RESOURCE ARTICLE · EQUIPMENT GUIDE

Choosing the Right Label Applicator for Your Operation

A plain-language guide to matching equipment to how you actually pack.

The most common mistake we see packers make isn't choosing a bad machine. It's choosing the wrong machine for their actual volume and layout. Here's how to think it through.

Start With Your Volume, Not the Machine

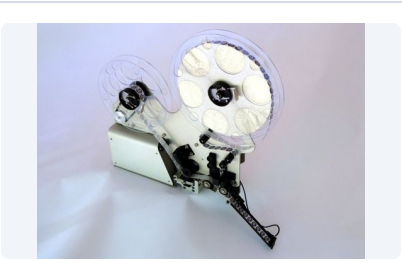
Before comparing equipment, get honest about your actual throughput. How many units move through your line per minute during a normal shift, and during your busiest season? A machine sized for peak capacity you rarely hit just adds cost and complexity for no benefit. A machine undersized for your real volume becomes the bottleneck on your whole line.

Three Machines, Three Different Jobs



PL 1000

Handheld



PL 2000

Narrow-Web High-Speed Compact



H500

Standard-Web High-Speed

Lower volume — Higher volume

PL 1000	PL 2000	H500
Up to 4.724 in/s	Up to 600 labels/min	Up to 2,000 labels/min (200 m/min)

Compare all three on our Labeling Equipment page.

PL 1000 Handheld: Best For…

Smaller operations, seasonal or lower-volume runs, or situations where labeling needs to happen in multiple spots rather than one fixed line position. Handheld units are the lowest-cost entry point and the easiest to learn, but they depend on an operator's pace rather than running unattended.

PL 2000 Narrow-Web High-Speed Compact: Best For...

Lines with limited physical space, or operations that need high-speed performance on narrow webs without dedicating a large footprint to get it. A compact, narrow-web machine can often be integrated into an existing line layout without the redesign a larger system would require. It's also increasingly relevant for packers planning ahead for item-level tagging, since a smaller footprint leaves room to add that capability later without starting over.

H500 Standard-Web High-Speed: Best For...

Operations running consistent, high-volume output on standard-width webs, think continuous packing lines rather than batch runs. These machines apply labels reliably at speed without an operator babysitting every cycle. That matters once volume gets high enough that manual labeling becomes the limiting factor.

Questions to Ask Before You Buy

- What's my actual average and peak volume, not my hoped-for volume?
- How much physical space do I realistically have on the line?
- Will I need to handle multiple label sizes or shapes, or just one?
- Am I likely to need RFID or 2D barcode capability within the next few years?
- Who's going to service this machine, and how quickly can I get parts?

How Pro Label Can Help

This is exactly the conversation we have with packers before recommending anything: matching the machine to the line, not the other way around. If you're not sure which category fits your operation, our Produce Labeling service starts with exactly this kind of assessment.

Not sure which category fits?

Tell us your volume, your floor space, and how you pack.
We'll point you to the right machine.

Contact Us

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