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## AU: New pallet reader technology

Australian supply chain innovator Peacock Bros is just weeks away from offering a new supply chain solution to warehouses which involves the use of a forklift-mounted optical reader that eliminates the need to scan individual barcodes on pallets and can replace the need for RFID tags.

The system, tested by the company's global partner, Sky-Trax, uses a camera which takes a digital snapshot of the side of a loaded pallet, enabling all 1D and 2D barcodes on that pallet to be deciphered.

The new technology works in combination with the Sky-Trax indoor positioning system, with the first installation successfully completed at Toyota in the United States.

"This is a more cost-effective option for warehouse operations that need to scan and identify individual barcodes and, in most operations, it can replace RFID," says managing director Neil Crump.

He tells Forkliftaction.com News that while the potential of RFID technology is enormous, the cost of RFID tags is off-putting.

"RFID is a fantastic system but the cost of tags, which could range from 20 cents to \$10 depending on size, capacity and type, makes it unaffordable for many companies. The optical camera technology eliminates the need for RFID tags and could save companies thousands of dollars."

For example, last year Peacock Bros completed its first full installation using RFID-equipped forklifts to pinpoint the tracking of millions of pallets at a fruit warehouse in New Zealand.

It's now feasible that a similar system can be installed using optical cameras and doing away with the need for RFID tags, yet still retaining most of the benefits such as real-time tracking of a pallet's location and instant visibility of a pallet's status.

Although not typical, there are some situations where the new technology can't replace the use of RFID, such as when there are nine boxes to a row on a pallet as RFID is the only way to read the inner boxes that aren't visible.

Source: [forkliftaction.com](#)

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