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## RFID News Roundup

The following are news announcements made during the past week.

### **InSync Software Teams With IBM to Improve Food Safety**

InSync Software, which provides solutions leveraging RFID, GPS

and sensor technologies to locate and track assets, improve operational efficiencies, and manage risks, has announced it is licensing software from IBM. InSync will integrate the IBM software into its food safety and asset-management products. Under the licensing agreement, InSync Software will offer IBM's InfoSphere Traceability Server software as part of its food safety solutions for customers worldwide. IBM's software is compatible with EPCglobal's Electronic Product Code Information Services (EPCIS) standard, and has passed the EPCglobal EPCIS Conformance Test. The software is designed to help companies share product data among partners in a supply chain, and includes enhanced reporting tools and alerting capabilities enabling companies to access and analyze data using browser-based reports. InSync Software's products employ sensor technologies, including RFID, to locate and track assets and processes, report on an item's location and its condition in real time, and automate time-consuming and error-prone manual processes. InSync indicates its agreement with IBM will enable it to offer its customers a standards-based food-traceability solution they can use with their trading partners. The integration of the IBM software, for instance, will allow companies to use InSync's solution to share information concerning food origins or other important information with any trading partner that also utilizes an EPCIS compliant solution. "Using IBM's traceability software, we can reduce complexity for customers who want to get up and running quickly," said Ravi Panja, InSync Software's CTO, in a prepared statement, "and at a cost that makes sense for their business while ensuring consumer safety, a key challenge in the market today." InSync's food-safety applications, such as GREENTrace, are being used by fruit and vegetable producers to trace the movements of products as they are harvested and transported to distributors and retailers (see RFID Tracks Produce From Field to Fork). Now, according to InSync Software, customers will be able to more easily share important product data from GREENTrace with retailers.

## **PepsiCo to Use RFID-enabled Reusable Plastic Pallets**

PepsiCo has announced to its national customers that its Quaker, Gatorade and Tropicana business units will begin shipping all products on Intelligent Global Pooling Systems' (iGPS) new all-plastic pallets. In a letter to its customers, dated Mar. 20 and released by iGPS, PepsiCo indicates the change is "addressing shipping platform quality concerns and reflects our desire to be responsible stewards of the environment." PepsiCo adds that as of Apr. 1, the Quaker and Gatorade business units will begin integrating iGPS' pallets into their networks completely across all stock-keeping units (SKUs), with the expectation of shipping exclusively on the iGPS platform as soon as all inventory on wood pallets is consumed. The Tropicana chilled business will convert beginning May 1. All iGPS pallets feature embedded EPC Gen 2 RFID tags that iGPS uses to track the pallets, which are rented by customers. In addition, iGPS' customers can utilize the RFID tags to track and trace their own shipments. According to Gary Garkowski, iGPS' VP of marketing, all three of PepsiCo's business units' facilities will be equipped with either handheld RFID interrogators or door-mounted readers (depending on the facility), in order to collect tag reads as pallets enter or exit facilities. The readers share that data with an iGPS server on site, Garkowski says, which then sends it to a back-end server at an iGPS-operated data center, via an Internet connection.

## **Ingecom Unveils Second-Generation Active Tag**

Active RFID provider Ingecom, headquartered in La Neuveville, Switzerland, has unveiled a new 2.45 GHz active RFID tag and reader (which Ingecom calls a controller), designed to track such items as reusable containers, including plastic pallets, totes, crates or metal pallets. The new ActiveRFID tag,

approximately the size of half a credit card, will cost €5 (\$7) apiece at high volumes,. The new controller costs less than €400 (\$538). This second-generation tag is built on a new ASIC, leverages a completely new proprietary communication protocol between the tag and the reader, and is covered by two new Ingecom patents. The tag can operate at temperature ranges from -20 degrees Celsius (-4 degrees Fahrenheit) to +70 degrees Celsius (+158 degrees Fahrenheit) without impacting the battery lifetime, and is expected to last 10 years with a tag ping rate of 2 seconds. The reading distance is more than 200 meters (656 feet) outdoors, and could typically reach 30 to 50 meters (98 to 164 feet) in a warehouse environment, according to Ingecom. The distance can be increased with the additional range expander, to cover a radius of 500 meters (1,640 feet), or 80 hectares (200 acres). The tag can work in environments containing metal, the company reports, and can also track metal assets such as roll cages, blade servers and other high-value items in a data center. The tag has a dense reader mode, and its anti-collision rate exceeds 10,000 tags per minute per reader. The tag's 4-millimeter-thick plastic shell is water-resistant and fitted with two holes in case a user needs to bolt the tag onto an asset. According to the company, the tag is available with an optional EPC 96-bit ID structure, and could meet the EPC Class 4 standard when released by EPCglobal. Samples of Ingecom's new ActiveRFID tags and controllers are available now, with production expected to begin this month.

## **Wi-Fi RTLS Provider Ekahau Intros Location Beacons and Survey Tool**

Ekahau, a provider of Wi-Fi-based real-time location systems (RTLS), has announced plans to begin offering location beacons—small, mobile battery-powered transmitters designed to increase the location accuracy of its RTLS solution, particularly in areas with poor Wi-Fi coverage. In a typical

hospital environment, the company claims, the location beacons can guarantee bed- and room-level accuracy without the need to install additional Wi-Fi access points. Ekahau's Wi-Fi tags can recognize location beacon signals and transmit the signal data to the RTLS server, which then calculates the precise location of the Ekahau tags. The location beacons are typically mounted on a wall. Because they require no cabling, the location beacons can be moved around as necessary, in order to improve accuracy for a period of time, or installed permanently in specific locations. The location beacons are now available through Ekahau and its partners worldwide at a price of approximately \$50 apiece. Ekahau is demonstrating the location beacon capabilities during the HIMSS 2009 Annual Conference and Exhibition in Chicago, being held Apr. 4-8, 2009 (visit Booth 4820 at the event). In addition, Ekahau has announced a new, free site survey tool designed to help consumers and small businesses identify and map their wireless coverage. The Ekahau HeatMapper, a coverage mapping tool for 802.11 Wi-Fi networks, is downloadable at no cost from Ekahau's Web site, and illustrates wireless signal strength on color-coded heat maps. In addition to basic coverage mapping, Ekahau HeatMapper also locates all detectable access points and shows their configurations and security settings. Ekahau HeatMapper is based on technology used in Ekahau Site Survey, an enterprise-grade Wi-Fi planning, verification and troubleshooting tool. Ekahau HeatMapper runs on Windows Vista or XP laptops equipped with integrated or external Wi-Fi network adapters. The Wi-Fi coverage is displayed on a map after a laptop is walked around a facility—a process commonly referred to as a Wi-Fi site survey.

## **NFC Forum, ETSI Partner to Promote Global Interoperability of NFC Solutions**

The NFC Forum, a nonprofit industry association that advances the use of Near Field Communication (NFC) technology, has

announced it will partner with the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI), a European organization that produces standards for information and communications technologies. Under the terms of the agreement, the NFC Forum and ETSI will align their activities to help the NFC community implement solutions complying with NFC-related specifications developed by both organizations. "When industry associations work hand-in-hand with standards bodies, it assures solutions providers that their products and services will reach the broadest possible market and work effectively around the world," said Koichi Tagawa, NFC Forum's chairman, in a prepared statement. As the NFC Forum and ETSI prepare to release additional specifications, the partnership will aid the coordination of activities related to testing and product certification.

### **Hi-G-Tek, Trojan Defense Collaborate on Nuclear Threat System**

Hi-G-Tek, a developer and manufacturer of active-RFID sensing and control solutions for tracking high-value cargo and sensitive materials, has announced plans to work with Trojan Defense, a nuclear electronics research firm currently under contract with the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Through this business agreement, Trojan Defense will supply its low-power solid-state neutron sensor, presently under development, for integration into Hi-G-Tek's portfolio of RFID seals, locks and interrogators. Ultimately, Hi-G-Tek reports, this will provide additional security to Hi-G-Tek's customers, including the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), which utilize Hi-G-Tek's solutions to manage their logistics supply chains and monitor in-transit shipments. Trojan Defense's sensors, the company adds, will be used to monitor cargo shipments, detecting the presence of any dangerous nuclear materials, and helping to trace these materials back to the country of origin.



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