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July 17 - August 21, 2011

Product information just a click away

Italian company creates ValueGo for all your shopping needs

By Alessio Galletti

Do you want to know everything about the wine you're about to purchase or the mozzarella you want to place on the dinner table? No problem, as long as the producer has used ValueGo, the system developed by Penelope SpA. It's not that there aren't other ways of getting reliable information, but the platform developed in Campania with government funding is innovative because it is able to offer consumers and producers full documentation, from the grape clusters to shelves, from the cow to the freezer. And everything is automated, based on the concept of traceability that "instead of depending on a producer's declaration, it could have, in all phases of product transformation, objective elements that certify the passage from one state to another," explains Francesco Marandino, general director of Penelope SpA.



This idea, which will be presented at Expo 2015, already earned the company a special mention at the Made in Italy digital innovation section. Put into simpler terminology: it's not the employees that collect and relay data, but the smart tags, i.e. equipment that can be set up anywhere along the supply chain, according to requirements. The data is then relayed over a WiFi network to the heart of the system where the information is recorded, independently of the producer. It is then available to the consumer with a click. Data can be viewed on a cell phone with Near Field Communication (NFC) technology, or with a photo camera and software able to re bi-dimensional bar codes. The end result is always the same: key product information, with a simple click, while standing in front of supermarket shelves. The same technology can also be used to evaluate the territory. And more, it can alert the consumer. "We used traffic-light logic," says Marandino. "If someone suffers some food allergy, he or she can check on the product to see if it's dangerous," with a red light that lights up in cases of an affirmative response, allowing the consumer to verify if the product is legitimate.

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Beyond the unquestionable advantages for the consumer in fact, ValueGo also makes things easier for the producer too. "For us, the objective was to create a system of traceability for the company. Then we thought of making the information on the entire production chain available to the consumer" says Marandino. The project's original spirit has certainly not been lost, and new functions are added to the platform as more producers adopt it.

After the pilot project developed in the buffalo mozzarella sector in fact, ValueGo will soon be applied to San Daniele prosciutto, to a fior di latte mozzarella network in Campania, as well as to wine production.

The advantages are many, beginning with reduced costs for those requesting ValueGo, since the system can be installed on already existing company networks. The automated data collection has many advantages for producers who would have steady production data available. A wine producer using ValueGo, company technician Maiulo explains, allows the cultivator to react in a timely manner against pathogens "that can develop in certain specific environmental conditions." The smart tags equipped with sensors installed on vines can in fact, monitor humidity and temperature conditions.

And the producer can also record this data to certify the wine the company produces conforms to guidelines, eliminating tedious paperwork.

And on the very issue of certification, Penelope SpA is working to create a partnership with Bureau Veritas, an international organization that would provide the Campania company with guidelines for issuing certification.

During the waiting period, Marandino and Maiulo explain, the simple fact of having ValueGo would eliminate the need to submit to quality control checks by outside companies.

Entering a partnership with the authorities in fact can guarantee them access to data at any time as well, helping to reduce costs and avoid random inspections.

For more information visit www.valuego.net.



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