

Family Farming and Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL) 2016 Special Order of Business

Country-of-origin labeling is a labeling law that requires retailers to provide information to consumers on the origins of food products including lamb, chicken, fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables, pecans, peanuts, macadamia nuts and ginseng. COOL was originally passed into law in 2002 and expanded in the 2008 Farm Bill. Laws requiring country of origin labeling have been in place since the 1930s in order to provide consumers with information about the products they purchase.

America's family farmers and ranchers are proud of the food, fiber, and fuel they produce. They produce in an expanding global marketplace and bearing the COOL label allows their products to be differentiated as U.S. produced.

Consumers are more and more interested in learning about their food – where it comes from and how it was produced — and COOL allows consumers to make decisions about their food purchases. The U.S. continues to import more and more food and consumers have the right to know where the food they are purchasing originated. U.S. Consumer polls continue to show great approval of COOL.

Multinational meat packers sued over the COOL regulations and lost four times in domestic courts. Both the courts and the WTO agree that the U.S. has a right to require COOL.

The WTO ruled against the U.S. and its implementation of the popular labeling law, and as a result, awarded \$1.1 billion in damages to Canada and Mexico. Congress repealed the law on a bill to fund the federal government with no hearings or alternative program. Now a “product of the U.S.” for beef and pork only means that the animal was slaughtered in the U.S., creating confusion in the marketplace.

COOL is popular with consumers and farmers and ranchers, and NFU supports maintaining the integrity of COOL.