

FEIG HyWEAR Wearable RFID Scanners Help Produce a More Sustainable Banana

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What do bananas and FEIG RFID have in common? Quite a lot as it turns out. At the UN Climate Change Conference, COP26, in Glasgow, Scotland, October 31- November 13, 2021, Gajen Kandiah, CEO of Hitachi Vantara, showed a video that explained how the number one banana grower in Queensland, Australia – Bartle Frere – is using data to create an impressive end-to-end sustainable farming operation.



FEIG's HyWEAR compact wearable scanners, currently on trial, appear in the video. The HyWEAR reads RFID tags into the farm's supply chain tracking system. The HyWEAR reader's wearable operation keeps the user's hands available for other tasks out in the field, improving worker efficiency.

The farm tags each emerging bunch of bananas with an RFID tag and identification number so the grower knows every step of its journey through the growing season, to the correct picking time and ultimately to the market.

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When it's time to harvest and bag the bananas, instead of the bagger searching 10 acres of banana trees for the 20 bunches that are ready to harvest, the grower knows exactly which are ready and goes directly to the ripe bunches, saving an immense amount of time.

Once the bananas are harvested, the farm sorts the bananas and places them on a pallet. Bartle Frere tracks the movement, temperature and GPS location of the containers as they travel to market.

Sustainable Production Through Technology

Bartle Frere also uses other kinds of tracking and data to work in harmony with the local ecosystem, which includes the great barrier reef. Bartle Frere monitors weather, water usage, and soil moisture. The farm has also installed solar-powered, inline nitrate sensors to track fertilizer use and sediment and reduce nitrate run-off. Tracking is crucial because [sediment, fertilizer run-off, pesticides and other pollutants pose a continuing threat to the Great Barrier Reef](#).

"What's really cool about this is that they're using everything from GPS to RFID tagging, in-soil monitoring, water monitoring and sediment monitoring," [said Kandiah](#). "All of this to basically make sure that we get a sustainable banana on the table.

"Their ability to tell to the millimeter how much water they need to use in each of the paddocks of the farm is phenomenal. They're using the same data to not just deliver a more sustainable banana; they're also managing water usage and RFID tagging. They're able to track from the plant all the way to the table," he continued.

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Partnership Fueled the Project

In facing the challenges of an ever more complex future, partnerships between businesses, vendors and government are becoming increasingly common and beneficial. The combination creates a powerful momentum none could produce individually. Bartle Frere Bananas and Hitachi Vantara established the project. Funding support came from Australia's National Landcare Program, Hort Innovation, Horticultural Research, the Australian Banana Grower's Council, AusVeg and others.

To learn more about how you can better manage your business and supply chain using data and RFID technology, [contact FEIG](#). We'll be happy to talk with you.

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