

Case study:

**Nordlaks streamlines  
operations and meets  
market demands**



## Nordlaks

Nordlaks was founded in 1989 and is today a fully integrated company producing, processing, and selling high quality Atlantic salmon and Rainbow trout worldwide. The headquarters are situated in Stokmarknes in Northern Norway along with their state-of-the-art harvesting and processing plant. About 300 experienced and motivated co-workers create quality in Nordlaks. The company owns their own facilities, both at sea and on shore. This control over the entire value chain, from the ova to the finished product, brings them to the forefront regarding traceability, hygiene and quality assurance.

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## A pioneer in adopting new technology

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Nordlaks has been a pioneer in applying modern technology and systems that enhance the quality and freshness of its products. With a unique freezing technique, modern facilities, and strategic supply chain oversight, Nordlaks has established its place in demanding, international markets.



*Nordlaks' frozen fish filets*

As a supplier of high quality fresh and frozen salmon and trout, the company adopted an exclusive, fresh-freezing method on fillets and portions called TRUFRESH®. It prevents the formation of ice crystals within fish tissue and preserves the original structure and taste of their products. Their IceBerg™ brand is *Nordlaks' facilities at sea*



based on rapid freezing of super fresh salmon and trout in one of the world's largest spiral freezers for fish. Before each product is frozen, tidy controls along the complete value chain monitor the entire lifecycle of salmon from the ova to the finished consumer product with state-of-the-art, annually certified, production facilities. And, an integral part of the value chain control has been the implementation of internal traceability systems, initiated by the company and implemented in cooperation with customers. As a result they have been awarded certifications by international, private and governmental institutions such as HACCP, KOSHER, and AIB/SYSCO.

However, Nordlaks operates in an increasingly competitive market. So, they



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began seeking solutions to extend their existing product tracking methods between production locations, bringing traceability data directly to its customers. “We saw that in a short time the market would demand a more transparent value chain. We would need to present more information around health, sustainability, and quality of our products in a more effective way,” said Anita Olsen, Marketing Manager for Nordlaks.

“Of course we had an internal traceability system tracing our products all the way back to smolt production. But, we had no way of exporting this information electronically to customers or consumers,” explained Stian Strøm, Nordlaks’ Sales Controller.

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Therefore, Nordlaks choose TraceTracker to help improve their traceability systems by adding the dimension of external global traceability. In effect, the objectives were to **streamline internally, to comply with international traceability demands**, to create

a **competitive differentiator**, and to **promote their brand name**.

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## Working with the right people at the right time

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After working with other clients around the world, TraceTracker knew that the speed of implementation would depend on having the right people with the right knowledge about the existing traceability systems available at the right time. Since Nordlaks proactively adopted other quality assurance technology, the management gave their full support and the staff members were eager to get on board. As the TraceTracker team reviewed the current production flows and IT systems at the first workshop meeting, Nordlaks offered new ideas and insights. They worked together to identify the traceable steps involved and define the type of product information that Nordlaks’ customers would need. “We started with the customers’ perspective and worked backward to the products,” said Strøm.

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From there, TraceTracker created sophisticated information exchange models with pre-defined parameters that they could test with historic product data. On top of this, they designed a powerful and easy to use interface which would be used at the various facilities, beginning with the processing facilities on land. Then, TraceTracker trained Nordlaks employees



how to create XML data files from data in existing traceability systems and upload the files into to the GTNet so the process could be automated, saving administrative time.

Along the way the commitment and involvement of the staff was instrumental in moving the project forward. “Global traceability is not complicated but depends on the internal traceability systems. You have to start where you are, sharing the data that you already have. The key factor is the involvement and commitment throughout the company including every step of the chain,” said Olsen.



*Nordlaks' facilities*

Once the development and testing phases were complete in summer 2007, the system was activated with live data in summer 2008. In the final step the system will be integrated with suppliers and customers.

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## The GTNet

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“The Global Traceability Network GTNet from TraceTracker provides us and our suppliers with a platform for sharing business information throughout the entire value chain. By supplying connectivity to the Global Traceability Network, TraceTracker enables us and our partners and customers to comply with international traceability demands,” says Olsen.

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TraceTracker’s GTNet® is an online, subscription-based service that collects data from Nordlaks’ internal computer systems to provide complete responses to consumer needs and regulatory requirements. Customers and regulators can view information about individual products online including quality data, proof of sustainable aquaculture practices, and more.

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## Benefits to Nordlaks

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For Nordlaks, the longterm benefits outweigh the costs. For the entire roll out process, Nordlaks paid consulting fees and a one off connection charge. However, going forward a flat, monthly subscription fee is charged for the GTNet service.



The GTNet service has been a success for Nordlaks so far. It is achieving its primary objective in terms of streamlining the movement of product data and setting up a system to meet international traceability demands, creating a competitive differentiator, and promoting the brand name.

“We have also used this as opportunity to improve the flow of information in our internal data systems,” said Olsen. “Even small changes have made information easier.”



*Nordlaks' high quality fish stocks<sup>1</sup>*

In the world market, the GTNet will help Nordlaks differentiate themselves as the supplier of completely traceable fish. Customers and consumers will have access to wealth of information for each Nordlaks products. And, from the regulators' perspective, the GTNet will help facilitate faster investigations and audits, since information will be available online.

“We believe that our ability to offer this system will strengthen our position in the market because it shows our business partners, government, and customers our commitment to food safety,” stated Olsen.

“Traceability is another product attribute or property that customers can see as evidence of Nordlaks' high quality standards.”

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**For more information visit  
[www.tracetracker.com](http://www.tracetracker.com).**

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<sup>1</sup> All photos are Copyright Nordlaks Produkter AS 2008



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