

June 5, 2015

The Honorable Reid Ribble
1513 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) repeal

Dear Congressman Ribble,

On behalf of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, I appreciate your early cosponsorship of Country of Origin Labeling repeal legislation in the form of H.R. 2393.

On May 18, 2015 the WTO ruled against the U.S. COOL requirements for the fourth and final appeal. The WTO Appellate panel confirmed their earlier decision that the amended COOL rules accorded less favorable treatment to imported livestock than to U.S. livestock. They also determined that the COOL rules provided an advantage to U.S. livestock producers due to the extra costs associated with segregating animals.

Canada has threatened to impose retaliatory tariffs on U.S. goods if the COOL requirements are not changed. Since we now have a WTO ruling, H.R. 2393 is appropriate legislation to move forward. This legislation passed the House Agriculture Committee at the end of May is awaiting a floor vote in the House.

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau supports a WTO compliant COOL; however, the limited 60 day window for retaliatory tariff determinations makes that unlikely. We support passage of H.R. 2393, which amends the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to effectively repeal country of origin labeling requirements for beef, pork, and chicken, while leaving intact the requirements for all other covered commodities.

Retaliatory tariffs from Canada and Mexico could exceed more than \$2 billion and would have a significant impact on United States agricultural product exports. For Wisconsin, the potential targets for retaliatory tariffs include: spirits, refrigerating equipment, cheese, breads and beef. This equates to approximately \$614 million worth of Wisconsin exports that could be subject to retaliatory tariffs. Wisconsin 2014 export statistics indicate that Canada and Mexico are our first and second export markets, respectively, with an export market value of over \$10.7 billion with \$1.9 billion coming from agriculture.

Wisconsin Farm Bureau supports H.R. 2393 to repeal specific portions of the COOL rule. It is our understanding that it is available for consideration by the House beginning June 9. We respectfully urge you to continue your support for H.R. 2393 and act quickly to avoid costly retaliatory tariffs for Wisconsin agricultural products.

I appreciate your time and consideration regarding this matter. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you have with this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Gefvert". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Karen Gefvert
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