

Focus: **GMO Labelling**

Supplier engagement enables GMO labelling impact assessment of over 5,000 private label products

The increasing demand from consumers for clear GMO labelling and the specific requirements of the Vermont Act 120 “Labelling foods produced with genetic engineering” presents a challenge for private brand retailers.

After several months of insufficient progress from attempting to acquire this information from their suppliers, one large US retailer with a portfolio of over 5,000 private label products brought in Solutions for Retail Brands (S4RB) to provide and manage an impact and risk assessment process for these products.

Background

As of July 1st 2016, labelling of GMO ingredients is required for all packaged and processed food products on the shelf in the state of Vermont. Every product either needs a certificate or a packaging change. Financial penalties for violating the requirements of this rule are up to \$1,000 per day, per product. The Vermont Act sets a precedent for other states to follow.

“The legislation means that essentially every product needs either a certificate or a labelling change. Doing nothing is not an option.”



Solution

To carry out a thorough impact and risk assessment, S4RB used a combination of outbound communications and a retailer-branded online portal to communicate with suppliers and to collect the information required. The solution is prepopulated with known information which made it quick and easy for suppliers to respond while ensuring high accuracy.

For each product there is simple classification of the product status to find out what action is required or whether the product is exempt. Information is also confirmed about the packaging type, an essential task to ascertain both the cost and timescale for any labeling changes required.

Using this online solution gives the retailer access to the results as they are received, allowing immediate visibility of the suppliers or categories with greatest risk or impact. S4RB also supported suppliers through the process to maximize completion rates.



Impact

Detailed information was collected for 77% of products in just five weeks. The exercise identified over 500 products to be disabled and over 250 new products to be added, resulting in a highly accurate report on the volume of products needing action.

The retailer was able to risk assess the impact of the labelling legislation changes for Vermont and take the necessary action to ensure compliance by the July

2016 deadline, avoiding the financial penalties for thousands of products.

Key facts

- 5,000+ private label products
- 270 suppliers & 182 product categories
- 77% of product data captured in 5 weeks
- 50% response rate in under 3 weeks