



## SUMMARY

National Frozen Foods is a leading processor and producer of frozen vegetables. In business for over 90 years, National has grown annual revenues to \$115 million by following a single, consistent slogan: “satisfy the customer and get better every day.” This philosophy guides all aspects of National’s business.

## SITUATION

The price that consumers pay for of National’s frozen vegetables is roughly the same today as it was ten to fifteen years ago. However, retail customer demands have increased dramatically over this period. In order to stay competitive, National had to find a way to increase customer service levels while simultaneously reducing operating expenses.

To achieve these goals, National needed to better manage their warehouse and production processes. Specifically, they needed to gain real-time visibility into inventory movement at the pallet level, to streamline data entry, and to automate transaction processing. They also needed to manage warehouse usage to optimize available space and enforce first-expired-first-out (FEFO) product rotation.

National had an in-house barcoding application that enabled them to track production, but realized they needed a single solution that could manage their entire manufacturing and inventory processes. National also needed a system that could be implemented quickly and efficiently—including integration to their ERP system—before the busy harvest season started.

## SOLUTION

National turned to Coolearth Software, the experts in supply chain solutions for the food & beverage, chemical, and other process industries. Whistle™, Coolearth’s leading supply chain execution (SCE) product suite, combines functionality for warehouse management, production execution, event management, and Web-based reporting. Whistle meets the unique needs of the process industries while providing seamless integration to leading manufacturing ERP software.

National needed to complete the Whistle implementation, including ERP integration, in time for the harvest season. Whistle’s seamless, turn-key integration allowed Coolearth to implement Whistle at National’s production facility in Albany, Oregon, within 30 days. “We required a solution that we could get up and running in less than 30 days,” said John Meersman, National’s Director of Information Technology. “A quick, easy implementation and tight integration with our existing ERP system was a key factor in our selection of Whistle from Coolearth.”

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said Meersman. “Whistle has cut our truck loading times by

45 minutes and significantly improved our productivity.”



At National, Whistle has played a key role in maintaining operational excellence. “National continues to find ways to improve in an extremely challenging business environment, which is now in its ninth straight flat or down year,” said Dick Grader, President of National Frozen Foods. “I think that speaks volumes about the team we have here at National, the customers we enjoy doing business with, and partners such as Coolearth who always seem to help us whenever the need arises.”

Whistle was built specifically to improve the operations of manufacturing facilities like those found at National. Whistle enables National to grade vegetables and report production in real time, while its directed putaway optimizes cold storage—an especially important concern for seasonal products that may spend months in the freezer. Due to the nature of the frozen vegetable business, product recall functionality is important to National and Whistle enables them to track lots of vegetables back to individual growers.

Whistle also manages inventory in third-party storage locations. This solves many problems caused by the inability of outside facilities to provide

accurate and timely data on the types and quantities of inventory they manage. Whistle's intuitive technology permits National to quickly retrieve inventory when it is needed for processing.

Designed from the ground up to leverage the latest wireless technology, Whistle provides National with the tools they need to meet the demands of even their toughest customers. Now they can streamline operations and reduce inventory-associated costs such as spoilage and excess recalls. Whistle's real-time integration with ERP and MES systems delivers warehouse transparency and allows National to optimize their supply chain planning applications using timely and accurate information.

## RESULTS

"Using Whistle we have 100% order fulfillment accuracy," said Meersman. "Whistle has cut our truck loading times by 45 minutes and significantly improved our productivity." We have additionally improved customer service by supporting increased order volumes and customer-specific demands, and by eliminating order fulfillment inaccuracies.

National is excited about the many other benefits of implementing the Whistle solution. Key benefits include:

### Improved Recall Efficiency

Whistle allows National to quickly carry out tight-banded recalls, instantly identifying—and placing on hold—all exposed product. With Whistle, National can easily track finished products back to the individual grower and vice versa.

### Real-time Inventory Visibility

Formerly burdened by cumbersome information latency, National now enjoys real-time visibility into all inventory and manufacturing activities.

### Accurate Product Tracking

Whistle tracks inventory at every step, from receiving to production to storage to shipping, and leverages technologies such as barcoding to ensure data accuracy. Inventory visibility allows National to reduce standing inventory and to eliminate product loss due to expiration.

### Optimized Facility

Whistle's automated technology optimizes warehousing and inventory processes, significantly improving productivity, reducing inventory carrying costs, and supporting increased inventory turnover.

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An unexpected bonus came in the form of increased employee satisfaction. "Workers feel that their jobs are enhanced through the use of Whistle. The product makes it easier for them to do their jobs and enables them to be more efficient," said Meersman. "They believe that their positions are more important and we feel this will lead to greater employee retention."

"The Whistle implementation paid for itself within 9 months," said Meersman. "This kind of return is outstanding for an enterprise software application." By implementing Whistle from Coolearth, National is using leading technology to ensure that their corporate philosophy stands for another 90 years. "Serve the customer and get better every day."



Coolearth is a leading provider of supply chain execution solutions to food & beverage, chemical, and other process manufacturers. Coolearth software is designed to fulfill the unique needs of hybrid production facilities requiring integrated warehouse management and shop floor execution solutions. Coolearth products go beyond traditional warehouse management systems built for distribution centers by cutting costs and improving efficiency throughout the entire production facility, not only the warehouse. Coolearth enables total plant transparency in order to support supply chain initiatives relying on accurate, real-time inventory and production data. Coolearth integrates the business with the shop floor, leveraging existing assets such as backoffice and process control systems.

Coolearth was founded in 1997 and is based in Seattle, Washington. Coolearth has been named as one of the 100 fastest growing private companies in Washington State.

Coolearth Software, Inc.  
2125 Western Avenue  
Suite 208  
Seattle, WA 98121

T (206) 770-9061  
F (206) 770-3354

info@coolearth.com  
www.coolearth.com