

Emerson GO NFC Loggers Help Reduce Claims and Improve Quality of Live Lobster Shipments

With more than 35 years of experience in the seafood industry, L&B Taspac is one of New Zealand's leading seafood processors and exporters serving major markets around the world. The company's strict quality standards ensure their customers receive the highest-quality products with each shipment.

L&B Taspac was fishing, processing and exporting high-value live New Zealand rock lobsters to China. Rock lobsters are the most commercially valuable of New Zealand's inshore fishery species. The live rock lobsters are cooled down and packed in poly bins at the company's factory in Auckland before being consolidated into airfreight units at the freight forwarder and then airfreighted to various locations throughout China. They will often be shipped via airplane to their final destinations — restaurants — where personnel will perform retanking and stock management functions. This complex supply chain coupled with the high value of the product means a comprehensive cold chain monitoring program is required to ensure the product not only survives the 16-hour journey, but also remains in premium condition.

Lobster mortality is threatened by temperature throughout the journey. They can die should they get too hot or cold. Mortalities also result from damaged cartons, poor handling, or a lobster being incorrectly stowed with or near other products that restrict its oxygen flow. Time in the box is also a key determinant of mortality, so direct flights with no delays and fast connections are critical.

"Tank-to-tank time varies from 24 to 40 hours," according to L&B Taspac's Director for International Sales, Mike Burnett. "Ideally, the less time in transit the better; but this is a function of the supply location and flight availability. Forty hours is generally considered to be the maximum time. Once the lobsters weaken past a certain point, they are notoriously hard to bring back to peak condition."



L&B Taspac was encountering a significant amount of shipment disputes and needed a practical solution to verify the authenticity of customer claims. The company needed to determine if quality issues on lobster deliveries were due to factors beyond their control in the cold chain. This was not only to maintain customer satisfaction, but because claim costs can be considerable. Many issues can incur after the lobsters arrive at their final destinations. Buyers usually are responsible for the product from when an aircraft lands to when product is delivered to their premises for unpacking.

Working in partnership with Emerson Cargo Solutions, L&B Taspac implemented a cargo-monitoring program using Emerson's GO NFC Loggers and cloud platform. Data loggers monitor the time and temperature of perishable products during outboard transit. GO NFC Loggers transfer data immediately using near-field communications via a mobile app. Information from each shipment can be easily and conveniently checked and sent to any email address from a smartphone.

The Emerson solution has helped L&B Taspac to verify if each stakeholder in the cold chain is doing their part in ensuring food safety. The company was able to identify airlines that took greater care of their product and align sales through them. The data loggers provided insights into the last leg of transport from when a customer collects the product at the airport to when the product is unpacked in the markets.

L&B Taspac was able to independently verify rock lobster mortality and quality-based claims due to the data provided by the GO NFC Loggers. If there were any temperature fluctuations during transit, the company could pinpoint where the product was at the time of the incident and project if it would have an impact on product quality. All of this adds up to L&B Taspac being able to verify their cold chain by ensuring their logistics partners were equally doing their parts to keep the cold chain intact.

When this monitoring was first instituted, L&B Taspac found significant discrepancies between the times some of their customers claimed to be unpacking the lobsters and when it was actually happening. Backed by data collected from the Emerson GO NFC Loggers, the company was able to refute 42% of the claims against its lobster shipments. Customer claims were verified and quickly resolved, effectively improving the company's operational efficiency.

GO NFC Loggers also provide solid proof if the lobster shipments were opened or tampered with during transit. This also adds insight into the last leg of transport from when a customer collects the product from the airport to when they unpack the shipment. This monitoring program helps streamline L&B Taspac's operations while improving product quality.



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