

04/08/2003 Entry: "I Need Some Help"

I need some help. I want to express my patriotism the best I possibly can. I've already boycotted things French. I didn't have much trouble with French fries because that's not what I called them. My boycott of things French may have the economic impact of a flea on an elephant, but it certainly has made me feel better.

I suppose I never really did buy all that much French stuff anyway. The cheese I've bought comes from Wisconsin. I may have had some French yogurt once, though, but I can't remember for sure. So even if it hasn't made much of an impact I've been able to do my small part. But now all that has changed.

I just read an article that told what New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark said recently. I felt like what she said was an insult to our country, our President, and worst of all to our troops. Now this is a free country and I know that not everybody is going to react the way I do. But I want to do my part and feel better about what I do. I want to boycott things from New Zealand.

The first things that popped into my mind that come from New Zealand are lamb, kiwis and beef. The problem is that we raise this stuff in this country too. Even kiwis. Some of those come from California—that's a part of the USA even if it sometimes seems like a foreign country.

New Zealand lamb won't be hard to boycott because a lot of it has a label on it saying it's from there. But if this idea catches on and there are a lot of people who won't buy New Zealand lamb I suppose they could just jerk the label off because nobody makes them do it in the first place.

Now just to make sure how this works, I made a trip to the grocery store. Sure enough there's a pile of kiwis there with labels on them. Some of the labels just said "kiwi #4030." I think that's just the store code. But others had labels with an American flag. The papaya said "Hawaiian." The bananas said either "Costa Rica" or "Ecuador." Other fruit had "Mexico" on it. I think I could easily avoid the New Zealand stuff.

But the beef was a different story. Every bit of it said it was USDA inspected. But I know for a fact that the USDA inspects imports. So that doesn't tell me anything about where it came from. Not one single item in the meat case said where it was from. How can I boycott New Zealand and still buy beef?

I know there are some outfits that label their meat "USA Beef." And according to the law if they label it that way they have to be able to document it. Now I'm not going to boycott beef. I'll just have to shop more carefully and ask questions. Next time I'm in a restaurant I'm going to ask, "Is this USA Beef?" But I sure could use some help. It would make it easier if it all had a country of origin label.

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