



Automating Cherry Clamshell Coding with Inkjet Technology

Case Study:

*IBC International Bar Coding & a
Pacific Northwest Cherry Packing Facility*

Executive Summary

A leading cherry packing facility faced rising labor costs and inefficiencies associated with manual labeling of clamshell packaging. Traditionally, each production line required four to five personnel to apply pre-printed adhesive labels by hand. Seeking a cost-effective, scalable, and reliable solution, the facility partnered with IBC International Bar Coding Systems & Consulting to implement Inkjet printing technology directly on the clamshells. The result was a streamlined operation that reduced labor costs, improved accuracy, and enhanced production throughput.



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Background

The cherry industry is highly seasonal, with a narrow harvest window. Packing facilities are under pressure to maximize efficiency while ensuring compliance with traceability and food safety requirements. This facility relied on adhesive labels for lot codes, pack dates, and traceability data. However, manual labeling created bottlenecks, required significant staffing, and introduced inconsistencies.

The Challenge

- Labor-intensive: 4–5 workers per line were needed to apply labels manually.
- Rising labor costs and availability pressures.
- Inconsistencies in placement and readability.
- Production slowdowns during peak cherry season.

The Solution

IBC International Bar Coding worked with the facility to implement [inkjet printers](#) on two production lines. Lot codes, and Julian dates were printed directly on clamshells, eliminating labels. IBC provided custom mounting systems, controls integration, and high-contrast fast-drying inks optimized for food packaging.

Results & Benefits:

- ✓ Labor Savings: Eliminated the need for 4–5 workers per line.
- ✓ Cost Reduction: Lower seasonal labor and consumable label costs.
- ✓ Efficiency: Maintained throughput without slowdowns.
- ✓ Accuracy & Compliance: Consistent machine-printed lot codes.
- ✓ Scalability: Expandable to additional lines and packaging formats.

Key Impact: Automated printing eliminated up to 10 full-time seasonal staff across two lines, while improving compliance and throughput.

Conclusion

By partnering with IBC International Bar Coding to implement Inkjet technology, the cherry packing facility reduced dependency on manual labor, improved compliance, and modernized its packaging operations. The solution created measurable improvements in cost savings, productivity, and product traceability.



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