

05/08/2003 Entry: "Understanding Labeling"

After working at the KCA booth for the 3-I show in Garden City, Kansas recently, we want to make sure that everyone has a reasonable insight and understanding about Country of Origin Labeling. From a few comments directed to us at the 3-I show, producer's have been misled by some organizations again with tactics that seem to only represent the packers and retailers interest in this debate. We want to make it clear to everyone that KCA's support for Country of Origin Labeling is and has been given in written form to USDA with an addendum (available at the USDA website listed below) and just recently provided proponent testimony during the Kansas House Agriculture Hearing on HCR 5017 Country of Origin Labeling.

Remember this is a "Country of Origin Labeling Law not a Producer of Origin Labeling Law there is a difference. With the current studies available producers see that we need labeling to track imported cattle from the country from which it came and this will allow U.S.A. producers to differentiate our product from imported. Most producers agree that after the collection of over 1 Billion dollars in Beef Checkoff money we should be advertising and promoting more than just generic beef.

Furthermore, guidelines for implementing the rule will only come after all comments have been considered. As a producers you had the right to submit comments and several did. If you believe in the direction that KCA and other like minded organizations support and have asked that COOL implemented correctly, be sure to call your congressional leaders and tell them.

Are we misusing the Labeling law as insinuated by some and saying that we will be in violation of trade laws under the North American Free Trade Agreement? Please understand that we support the intent of the bill and resolution that as long as cattle currently in the United States that never leave are all eligible for a U.S.A. label. Only if the cattle leave and return to or imports come into the United States will they require verification, tracking and documentation. We further believe that competition and labeling when fair, will allow imports and domestic product to be competitive in any market whereby allowing the consumer the right to know what they are buying and from whom. After reading the results from 4 studies we believe in the United States consumer. We strongly believe from the data that they will chose United States product.

Another concern for thought is, do you think that the U.S.A. packers and retailers are telling all of the individual foreign producers that they have to provide verification and documentation records just like the U.S. producers? My comment would simply be "NO". I would say "good luck" to those supporting sending of the letters, requiring it on the foreign producer but then again if we as U.S.producers never ship cattle out of the U.S. and importers are unwilling to verify and document theirs, we may eliminate increased imports and get our market back,

the very ones that we have had displaced by imports. That does mean longterm money in the U.S. producers pocket!

Furthermore, guidelines for implementing the rule will only come after all comments have been considered and reviewed before the final regulations are approved. As a producers you had the right to submit comments and several did. If you believe in the direction that KCA and other like minded organizations support and have asked that COOL implemented correctly, be sure to call your congressional leaders and tell them.

For more information as to the legal issues, cost and benefit with Country of Origin Labeling see the web site to view full text of "Country of Origin Labeling: A Legal and Economic Analysis," please visit:
<http://www.iatpc.fred.ifas.ufl.edu/publications.htm>.

For USDA info see below list of web sites

USDA Subtitle D guidelines: <http://amsdev.ams.usda.gov/cool/subtitled.pdf>

USDA Current Voluntary Guidelines:<http://www.ams.usda.gov/COOL/ls0213.pdf>

USDA Country of Origin Labeling comments:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/COOL/submissions.htm>

If you have any questions or would like copies of any survey's available on this issue please call the KCA office at 877-694-2906 or reply by email to KCA @ cowsrus@st-tel.net