

Family Farming and Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL) 2015 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 muscle cut and ground meats, 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 have 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.

Canada has lobbied U.S. members of Congress, urging them to repeal a U.S. law they disagree with. They point to damages amounting to \$1.4 billion. A recent study by Dr. Bob Taylor of Auburn University found that Canada's claims of \$1.4 billion in damages from COOL were grossly overstated and in fact the price basis narrowed after COOL rules were implemented.

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