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Traceability Is Free: A Different Look at Food Traceability

OAKVILLE, ONTARIO, August 13, 2013 — The Value Chain Management Centre (VCMC) and SCS Consulting (SCS) are pleased to announce the release of a just-published research paper concerning food traceability, entitled “Traceability Is Free.” Growing concerns about foodborne illness and the rising costs of managing an increasingly complex food chain have created demand for more effective and efficient information management in the chain of businesses from farms all the way to restaurants and food retailers. The authors of this new paper maintain that as the “quality is free” notion drove improvements in the automotive and aerospace industries, the prosperity of farmers and other agri-food businesses will rest on better management of information and communication technology (ICT).

The report can be accessed via the following link: <http://vcm-international.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Traceability-Is-Free.pdf>.

Dr. Martin Gooch, one of the co-authors and Director of VCMC, stated, “We found real world examples and academically rigorous concepts to describe the role that effective traceability systems play in ensuring financially and environmentally sustainable food businesses. In doing so, we believe that we have unequivocally shown the role that traceability can play in enabling effective value chain management. In the 21st century’s rapidly changing global food chain, the success of an individual business relies on more than the ability to produce good, nutritious food.”

Brian Sterling, the other author and President of SCS says, “Just as the auto industry discovered in the 1980s, success relies on tightly managing your value chain to sustain financial viability in a highly competitive market. We have drawn a direct link between superb performance and closer collaboration and partnering in a value chain. By working together, businesses unlock the value in chains in which they operate. And in so doing, traceability becomes part of an overall and considerably more effective management system.”

Traceability has become a hot topic within the food industry. New practices and information systems are being developed to track and trace products and enable businesses to address situations such as recalls and verifying the source of a product. The authors point out, however, that investment just for the sake of having traceability for emergencies does not achieve the value that often accompanies the business case. These practices and systems must support value chain management so that traceability no longer is simply an added cost.

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SCS CONSULTING

SCS is an international consulting firm focusing on advice for clients in the strategic areas of value chain optimization, information technology management, business growth, and organizational effectiveness. It specializes in food traceability programs, and in creating and implementing business start-up strategies, corporate development plans, and governance of business change.

VALUE CHAIN MANAGEMENT CENTRE

The Value Chain Management Centre is a division of Value Chain Management International Inc. (VCMi). VCMi is dedicated to helping businesses, primarily in the agricultural and food industry, to enhance their long-term profitability and environmental sustainability. The company achieves this by enabling businesses to develop close consumer-focused relationships with customers and suppliers, which provides them with the ability to adapt to changing market conditions and mitigate risks more effectively than if working unilaterally.

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