

Talking Points: Senate Bill 2716 (S.2716)

American Beef Labeling Act of 2021 (S.2716)

Reinstates Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (M-COOL) for Beef by Requiring Beef sold at Retail to be Labeled as to Where the Animal Was Born, Raised, and Harvested

- 1. M-COOL Enables Consumers - Not Packers - To Choose Where Beef is Produced**
 - a. When the origin of beef is identified at the grocery store consumers can choose from which country they want their beef sourced.
 - b. When consumers make their origin-related choice, they send demand signals to beef packers telling them from where the beef must be sourced.
 - c. Without M-COOL, there is only a generic demand for beef and beef packers – not consumers – choose to source beef from any of 20 or so foreign countries.
- 2. M-COOL Will Prevent the Deceptive Practice of Placing “Product of U.S.A.” Labels on Foreign Beef that Continues Today**
 - a. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) currently allows importers to label foreign beef products “Product of the U.S.A.” when the foreign beef is merely unwrapped and rewrapped.
 - b. Passage of the new M-COOL bill (S.2716) will permanently correct this deceptive practice because M-COOL will require foreign beef to retain its foreign label through retail sale, meaning all the way to the consumer.
- 3. M-COOL Will Enhance Our National Security, which Is Dependent on National Food Security**

Because M-COOL affords consumers the right to choose from which country their beef is born, raised, and harvested, it follows that consumers can choose to make the entire U.S. beef supply chain more robust, more resilient, and more decentralized. Thus, M-COOL empowers consumers to ensure an abundant, safe supply of domestically produced beef.
- 4. M-COOL Helps Ensure Consumer Beef Prices Are Affordable**
 - a. Without M-COOL, beef is a generic commodity and lower-cost, imported beef bears the same price tag as U.S. born and raised beef. This is because consumers cannot tell the difference.
 - b. When lower-cost imports are revealed with M-COOL, they will likely be priced lower than domestic beef. This will allow consumers to not only choose which product to purchase based on price; but also, the competition between lower-priced and higher-priced products will help keep all beef prices affordable.
- 5. M-COOL Empowers Consumers to Avoid Beef from Countries with Questionable Food Safety Records**
 - a. Beef packers are currently importing beef from countries with records of violating food safety standards – notably Brazil’s numerous inspection violations, while other countries continue harboring dangerous livestock diseases – reports of foot-

and-mouth disease in Namibia, Africa, and Brazil, for example. And many other developing countries do not have the same livestock production standards required in the United States.

- b. The U.S. has a history of waiting long periods before banning imports from countries with food safety infractions or disease outbreaks - with Brazil again providing a good example. Only with M-COOL can consumers make their own choice about how to respond to news reports of disease or safety problems in foreign countries.

6. M-COOL Empowers Consumers to Support America's Independent Cattle Farmers and Ranchers Through Their Purchasing Choices

- a. Consumers who wish to support America's independent cattle farmers and ranchers can do so only if they can choose to purchase beef exclusively born, raised, and harvested in the United States.
- b. Obviously, M-COOL empowers consumers to choose to support the supply chains within the country of their choosing, which is the essence of competition.

7. M-COOL Will Prevent Ongoing Industry Concentration and Consolidation

- a. Industry concentration is facilitated when concentrated beef packers access undifferentiated, lower-cost imports and use them as direct substitutes for U.S.-produced beef, thus reducing demand for cattle raised by American cattle farmers and ranchers.
- b. With M-COOL, consumers will be empowered to disrupt the ongoing concentration and consolidation efforts of the big beef packers by choosing to support more local and regional beef packing facilities that exclusively produce beef born, raised, and harvested in the United States.

8. M-COOL Will Create New Opportunities to Rebuild America's Shrunken Cattle Herd and Attract New Entrants into the Cattle Farming and Ranching Sector

- a. The big beef packing lobby contends that large quantities of foreign beef and cattle are continually needed to fill domestic supply gaps. However, when large quantities of undifferentiated foreign beef and beef from imported cattle are used to meet domestic beef demand, that beef and those cattle effectively shuts down opportunities for U.S. cattle farmers and ranchers to increase production of beef from animals exclusively born, raised, and harvested in the United States.

9. M-COOL Empowers Consumers to Express their Patriotism/Nationalism

Only with M-COOL can consumers express their patriotism/nationalism through their purchases by choosing between beef produced exclusively in the U.S. or beef produced in a foreign country.

10. M-COOL Will Help Revitalize America's Rural Communities

For all the reasons stated in these talking points, M-COOL empowers consumers to help restore for America's rural communities the economic opportunities lost because undifferentiated foreign beef, and worse, the mislabeling of foreign beef, has deprived America's independent cattle farmers and ranchers the opportunity to compete in their own domestic market.