

Supplier certificates safeguard Reid Fruits' brand

BELOW—

Laava Smart Fingerprints have been used on Reid Fruits' cherry cartons for the past three years
OPPOSITE, RIGHT & BELOW—Each supplier certificate was printed with its own Smart Fingerprint

Australian cherry exporter extends use of Laava Smart Fingerprints.

by Matthew Jones

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Reid Fruits has added another layer of counterfeit protection to its premium cherry brand.

The leading Tasmanian grower-packer-exporter introduced authorised supplier certificates for its import partners over the 2021/22 season.

Each certificate was printed with its own Laava Smart Fingerprint, a scannable authentication marking that protects brands from counterfeiters and creates digital engagement opportunities.

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Tony Coad, manager of sales and marketing at Reid Fruits, says extending the use of Laava Smart Fingerprints to supplier certificates provides further assurances around product authentication to the company's international customers.



“One of the things we know is that customers and consumers are very interested in knowing where they can buy genuine and authentic Reid Fruits premium cherries,” Coad explains.

“The new and secure authorised certificates this season, with their own individual Laava Smart Fingerprint, enabled our importers and their distributors to verify to customers they were authorised to sell genuine Reid Fruits products.”

A unique Laava Smart Fingerprint was created and assigned to each individual supplier certificate. The credentials of each supplier could be verified in real time by end consumers and trade users alike – using scanning technology on their mobile phones or via Laava’s WeChat mini programme for Chinese users.

Laava’s system enabled Reid Fruits to instantly update supplier credentials with any changes. It also immediately flagged any suspected nefarious activity.

In parallel, Reid Fruits was able to extend its investment in digital storytelling and consumer engagement over the 2021/22 season. This was delivered through enhancements to the Laava ‘digital experience’ for end consumers and a creative new social media marketing campaign coordinated by Roolife Group, a partner of Laava. Roolife’s campaign included coverage of the supplier certification programme.

Reid Fruits will look to extend the use of supplier certificates over coming seasons.

“This year, the certificates were mainly taken up in the China market where distributor interest was especially strong and consumers are particularly concerned about knowing how to verify and purchase genuine product,” Coad says.

“Reid Fruits will consider the needs and market interest in the certificates throughout its export network as time goes on.”

Reid Fruits engaged Sydney-based Laava after its 2018/2019 cherry season, following a number of reports regarding counterfeit cartons in key export markets. Many of these reports came directly from customers. The company also received queries from end consumers wanting to check for authenticity.

“It is important that we protect the value of the Reid Fruits’ premium brand, which the company has invested in over many years, and that access to many export markets for pest-free Tasmanian cherries is not jeopardised by counterfeit product,” Coad says.

“Through the success of deploying Laava Smart Fingerprints on Reid Fruits’ cartons in the first two seasons of partnering with Laava (2019/20 and 2020/21) – resulting in dramatically reduced counterfeit attempts –

applying Laava’s patented authentication markings to supplier certificates in the third season was another layer of protection for Reid Fruits.”

Based on his company’s experience in the horticulture export sector over the last three years, Laava joint chief executive and commercial director, Gavin Ger, says counterfeiters and other “bad actors” will use any available means to leverage the brand equity built up by high quality producers like Reid Fruits. They will also trade off the enviable reputation of premium producing countries, like Australia and New Zealand.

In 2020, Laava partnered with the Harmonised Australian Retailer Produce Scheme (HARPS) to protect its industry certifications. While primarily designed for the Australian domestic market, HARPS certificates are increasingly being used in export trade, raising the potential for misrepresentation.

Each HARPS certificate now features a unique Laava Smart Fingerprint – enabling instant verification by anyone globally.

With a distinct trend forming towards greater transparency in the fresh produce sector, Ger says brands and industries that invest in the tools to deliver this will achieve the market recognition and premium they deserve.

“Proving the authenticity, origin, sustainability and other claims brands make is important to wholesalers, distributors, retailers and consumers alike,” Ger explains. “Consumers in particular, are becoming increasingly curious about the people, places and stories behind what they buy. And of course, they also want to know it’s the real thing.”

