

## **Brainstorm: Automation in Poultry Processing (Part V)**

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**The *Food Manufacturing* Brainstorm features industry experts sharing their perspectives on issues critical to the overall food industry marketplace. In this issue, we ask:**

**Poultry has long been one of the least automated food processing sectors. As automation equipment becomes more sophisticated, how will poultry processors see their business practices change?**



Sophisticated automation in poultry processing will further standardize packaging, increasing product safety. We have seen some of this improvement due to the shift from in-store butchers to case-ready retail packaging. By eliminating the handling of raw poultry in the backroom of supermarkets, today many food safety issues are better contained. However, food safety challenges have shifted from butchers to processors, making it even more of a focus for processors. While automation will continue to decrease contamination risks due to less potential hazard points in the packaging process, the risk for incorrect labeling and coding on poultry products increases due to more system complexity.

Automated systems are only more efficient if managed correctly. Increased regulation — including traceability, country-of-origin and allergy information — make labeling and coding on even the most standard poultry products confusing and often requires manual entry and system monitoring. One challenge for poultry processors today is managing more and increasing complex codes which escalate

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the risk of coding and labeling errors, in turn risking product safety. Customers are turning to more comprehensive and reliable coding systems which are integrated into automatic packing lines to reduce coding errors and ensure product safety without downtime.

One way to reduce coding errors is investing in Code Assurance solutions, which use advanced coding equipment and software to ensure the right code is on the right product every time. Combining automated packing technology with advanced coding equipment and networked software can decrease the risk of human coding errors. For example, code selection during a line changeover can be as simple as scanning a UPC, which enables poultry processors to easily and efficiently run pre-programmed production cycles, reducing code errors. Code Assurance solutions in an automated poultry processing environment improve customer safety and the bottom line.

See Part I [here](#) [2], Part II [here](#) [3], Part III [here](#) [4] and Part IV [here](#) [5].

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