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Anti-counterfeit technology protecting Australian food

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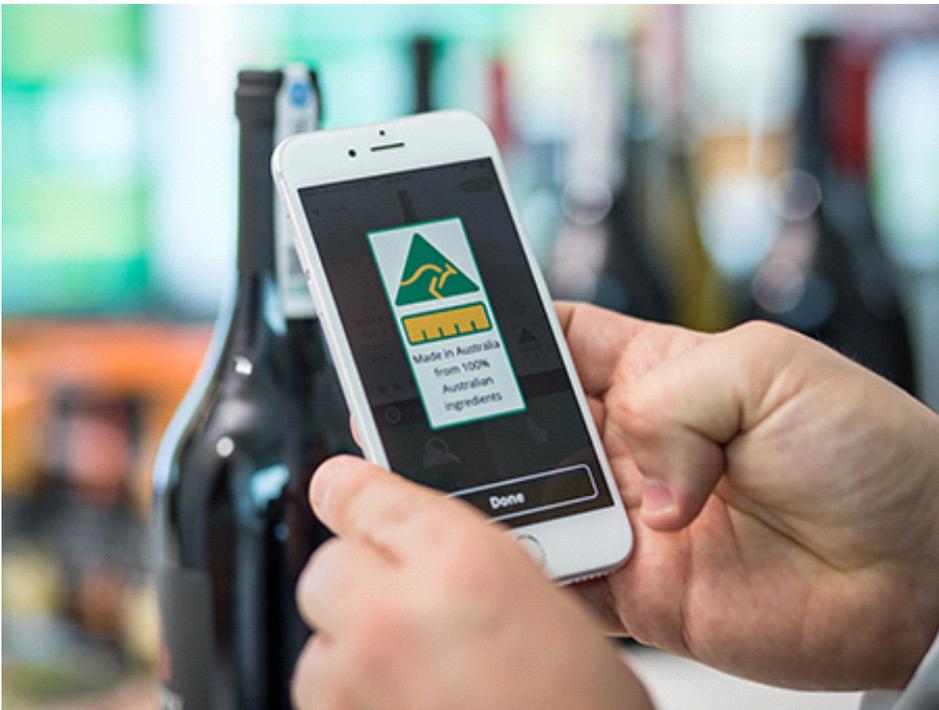
Australia produces some of the highest quality food in the world, but a number of overseas operators have counterfeited food products so that they can sell inferior and potentially unsafe food labelled as Australian. Now, sophisticated anti-counterfeit and traceability technology is helping to protect the integrity of premium Australian foods in international markets.

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“Counterfeit food is one of the biggest challenges facing Australia’s primary producers today,” says Al Jawhari, who is Chief Technology Officer for the Adelaide-based Beston Global Food Company.

“Unethical operators have been able to take advantage of Australia’s reputation for quality food and beverages by using counterfeit inferior food products,” Mr Jawhari explains.

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“They pretend the food is from Australia, when it’s not.”

But the counterfeiters’ days may well be numbered. Sophisticated anti-counterfeit and traceability technology has been developed which is helping to protect the integrity of premium Australian foods.

Suppliers can now trace how and where their produce is used. They can also find out what products contain their produce and the places where their produce is sold.

This is possible because of a three-part traceability, anti-counterfeit and global e-commerce platform put together by Beston, which allows consumers to buy online and offline, trace the origin of products, and verify their authenticity.

Technology to prevent counterfeiting

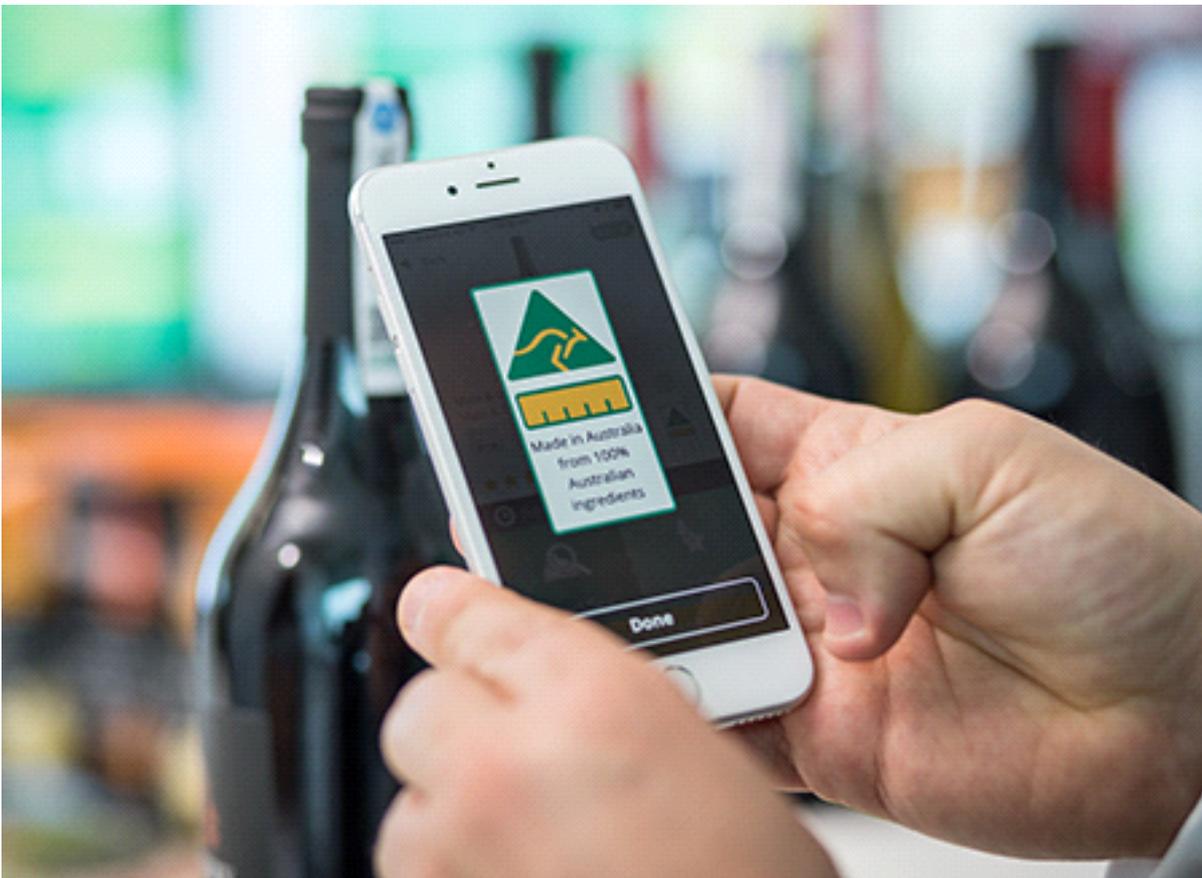
“The technology is similar to that which is used to prevent currency counterfeiting,” says Mr Jawhari.

“The first part of our technology platform provides product traceability and distribution through an app we call Oziris. Think of it as Oz+Iris – Oz for Australia and Iris for the all-seeing eye.”

The second part of the platform is an anti-counterfeit feature known as Brandlok, which contains anti-counterfeit technology originally developed by Australia’s national science agency, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).

The third aspect – a global e-commerce platform – is currently operational in Australia and China.

Customers can also scan the Quick Response (QR) code to find out more about a product.



“This can be anything from the origin of the individual ingredients and the batch level, to when and where the product was made, the use-by dates, the dates of shipping, producer information, and even customer reviews,” Mr Jawhari says.

Innovation in food security

“What we have now put together – combining those technologies into one platform – is a world first. It’s quite revolutionary and no other country has it,” Mr Jawhari says.

Over 800 Australian products – from rock lobster and cheese to meat and wine – are now being sold protected by the Oziris technology platform.

Many Australian food manufacturers have been affected by counterfeit labelling when selling premium food products overseas.

“A number of the companies now using this system have learnt first-hand how important it is to protect their produce,” Mr Jawhari says.

“It is not a pleasant experience to have your products counterfeited, and when this happens it can often be impossible for a brand to recover if it has been badly damaged.”

Tackling a world-wide problem

Counterfeiting is not only big business, but a world-wide problem. ‘The global trade in fake goods is worth nearly half a trillion dollars a year,’ says Mr Jawhari, ‘and it has been estimated that the value of the counterfeit market could reach US\$2.3 trillion by 2022.’

Unsafe food is also a problem around the world. Food production and distribution have become more industrialised in response to rising demand, and the food trade has become more globalised. This has had the effect of introducing multiple opportunities for food to become contaminated with harmful bacteria, viruses, parasites or chemicals.

“We have found that consumers are very aware of counterfeit food issues and are happy to use technology to ensure that what they are getting is authentic,” says Mr Jawhari, noting that China is one of the biggest markets for premium Australian produce.

“There is huge potential in China for premium produce, but there is also a problem with counterfeit products,” he says.

“This is where we come in. Consumers need to know that the products they are buying are safe and of the highest quality.”

Consumers can now rest easy, knowing the journey their food has taken from paddock to plate.

Learn more about [Oziris](#).