

## Letters &amp; Opinions

## Beef producers want a COOL fix

## COMMENTARY

By J.T. SMITH

**T**HE Country of Origin Labeling Law, or COOL, is truly a poorly written mandate, America's cattlemen say. Cattle producers are asking the U.S. Congress to fix COOL so it is fair and workable.

The beef producers want Congress to find an alternative approach to remedy the mandatory labeling law.

Beef industry leaders say labeling of food products — done right — helps to build market demand for brand products, especially for U.S. beef. American cattlemen have long supported a voluntary marketing program to promote American beef. But they say COOL, as a mandatory labeling law, just forces additional burdens on livestock pro-

ducers, with no tangible benefits for them or consumers.

"This law is imminent," says Colin Woodall, National Cattlemen's Beef Association executive director of legislative affairs. "The mandatory law is on the books and set to be implemented next year. But there's still time for Congress to fix some of the more damaging aspects of the law — and they'll only do so if they hear from enough of their constituents in the countryside."

**We want to hear from you!**

E-mail your letters to  
jtsmith@farmprogress.com.

Write to: Letter to the Editor  
The Farmer-Stockman  
P.O. Box 459  
Tuscola, TX 79562

All letters must include your name, address and telephone number for verification purposes, and should be 300 words or less.

Meanwhile, NCBA is directing cattle-producer members to the Web site, [www.beefusa.org](http://www.beefusa.org), for more information on the soon-to-be-implemented mandatory COOL.

Using the site, individuals also can contact their members of Congress and urge them to fix the problems with the program before it is forced on cattle producers, Woodall notes.

He points out that COOL not only hurts U.S. cattlemen, but also gives some of the competition an edge because of exemptions. Under COOL as the law stands now, nearly 75% of meat products will go unlabeled because processed products, products used in food service (including restaurants), and poultry will remain unlabeled. Ironically, poultry products are a major competitor with beef.

The beef leader notes that as COOL is written now, many beef producers, unfamiliar with the complex law, could be hit with penalties and fines for non-compliance.

In fact, as the law stands now, calves born this year would have to meet the COOL criteria if marketed in the fall of 2008.

U.S. Rep. Randy Neugebauer of Lubbock, Texas, representing the 19th District, says he has made it one of his priorities to see that Congress fixes COOL.

## SOUND OFF

**Too much exposed flesh**

For many years I thought I was the only person on Earth that still believed in dressing modestly and appropriately wherever we went.

In the July issue of *The Farmer-Stockman*, Mr. Dee Martin proved me wrong. I'm glad there are others that think as I do.

I was born in 1919 on a farm near Burton, Texas. After returning from World War II, I moved to the Waco, Texas, area.

I don't recall ever seeing my parents or grandparents wearing shorts — or women wearing pants — to church or anywhere else. We had what we called "Sunday clothes." It was the best we had.

My wife and I have been married over 60 years. We still wear the best we have when we go to church.

It's a shame, disgrace and disgusting to see what our young people — and some old folks — wear or don't wear.

I don't think God is pleased with all this exposed flesh.

Perhaps the mosquitoes are.

Granvil G. Rost  
McGregor, Texas

*Editor's note: Then there are people like me, who don't need to wear "shorts" anywhere. Like the late Western actor Slim Pickens once told me: "I'm just one of those actors who looks best with his pants on."*



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