



# Spicing Things Up With Tracer

How the TRACER® System helped a spice making company optimize inventory and comply with new FDA regulations



Kevin Clifton and Delores Clifton  
Owners, Clifco Spice Sales

## Clifco Spice Sales

Founded in 1988 by Gene and Delores Clifton, Texas-based Clifco Spice Sales provides over 1,000 varieties of custom-blended spices and seasonings to customers in the food processing industry. Their products are distributed throughout Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana. Clifco's own brand of spice blends can be found at [www.clifcospicesales.com](http://www.clifcospicesales.com).



## Meeting the Need While Exceeding Expectations

Clifco co-owner Kevin Clifton oversees the production side of the business. He was looking for an automated, electronic system that could control not only the movement of raw materials and finished products, but could also eliminate the need for hand-writing and manually tracking lot codes and batches. With this type of solution, Kevin knew he could better control Clifco's inventory, production consistency and automate their compliance process with the Bioterrorism Act of 2002.

“With this system, we are in total compliance with the new FDA regulations, we know all of our products are consistent and accurate, and have a better handle on our inventory.”

Kevin Clifton • Owner, Clifco Spice Sales

## The Tracer System is a Recipe for Success

Sonny Richardson of Dallas-based Nicol Systems Group introduced Kevin to Rice Lake Weighing Systems' Tracer System for dry foods. Tracer is ideal for bulk and minor ingredient traceability, Hazardous Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) compliance, portion control, inventory optimization, and reporting. The system guides operators through critical control processes, assuring operator compliance as well providing management with audits of compliance. With a Tracer System in place, Clifco would have the ability to take complete control of ingredient traceability from the dock, through the blending process, all the way to finished inventory and shipping to their customers—all in a paperless environment. Thanks to Nicol Systems Group, Kevin knew he had found the solution he was looking for.

## Keeping it Simple

Operating the Tracer terminal is very easy. From the beginning of each batch to the end of the recipe building process, Tracer guides the operator through each step. Tracer validates the lot numbers,

verifies the availability of inventory and processes the entry of multiple lot numbers.

Before an ingredient is added into the weighing vessel, the operator must verify the lot number. After the product is added and only when it meets a pre-set tolerance on the scale can the operator push “ACCEPT” on the touchscreen terminal and move on to the next ingredient. If the operator adds an ingredient outside the batch tolerances, the supervisor has the ability to override the

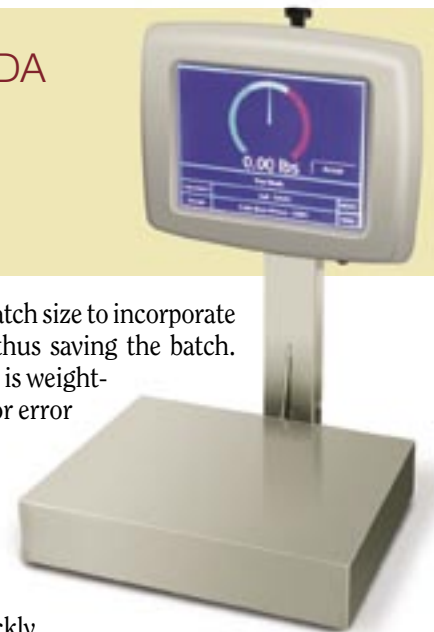
system to recalculate the batch size to incorporate the weighed ingredients, thus saving the batch. Because the Tracer System is weight-based, there is no chance for error when building a recipe.

## Realizing the ROI

The Tracer System was installed at Clifco in just three days. Operators quickly adapted to the large, bright color touchscreen PC as well as the process for building recipes and tracking lots. With Tracer's Receiving Module, Clifco is able to analyze and track inventory in real time, providing complete inventory control. The Reporting Module provides access to 21 standard reports, providing up-to-the minute reporting on usage, productivity, tracking, and much more. In addition, Tracer allows the creation of custom reports. All data is easily exported into Clifco's accounting software.

With the Tracer System in place, Clifco Spice Sales now has a paperless, electronic recipe management solution that improves lot number control on the production lines and streamlines compliance of the FDA Bioterrorism Act of 2002, Section 306. Clifco has not only increased their batch consistency, but has also firmly tightened control of their inventory. The Tracer System has provided a true Return on Investment (ROI) through the elimination of scraped batches and has allowed Clifco Spice Sales to achieve a marketing edge over their competition.

According to Kevin Clifton, “With this system, we are in total compliance with the new FDA regulations, we know all of our products are consistent and accurate, and have a better handle on our inventory.” ■



*Clifco Spice Sales provides over 1,000 varieties of custom-blended spices and seasonings with a distinct “Texas” flavor.*