Traceability at the interface between economics and the law

Luca Lanini - Francesco Timpano
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore Piacenza
luca.lanini@unicatt.it
francesco.timpano@unicatt.it

Abstract

This document provides an evaluation of traceability's ability to integrate retailers and suppliers through stable contractual relations. Retailers are reinforcing their dominant position in vertical relationships along the supply chain and this is particularly true in short marketing channels. Suppliers are busy rationalizing their productive processes and they are accepting standards proposed by retailers who are the ground for new “référencement” policies.

Strong partnerships are source of stability in an overall uncertain scenario subject to increasing global competition. Partnership between retailers and suppliers acquires a strategic relevance, since it favours long-term goal achievements. Searching for suppliers with the necessary resources and competences becomes crucial for retailers to acquire a durable competitive advantage.

In this scenario, retailers are developing voluntary certification standards for their suppliers, hoping to standardize product supply procedures and create a greater supply market, transferring the majority of costs and responsibilities to suppliers. (standard Global-Gap Good Agricultural Practices, BRC-British Retail Consortium, IFS-International Food Standard).

Traceability requires a reorganization process (organizational innovation) of all relationships along the entire supply chain in order to allow the necessary information exchange, based on the use of ample possibilities offered by new ICT (technological innovation) and the choice of common information codification standards relative to products.