

12/18/2003 Entry: "USDA EXTENDS COMMENT PERIOD FOR PROPOSED COOL RULE"

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USDA EXTENDS COMMENT PERIOD FOR PROPOSED RULE FOR MANDATORY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELING

WASHINGTON, Dec. 17, 2003 --The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service today announced that it is extending the comment period on the proposed rule for the mandatory country of origin labeling program.

"Based on the inquiries we are receiving from both proponents and opponents of the program about its implementation status, we are extending the comment period to ensure that those wishing to comment have the opportunity to do so," said A.J. Yates, AMS administrator. "We strongly encourage all interested parties to submit comments."

The Dec. 29, 2003, deadline has been extended to Feb. 27, 2004. Yates said the extension will not prevent AMS from meeting the statutory requirements for the mandatory country of origin labeling program.

USDA is also making minor corrections to the economic impact assessment due to transcription errors. The errors relate to outcomes of the analysis and in no way affect the analysis itself. The estimated recordkeeping and implementation costs remain unchanged.

The proposed rule was published in the Oct. 30, 2003, Federal Register. Details of the comment period extension are scheduled to appear in the Dec. 22 Federal Register. Comments may be sent via e-mail to: cool@usda.gov or sent regular mail to: Country of Origin Labeling Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, USDA STOP 0249, Washington DC 20250 0249, no later than Feb. 27, 2004. Copies of the proposed rule and additional information can be found at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/cool>.