory requirement to put country of origin information on an IFPS PLU code 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 COOL took effect in March 2009. It requires that retailers notify their customers of the country of origin for fresh produce. If the produce is labeled with a sticker, the regulation requires that the majority of produce 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 produce. To ensure compliance with the regulation in the U.S., the USDA conducts in-store COOL reviews.

Is it acceptable to add our company's website on the IFPS PLU code label?

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.

What is the GSI DataBar and how does it relate to the IFPS PLU code?

The GSI 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 Global Trade Item Number (GTIN). 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 GSI Stacked Omni-directional DataBar, can be printed on the same sticker on which the IFPS PLU code is printed.

(More information on the GS1 DataBar is available at www.gs1.org/barcodes/databar).

Will I still need to use the IFPS PLU code if I am using the GS1 DataBar?

Yes, the IFPS PLU code will be the human readable portion of the label if the GS1 DataBar does not scan.

Do I need to include the IFPS PLU code when creating my GTIN to be encoded in the GS1 DataBar?

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 IFPS PLU code in the 14-digit GTIN. It is recommended you simply create your own GTINs as you see fit to capture all the bulk produce in your item catalog.

What is a QR code and can it be used in place of an IFPS PLU code?

A QR code is a Quick Response code. It is a 2-dimensional barcode and it is more similar to a UPC than an IFPS PLU code. Barcodes 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.