



The American Beef Labeling Act to Restore Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling



Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (MCOOL) was first enacted by Congress in the 2002 Farm Bill, requiring retailers to clearly label certain food products with their country of origin.

In 2015, after a lengthy dispute led by Mexico and Canada that challenged the United States' MCOOL requirements for beef and pork as an undue trade barrier, the World Trade Organization made a controversial ruling against the U.S. Rather than face billions of dollars in retaliatory tariffs, Congress opted to repeal MCOOL requirements for beef and pork. MCOOL remains in place for a variety of other products including lamb, chicken, and fresh produce.

As global markets consolidate, and consumers demand greater awareness of where their food comes from, U.S.-based, family-scale farmers who rely on domestic markets lose out. Prior to 2019, the U.S. consistently exported more agricultural products than it imported. Over the past few years, this trend has flipped and the USDA estimates a record-high farm trade deficit in 2025 of nearly \$50 billion.¹

Some countries that the U.S. imports meat products from have lower food safety, environmental, and labor protections, as well as lower prices for farmers. These factors mean that multinational corporations can import product into the U.S. cheaply, both undercutting U.S. farmers and ranchers who cannot out-compete and enabling substandard environmental and labor practices abroad. Reinstating and expanding MCOOL offers additional market transparency and opportunities for farmers and ranchers, without unfair competition from multinational agribusinesses.

The bipartisan American Beef Labeling Act (S.421) will restore MCOOL for beef products by amending the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946. The bill requires the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative and the Department of Agriculture to work together to develop and implement means of reinstating MCOOL that complies with all WTO rules within one year of the bill's enactment.



In addition to many groups including NFFC, R-CALF, National Farmers Union, the American Beef Labeling Act has consistently received overwhelming bipartisan support from voters.

Surveys show that the most U.S. consumers continue to support mandatory country of origin labeling. Consumers deserve to know where their food comes from, desire to support their local food

- 43-48% of consumers always or most of the time look for the “Product of USA” label when buying meat products.²
- Nearly three-quarters of Democrats (72%) and four in five Republicans (79%) said they are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports the American Beef Labeling Act.³
- 86% of voters support the reinstatement of MCOOL for beef.³

The American Beef Labeling Act will help to restore market integrity and fair competition for US producers, while allowing consumers to make fully informed purchasing decisions.

For more information please contact:

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¹Kaufman, J., Jiang, H., & Williams, A. (2025). Outlook for U.S. agricultural trade: May 2025 (Report No. AES-132). U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service and U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details?pubid=112706>

²RTI International, Cates, S. C., Wood, D., Creel, D., Brophy, J., Love, E., & Barefoot, A. (2022) *Analyzing Consumers' Value of “Product of USA” Labeling Claims*. US Department of Agriculture. https://www.fsis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media_file/documents/Product_of_USA_Consumer_Survey_Final_Report.pdf.

³Morning Consult. (2022). *Opinions on the American Beef Labeling Act*. Coalition for a Prosperous America. <https://prosperousamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/MC-CPA-Beef-poll-September-2022.pdf>