



**Electronic Meat Transfer Certificate
could save meat industry millions**

The development of an eMessaging system within Australia's meat and livestock industry could lead to savings of at least \$2.3 million per year – and that's just a start. GS1 EANCOM messaging has been incorporated into this new system to provide a higher level of security when using global standards.



The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) requires a Meat Transfer Certificate (MTC) to be completed every time export-eligible meat is transferred from one registered establishment to another. There are more than 100,000 of these paper forms completed every year as a hard copy must accompany the physical product.

A MTC is very labour-intensive to complete. The establishment first fills in the form and sends it with the shipment to the next establishment. The receiving establishment checks the shipment against the MTC and completes the Attestation section and returns it to the original establishment which then files it with the original MTC.

According to Rebecca Underwood, Manager of the Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) Supply Chain Management program, there is a great need for a more efficient way to communicate meat transfer details due to the increasing

requirements by customers and regulators for more detailed information about products.

"The cost of filling out all the MTC forms at the various stages of moving the product and the filing it for AQIS inspection is about \$20 per certificate", Ms Underwood said.

"What we did is use the GS1 standards and industry knowledge to develop the electronic meat transfer certificate (eMTC) and then combined the two so that there is a single and efficient system communicating both commercial and regulatory information. It is estimated that when fully implemented, the cost could be reduced to less than \$1 per certificate. That's an annual saving of \$2.3 million to the Australian red meat industry if there is widespread adoption of the electronic eMTC system."

The eMTC was developed to provide a non-proprietary system based on international standards for the

creation, printing, and electronically sending and receiving of Meat Transfer Certificates. It has been developed by the industry body Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) with the assistance of AQIS, GS1 Australia, industry participants and export customers. A set of industry software tools have been produced that operate as stand-alone tools to create, print and send eMTCs. This new software solution is free of charge as it is non-proprietary and based on open standards.

The eMTC system was developed over 18 months: First, the commercial requirements of small and large organisations were reviewed and this information was summarised and matched against the requirements of the paper Meat Transfer Certificates then the legal requirements for electronic documents, the commercial GS1 system for bar coding and the GS1 EANCOM messaging were studied. Finally the eMTC was developed to include GS1 EANCOM Despatch Advice message and Receipt message.

For the eMTC system to work correctly through the whole supply chain and logistic channels it requires each organisation that creates and uses eMTC to have a registration with GS1 Australia. GS1 Australia is responsible for issuing globally unique company numbers used for logistics management. These GS1 company numbers are not meat based company numbers, they are issued for all trade and commerce usage.

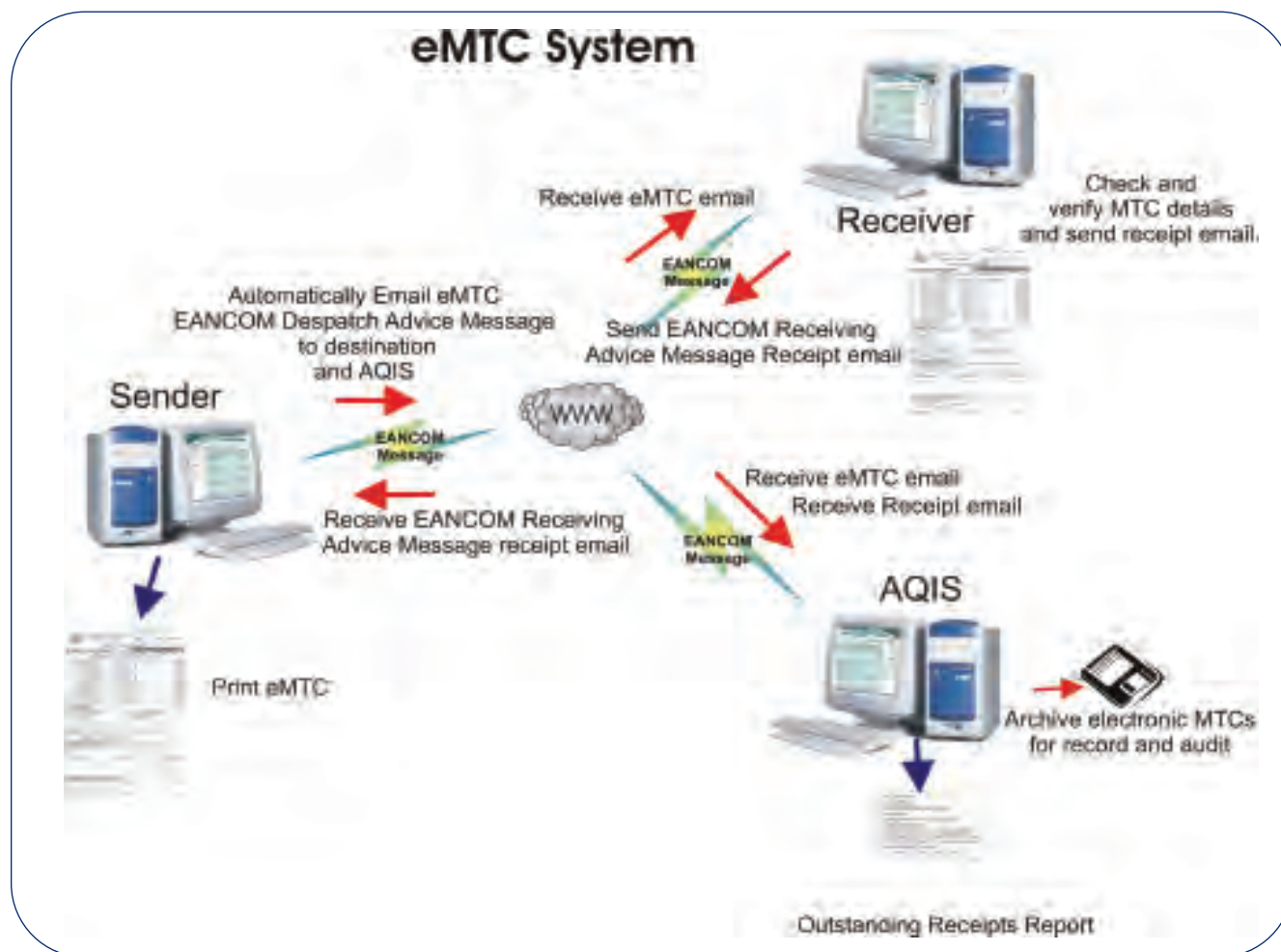
According to MLA, the eMTC system was developed to:

- Lower the cost and administration time required;
- Allow for the requirements of MTCs to be built into the various



Applying bar code labels to meat packaging.





company inventory systems, so companies can run one system for their own inventory management and MTCs;

- Provide a higher level of security. An independent message is sent electronically and reconciled to the physical shipment.
- Allow the inclusion of the details of each and every carton/carcase, pallet and case that comprises a shipment.
- Provide a faster system and a higher level for "Track Forward" and "Trace Back".
- Assist in meeting export customer requirements for bio-security and source verification of product.
- Potentially assist in the process of moving from port marks to individual GS1 bar code serialisation of individual cartons, carcasses, pallets and containers.

The eMTC is made up of two parts.

Part one is a program that allows the user to electronically complete the MTC information. This includes adding the GS1 Bar code

information of each carton/carcase along with additional data including product weight, production date and serial number directly into the eMTC. The tool allows for a printed version of the MTC to be generated. An eMTC GS1 EANCOM message is also generated as a text file, and is automatically emailed to the destination of the product and copied to AQIS.

Part two is a program that allows companies receiving emailed eMTC messages to view and print these messages. Once reviewed an eMTC Receipt message is created and emailed back to the originator and a copy emailed to AQIS. This is equivalent to the "Attestation of Receiving Official" on the paper MTCs. The eMTC data, GS1 Bar code information, product weight, production date and serial number, that is in the message can be exported to other plant/company systems.

These two parts work together to create, print, send and then receive, check and receipt a shipment.

The eMTC can have as many market eligibility options as there are product groups. This allows for product segregation at a much higher level than previously possible.

The need for security is very important in meeting the requirements of both AQIS and export customer expectations. For this reason, the eMTC system includes an electronic signature system that validates the authenticity of the message.

MLA and AQIS are rolling out the eMTC nationally so that all meat processors, cold stores and other registered establishments can benefit. Within the first year of release MLA is aiming for the eMTC procedure to be adopted by meat processors responsible for 25 per cent of processed volume. The long term adoption rate is expected to greatly exceed this value.

For more information regarding eMTC please contact Rachel Kairuz at GS1 Australia on 1300 366 033.



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