



### Some People Thought They Were Nuts.

In 1946, Alton and Lula Schermer founded the Schermer Pecan Company (Schermer Pecan) out of their home. People said they were nuts – but they took it as a compliment. In 1968, Frank Wetherbee formed Nut Tree Pecan, Inc. in Albany, Georgia, a pecan cleaning plant. Today the plant has a 25 million-pound per season capacity designed to clean, grade and size the highest quality pecans available. In 1977, Frank Wetherbee purchased Schermer Pecan, which remains one of only a few family-run pecan companies that grow, shell and distribute; helping make Georgia a producer of 45% of the country's pecans at an average of 110 million pounds per year.

### A Tough Nut to Crack.

Schermer Pecan experienced continual growth over the years, with demand increasing worldwide. As the business grew, managing inventory became increasingly difficult, particularly during harvest, which runs from September through December. This short season means there's a massive amount of production going on in a quick span of time, with product moving out as soon as it moves in.

The process involves sorting the pecans by type, and recording the originating farm, nut grade and date packaged. However, with limited automation, it was tough to accurately track this data manually. Occasionally, they would end up



with more inventory at the end of the season than recorded. If it was not sold during season, it would have to be sold for less than market value; causing the company to lose margin on the product. Putt Wetherbee, Owner and Grower at Schermer Pecan, was ready for a more sophisticated process to track and trace bags, loads and containers of pecans. "What went into the warehouse didn't always come out that way, said Wetherbee. "We were finding inventory we didn't realize we had," he added.

What Schermer needed was the ability to access status of inventory, in real-time, and be able to track location, pecan type, originating farm, and date processed for each 2500-lb bag. If there was a problem with a particular lot, it was critical to be able to easily round up all affected bags. Otherwise they would have to recall the whole lot.

Wetherbee was referred to Barcom during the course of his research. Barcom immediately began to learn about their business and set out to develop a strategy. Barcom identified three main areas of need:

1. Reliably identify each bag, load and container
2. Accurately locate inventory and track each bag as it moves through the process
3. Efficiently track export loads

From there, a plan began to take form.



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## Easy as Pie.

Once Schermer Pecan's process and needs became clear, Barcom developed a plan to improve worker productivity, allow greater inventory visibility and reduce risk of inventory loss. Barcom's recommendation included:

- Honeywell IF2 RFID Solution
- Honeywell CK71 Handheld Mobile Computers
- Honeywell PM43 RFID printer
- Barcom's transACTION Software Solution

## Turning Over a New Leaf.

Barcom's transACTION software application drove the solution, which included an RFID component. The way the system was designed, first an RFID tag and identifying label would be generated; the label information included pecan type, originating farm, nut grade, and date packaged. The bags would then be weighed, tagged and loaded onto a forklift. With several RFID portals placed throughout the plant, the RFID reader would pick up the bag number and record item location. The RFID tag has a barcode on it as well, allowing workers to scan the bag into a specific location with a bar code bin location label if necessary.

"transACTION helped us improve our process when it came to loading and tracking," said Wetherbee. "The flexibility of the application is what really sold us," he added. Schermer Pecan wanted to minimize the amount of

handheld bar code scanning performed, and rely on the RFID solution where possible. Barcom also designed a dust-proof cabinet for a flat-panel PC and printer to generate each RFID tag.

TRANSFER	
Part #:	AW075N-UB
AW TYPE NYLON COATED WEIGHTS	
From Bin:	09B20
Qty:	800
TO Bin:	UB
Find	
Bin	Qty
09B20	570
13B20	424
FX	3
PUTUP	8
Update Clear Exit	

## The Barcom Experience.

The folks at Schermer agreed that RFID was the right choice for their operations. The addition of the software application made it a much more efficient and secure system. "We were really impressed with the way Barcom took the time to learn how our business worked," said Wetherbee. "They did an excellent job of understanding our process thoroughly before moving forward with the software development," he added. For Schermer Pecan, ROI (return on investment) was very short. With the price of pecans shifting downward immediately after the market closes, they could easily lose tens of thousands of dollars if bags of pecans were located post-market that could have been sold in season. "We will be working with Barcom again in the near future," remarked Wetherbee. "They're a great partner to have in our court."

**Interested in learning more about RFID technology and how it can help you maximize the value of your inventory?**

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**BARCOMINC.COM | 423-855-1822**



To learn more about the Schermer Pecan story, please visit [schermerpecans.com](http://schermerpecans.com).