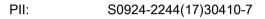
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The components of a food traceability system

Petter Olsen, Melania Borit



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1	Title
2	The components of a food traceability system
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4	Authors
5	Petter Olsen ^{a,*} and Melania Borit ^b
6	
7	Affiliations
8	^a Nofima, Muninbakken 9-13, Breivika, Postboks 6122, N-9291 Tromsø, Norway (Phone:
9	+47 776 29231; fax: +47 776 29100; e-mail <u>petter.olsen@nofima.no</u>)
10	^b University of Tromsø (UiT) - The Arctic University of Norway, Norwegian College of
11	Fishery Science, N-9037 Tromsø, Norway (e-mail: melania.borit@uit.no)
12	*Corresponding author
13	
14	Abstract
15	Background
16	Traceability of food products has become the focus of regional and national legislation, of
17	many research and technical development initiatives and projects, and of many scientific
18	articles. However, most of the scientific publications do not differentiate between the
19	components of a traceability system, and those who do to some degree use inconsistent
20	terminology and definitions. This weakens the analysis and the conclusions, and it can lead to
21	misunderstanding in relation to what a traceability system is, what the components are, and
22	how system functionality can be improved.
23	
24	Scope and approach
25	This paper provides a structure for describing and analyzing a traceability system and
26	emphasizes the difference between the system mechanisms as opposed to the attributes of the
27	units that are traced. The basis for the classification outlined in this article is practical
28	experience from traceability system implementations in the food industry, and participation in
29	international standardization processes relating to food traceability. The references and the
30	authors' experience are from the food sector, but the component description is likely to be
31	relevant and applicable to any product traceability system in a supply chain.
32	
33	'Traceability system' is used as a generic term in this article, encompassing the principles,

34 practices, and standards needed to achieve traceability of food products, regardless of how

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