



June 8, 2015

The Honorable K. Michael Conaway
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your leadership in getting HR 2393, the Country of Origin Labeling Amendments Act of 2015, introduced, through the Committee, and to the floor for a vote this Wednesday. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) supports HR 2393 and urges the House to pass this legislation.

Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL) is a failed experiment. USDA's own economic analysis shows that it has cost the U.S. beef industry billions since implementation with no discernable benefits. Cost with no benefit doesn't make financial sense to America's cattle producers. COOL is simply a marketing program that most consumers aren't paying any attention to. Marketing is best left to those in the business who know the most effective way to get the consumer's attention and give them what they want. Mandatory, government-run COOL does not do that. All members of Congress need to realize that it is U.S. cattle producers who have been hit by the costs of COOL since the program went in place in October of 2008. This is ultimately not about Canada or Mexico, it is about us.

The costs of implementation will be compounded by the impact of retaliation by Canada and Mexico due to COOL. This impact will be on cattle producers and many other products and industries in the U.S. economy. Canada and Mexico are historically two of the top five markets for the export of U.S. beef. We cannot afford to lose access to those markets due to tariffs. It is our hope that Members of Congress will understand this is about working to prevent an economic hit to the economy. We need Congress to be proactive and prevent retaliation rather than waiting until we lose money and jobs before repealing COOL.

There are no other options left in the WTO process. In addition, there are no other alternative or compromise positions that will make COOL work. The only option to ensure that retaliation won't take place, and to prevent further costs to U.S. cattle producers, is to repeal COOL.

We urge swift and decisive passage of HR 2393.

Sincerely,

Philip Ellis
President