

AMERICANS FOR COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN LABELING

October 25, 2005

Attn: FY2006 Agriculture Appropriations Conferees

Dear Appropriations Leaders:

We, the undersigned organizations, write to reiterate our opposition to any attempt at further delaying country-of-origin labeling (COOL) in the fiscal year (FY) 2006 agriculture appropriations bill. We support the Senate version of the bill that allows implementation to move forward on the remaining covered commodities as scheduled and urge the conferees to remove the delay language from the final compromise legislation.

Our coalition, representing millions of American producers and consumers, continues to push for the implementation of mandatory COOL, as directed in the 2002 farm bill. Several surveys consistently illustrate American consumers support mandatory country-of-origin labeling and are even willing to pay a premium for such information. Furthermore, 48 of the 57 countries with whom the U.S. trades with, require labeling on one or more of the covered commodities under the U.S. law.

Country-of-origin labeling provides U.S. agricultural producers the opportunity to promote their excellent products. The labeling law does not violate international trade agreements, would not drastically increase producer and consumer costs, does not require third-party documentation for "trace-back" or disadvantage any commodity. Labeling products is simply a promotional tool for U.S. producers and an information source for consumers.

Evidence that this law does work can be found in the implementation of mandatory COOL for seafood which took effect April 2005. Today, American consumers and seafood producers are benefiting from the COOL information to which they did not have access while the program was voluntary. Since going into effect over seven months ago, consumers and producers are benefiting, and the sky did not fall!

Delaying the implementation of this valuable law to give opponents of COOL the opportunity to repeal the law and replace it with a voluntary law is simply not right. A voluntary system will not work.

We strongly request the conference committee remove the House language delaying implementation of COOL for beef and beef products and follow through with the promise Congress made to American producers and consumers in 2002.

Sincerely,

Alabama Contract Poultry Growers Association
Alaska Farmers Union
Alliance for a Sustainable Future
American Agriculture Movement, Inc.
American Agriculture Movement, Inc. of Missouri
American Corn Growers Association
American Grassfed Association
American Meat Goat Association
Animal Welfare Institute and Society for Animal Protective Legislation
Arkansas Farmers Union

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Region of the Secular Franciscan Order (NY)
BRONX GREENS (NY)
Burleigh County Farm Bureau (ND)
Calaveras Co. Cattlemen's Association (CA)
California Dairy Campaign
California Farmers Union
California Institute for Rural Studies
Californians for GE-Free Agriculture
Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment
Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Corning/Elmira (NY)
Cattle Producers of Washington
Center for Rural Affairs
Center Valley Organics (IN)
Church Women United of Chemung County (NY)
Church Women United, New York State
Citizen's Action Coalition/Indiana's Campaign for Economic Justice
CitySeed (CT)
Colorado Independent CattleGrowers Association
Colorado Livestock Marketing Association
Community Action Resource Enterprises Inc. (OR)
Community Markets (NY)
Community to Community Development (WA)
Consumer Federation of America
Consumer Federation of California
Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease Foundation (OH)
Dakota Resource Council
Dakota Rural Action
Defenders of Wildlife
Ecology Ministry, Social Justice Office Catholic Archdiocese of Santa Fe, New Mexico
Endangered Habitats League (CA)
FamilyCook Productions (NY)
Farm Aid
Farm Fresh Rhode Island
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund
Florida Farmers, Inc.
Florida Tomato Exchange
Grant County Stockgrowers (OR)
Harding County Stockgrowers (SD)
Horseheads Grange #1118 (NY)
Idaho Rural Council
Illinois Farmers Union
Illinois Stewardship Alliance
Independent Beef Association of North Dakota.
Independent Cattlemen of Nebraska
Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas
Indiana National Farmers Organization
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
Iowa Farmers Union
Kansas Cattlemen's Association
Kansas Farmers Union

Kansas National Farmers Organization
Kentucky Goat Producers Association
Kit Carson County Cattlemen's Association (CO)
Kit Carson County Farmers Union (CO)
Ladies of Charity, Chemung County (NY)
Land Stewardship Project (MN)
Little Seed Farms CSA (NY)
Livestock Marketing Association
Michigan Farmers Union
Mid Nebraska Pride
Minnesota Farmers Union
Mississippi Livestock Marketing Association
Missouri Farmers Union
Missouri Rural Crisis Center
Montana Cattlemen's Association
Montana Farmers Union
Morrow County Livestock Growers (OR)
Murray County Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association
National Association of Counties
National Association of Farmer Elected Committees
National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture
National Catholic Rural Life Conference
National Consumers League
National Family Farm Coalition
National Farmers Organization
National Farmers Union
National Grange
Nebraska American Corn Growers Association
Nebraska Farmers Union
Nebraska Grange
Nebraska Livestock Markets Association
Nebraska State AFL-CIO
Nebraska Wildlife Federation
Nebraska Women Involved In Farm Economics
Nebraskans for Peace
New York Beef Producers Association
New York State Horticultural Society
North Carolina Contract Poultry Growers Association
North Dakota Farmers Union
North Dakota Livestock Marketing Association
Northeast Organic Farming Association (NY)
Northern Plains Resource Council
Ohio Farmers Union
Oregon Farmers Union
Oregon Livestock Producer Association
Organization for Competitive Markets
Paralyzed Hoosier Veterans (IN)
Past Regents' Club, Diocese of Rochester (NY)
Pennsylvania Farmers Union
Perkins Co. Livestock Improvement Association (SD)

Platte County Farm Bureau (NE)
Powder River Basin Resource Council
Public Citizen
R-CALF United Stockgrowers of America
Revitalization Institute (VA)
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
Rural Advancement Foundation International - USA
Rural Roots(ID)
Small Farm Today Magazine
Small Planet Institute (NY, MA)
South Dakota Farmers Union
South Dakota Livestock Auction Markets Association
South Dakota Sheepgrowers
South Dakota Stockgrowers Association
Southern Colorado Livestock Association
Southern Indiana Center for Independent Living (SICIL)
Southern Shrimp Alliance
Southwestern Colorado Livestock Association
St. John the Baptist Fraternity, Secular Franciscan Order (NY)
State Ladies of Charity, Chemung County, NY
Sustainable Earth (IN)
Texas Farmers Union
The Cornucopia Institute
Union of Concerned Scientists
Utah Farmers Union
Valley Watch, Inc. (IN)
Washington Cattlemen's Association
Western Colorado Congress
Western Organization of Resource Councils
Wisconsin Farmers Union
Women Involved in Farm Economics (WIFE)
Wyoming Stock Growers Association