

Action Update: Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling Remains Law

CONGRATULATIONS!

You won! Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling stands as law!

You stood up to the money and lobby efforts of agri-business and the big meat retailers and proved that family farmers, ranchers and consumers do have power in Congress. Because of all your hard work, the voluntary country of origin labeling bill that would have killed mandatory labeling was not included in the FY 2005 Omnibus spending bill.

This was a truly bi-partisan effort by the Congressmen and women from many states who were willing to stand firm for the right of consumers to know the country of origin of the produce and meats they buy and the producers ability to differentiate their product from foreign foods.

Status: Mandatory country of origin labeling remains the law and implementation remains scheduled for September 30, 2006. As part of last week's overall strategy to defend mandatory labeling, a bi-partisan bill to move up the implementation date for country of origin labeling of meat to September 20, 2005, was introduced in the U.S. Senate. Senators Conrad Burns (R-MT), Tim Johnson (D-SD), Craig Thomas (R-WY), Mike Enzi (R-WY), Byron Dorgan (D-ND), and Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) introduced the bill on Tuesday, November 16, 2004.

Despite this tremendous win, opponents of mandatory labeling will not give up. They will continue to try to kill the law. In addition, USDA will continue to write rules that make labeling implementation difficult. We must continue to defend mandatory country of origin labeling and ensure that USDA writes workable, least-cost rules.

Action: Your Representatives and Senators heard you loud and clear and they fought to defend mandatory labeling. If your Congressman or woman supported mandatory country of origin labeling, take the time to thank them for their support on this issue. If they do not support the mandatory law, make sure they know you are disappointed.

You can reach your Senators and Representatives by calling the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121 and asking for them by name. Also, you can contact their state offices to express your appreciation.

For more information, contact Jeri Lynn Bakken by email at jerilynn@worc.org or by telephone at 701/376-7077.

Once again, thank you for your hard work and congratulations on a tremendous win in preserving mandatory country of origin labeling!