



NCBA: The Voice of the
U.S. Cattle Industry

Country of Origin Labeling (COOL)

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What the New Labels in Your Meat Case Mean

- **Product of the U.S.** —for meat from animals born, raised, and slaughtered in the United States
- **Product of the U.S., Mexico, or Canada**—a label designating multiple countries of origin is used for meat from animals born, raised and/or slaughtered in the United States. For instance, this label may be used when an animal is born in Canada or Mexico and brought to the U.S. for feeding and processing.
- **Product of Canada and the U.S.**—for meat from animals born and raised in another country and brought to the U.S. solely for processing. When animals are imported directly for slaughter the other country is placed ahead of the U.S. on the labels.
- **Product of Australia**—for boxed beef processed and imported from another country.
- **Ground Beef**—must be labeled with all countries of origin that are in a processor's supply and might be used in any given batch.

COOL Facts

Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) is a marketing tool that provides consumers with information on the origin of beef products.

COOL is **not** a food safety tool.

COOL became mandatory on September 30, 2008.

Processed food (food that has been combined with other covered commodities or been cooked, cured, smoked, etc.) does not need to be labeled

Cattle Producers and COOL

- Cattle producers are not directly regulated by COOL, but packers will require producers to verify the origin of the cattle they purchase
- NCBA helped develop a standardized affidavit that can be used to verify origin throughout the cattle market, from conception to consumer
- Standard business documents—like vet records and calf books—can serve as proof of origin
- Participating in the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) automatically provides all the record-keeping needed to be COOL-compliant.

