

History of Voluntary COOL Programs
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- Prior to the 2002 passage of today's COOL law, the FSIS and AMS offered a voluntary labeling program for meat products. During its first three years of operation, no suppliers participated in the program. 68 Fed. Reg., at 61,956, col. 1 (Oct. 30, 2003).
- The 2002 COOL law was initially implemented by USDA as a voluntary COOL program that went into effect on October 11, 2002. 67 Fed. Reg., at 63,367, col. 2 (Oct. 11, 2002). The program reserved the USA label only for meat derived from animals that were exclusively born, raised, and slaughtered in the United States. *Id.*, at 63,373, cols. 2-3. By mid-2005, the Congressional Research Service reported that few if any retailers opted for the voluntary program. CRS Report, 97-508 ENR, June 3, 2005, at CRS-3. The voluntary program remained in effect for six years, until September 30, 2008, which was the date that the voluntary COOL program became mandatory. 73 Fed. Reg., 45106, (Aug. 1, 2008).
- In 2005 opponents to mandatory COOL introduced legislation to convert mandatory COOL to voluntary COOL for meat and they adopted the same born, raised, and slaughtered requirement contained in USDA's voluntary program. H.R. 2068 109th Congress. This legislation to convert COOL from mandatory to voluntary was introduced by Representative Goodlatte and did not pass largely because of R-CALF USA's strong opposition.
- When it issued its final COOL rule in 2009, USDA reaffirmed that there was a lack of widespread participation in voluntary labeling programs. 74 Fed Reg, at 2,682 (Jan. 15, 2009).
- Thus, the U.S. had already implemented a voluntary COOL program using the very "Born, Raised, and Slaughtered" standard for the USA label that is now included in the USCA Petition and the Thune/Rounds U.S. Beef Integrity Act. And, this voluntary COOL program was in effect for many years. These new efforts are simply redo's of voluntary COOL that proved to be abject failures. Why would we continue expending efforts to redo what we already know is unworkable and ineffective for both producers and consumers?
- What did work was the Mandatory COOL law for beef that was partially implemented in 2009 (recall this partial implementation allowed multiple labels such as "Product of U.S., Mexico, and Canada" so consumers still could not distinguish the superior U.S. product). In May of 2013 the COOL law was fully implemented by requiring labels that stated where the animal was born, raised, and slaughtered. When that occurred, U.S. cattle producers were finally able to compete in their own market. R-CALF USA will not compromise its efforts to fully restore mandatory COOL for beef because we know that is what works and that is what U.S. cattle producers need. We must accept nothing less.