

January 22, 2014

Dear Farm Bill Conferee:

The undersigned 96 farm, ranch, consumer, rural, labor and faith-based Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) advocates urge the 2014 Farm Bill conference to reject any changes to the final country of origin labeling rules that do not provide consumers with additional and more accurate information about the source of their food. Consumers and farmers overwhelmingly support the implementation of these commonsense rules.

The final country-of-origin labeling rules for meat products went into effect in May of 2013 and were the product of literally more than a decade of advocacy by farmer, rancher, rural, faith-based and consumer organizations across the country. The powerful meatpacker and poultry industry lobby have tried to delay and derail these rules since they were first included in the 2002 Farm Bill and again in the 2008 Farm Bill.

These final rules provide clear information to consumers that balances the small cost of implementation (which even using the inflated industry cost figures amounts to less than 1¢ per pound of pork or beef processed at American plants). The final rules are in line with the World Trade Organization's Appellate Body report. In contrast, the purported amendment to COOL would significantly erode the quality of information disclosed to consumers while maintaining the current cost of segregating livestock.

The proposal floated the week of January 13<sup>th</sup> would replace the production-step labeling that delineates where an animal was born, raised and slaughtered with either a "product of USA" or "product of North America" label. This labeling scheme fails to remedy the critique of the WTO dispute panels because it would perpetuate consumer deception, as the United States is part of North America, and would still require meatpackers to keep all-American born and raised livestock separate from livestock born and/or raised in Canada or Mexico.

This North American or NAFTA-meat label is entirely unacceptable and many COOL advocates would oppose a farm bill that contained this language. Now is not the time to roll back the country of origin labeling provisions behind the closed doors of the conference process. Any changes to country of origin labeling should occur in full view of the American public with ample debate and recorded votes.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Missions, Inc. (NY)  
American Agriculture Movement  
American Federation of Government Employees (AFL-CIO), Local 3354, USDA-St. Louis  
Berks (PA) Gas Truth  
Buckeye Quality Beef Association (OH)  
Campaign for Contract Agriculture Reform  
Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment  
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (NC)  
Cattle Producers of Louisiana

Cattle Producers of Washington  
Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry (MN)  
Center for Media and Democracy's Food Rights Network  
Center for Rural Affairs  
Central Co-op (WA)  
Chicago Consumer Coalition  
Church Women United of New York State  
Citizen Action Coalition of Indiana  
CJD Foundation  
Coalition for a Prosperous America

Colorado Independent CattleGrowers Association  
Community Farm Alliance (KY)  
Community Food and Justice Coalition (CA)  
Consumer Assistance Council, Inc.  
Consumer Federation of America  
Consumer Federation of California  
Consumer Federation of the Southeast  
Contract Poultry Growers Association of the Virginias  
Cornucopia Institute  
Dakota Resource Council  
Dakota Rural Action  
East New York Farms!/United Community Centers  
Ecological Farming Association (CA)  
Endangered Habitats League (CA)  
Fair World Project  
Family Farm Defenders (WI)  
Farm Aid  
Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance  
Florida Certified Organic Growers and Consumers, Inc.  
Food & Water Watch  
Food Chain Workers Alliance  
Food Democracy Now!  
Grassroots International  
Hmong National Development, Inc.  
Illinois Stewardship Alliance  
Independent Beef Association of North Dakota (I-BAND)  
Independent Cattlemen of Nebraska  
Independent Cattlemen of Wyoming  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
International Brotherhood of Teamsters  
Intertribal Agriculture Council  
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement  
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future (MD)  
Kansas Cattlemen's Association  
Land Stewardship Project (MN)  
Massey Road Producers, Dubuque County (IA)  
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute (WI)  
Michigan Land Trustees  
Midwest Organic Dairy Producers Association  
Missouri Farmers Union  
Missouri Rural Crisis Center  
National Consumers League  
National Family Farm Coalition  
National Farmers Organization  
National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Association  
Nevada Live Stock Association  
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project  
Northeast Organic Farming Assoc. - CT  
Northeast Organic Farming Assoc. - NY  
Northeast Organic Farming Association, Interstate  
Council (NOFA-IC)  
Northern Plains Resource Council (MT)  
Northern Wisconsin Beef Producers  
Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance (MA)  
Northwest Farm Bill Action Group  
Oglala Sioux Livestock and Land Owners Association

(SD)  
Oregon Rural Action  
Organic Consumers Association  
Organic Farmers' Agency for Relationship Marketing  
(OFARM)  
Organic Seed Alliance  
Organization for Competitive Markets  
Other Worlds (LA)  
Peach Bottom Concerned Citizens Group (PBCCG) (PA)  
Pesticide Action Network North America  
Powder River Basin Resource Council (WY)  
Progressive Agriculture Organization (PA)  
Public Citizen  
R-CALF USA  
Rural Advancement Foundation International - USA  
(RAFI-USA)  
Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural  
South Dakota Stockgrowers Association  
Sustain LA  
Virginia Association for Biological Farming  
Virginia Citizens Consumer Council  
Western Colorado Congress  
Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC)  
Western Sustainable Agriculture Working Group  
WhyHunger