

**Summary of Proposed Beef Labeling Act of 2020**  
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The proposed Beef Labeling Act of 2020 (Proposed Act) requires all beef distributed in U.S. commerce to be identified with its country of origin information and requires beef retailers to inform consumers of the country of origin of beef.

The Proposed Act does not amend the country-of-origin labeling (COOL) bill that was previously reviewed by the World Trade Organization (WTO). Instead, the Proposed Act is a new, stand-alone bill that substantially differs from the earlier COOL law that applied to beef.

The Proposed Act differs from the previous COOL law (Old Law) in the following respects:

- Unlike the Old Law that imposed a duty only on retailers to label beef even though retailers had no direct means of making a COOL declaration, the Proposed Act requires packers and importers to label all beef that enters U.S. commerce and further requires all subsequent purchasers to maintain those labels in U.S. commerce.
- Unlike the Old Law that imposed recordkeeping requirements on cattle producers and cattle importers, the Proposed Act imposes no recordkeeping burden for live cattle as it directs packers to initiate origin claims based on the presence or absence of official foreign markings or devices.
- Unlike the Old Law's narrow definition of a retailer that limited the volume of beef subject to labeling requirements, the Proposed Act subjects all persons who sell beef at retail to the mandatory COOL requirements.
- Unlike the Old Law that did not require origin information to be conveyed to food service establishments, thus precluding them from voluntarily labeling beef, the Proposed Act requires beef distributed to food service establishments to be labeled, thus empowering them to voluntarily convey COOL information to their customers.
- Unlike the Old Law that did not recognize that animals could be raised in more than one country, the Proposed Act provides a simplified method for packers to declare multiple countries where an imported animal was raised.
- Unlike the Old Law that exempted many beef products from labeling requirements if they were subject to even minor processing, the Proposed Act requires all beef distributed in U.S. commerce to be labeled.

Because the Proposed Act is so substantially different than the Old Law, it is inconceivable that the WTO could apply its Old Law-specific sanctions to the substantially revised Proposed Act.