



FACT SHEET

Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL)

Issue Summary: *The Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL) law, first passed in 2002 and then refined in 2008, mandates that muscle cuts of meat and some vegetables, nuts and fruits sold at retail must contain a label informing consumers about the country where the product was sourced.*

- COOL provides consumers with information they care about. A May 2013 public opinion poll showed more than 90 percent of consumers support COOL.
- COOL is strongly supported by America's farmers and ranchers, who are proud of what they produce.
- COOL does not restrict imports in any way. Instead, it informs consumers about where certain products were sourced and allows consumers to make informed decisions about the food they eat.
- Despite strong public support, the U.S. meat industry has tried to stop implementation of COOL, but those efforts have been rejected by U.S. courts on four separate occasions.
- COOL is currently being challenged by Mexico and Canada in the World Trade Organization (WTO). The WTO in October ruled that COOL fulfills the legitimate objective of informing consumers about the origins of their food, but that the implementation of the law remains unbalanced between consumer information and production costs. The USDA is expected to appeal the WTO decision in early 2015.
- Efforts to "reform" COOL in Congress are veiled attempts to gut the law. Opponents of COOL are pressing for a "Made in North America" label that would give consumers less, not more, information about a product's country of origin.