

**Cover Letter to Recommended Affidavit/Declaration of Origin Statements:**

September 4, 2008

To Livestock Industry Stakeholders:

In an unprecedented meeting, August 26, 2008, 70 representatives of over 30 livestock industry sector, specie and food retail organizations and companies came together in Kansas City, Missouri to develop universal procedures for implementing the requirements of the Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) law that takes affect September 30, 2008. Our principal goal was to reach agreement on universal procedures and language for using the necessary affidavits and/or declarations of country of origin (CoO) to move origin claims along the livestock's chain of custody/ownership to slaughter facilities to assure that meat covered commodities will be accurately labeled at retail.

The undersigned are pleased to report that we accomplished our objective and the attached universal "Country of Origin Affidavit/Declaration" statements are recommended to the livestock industry at-large in establishing and forwarding country of origin claims on livestock covered by the COOL law (cattle (including veal), swine, sheep and goats). In our endeavors, we sought the simplest, most effective, least burdensome approach for producers, marketing businesses, feeders and packers to use in implementing and complying with COOL. We hope you will agree and will join us in adopting the attached "Affidavit/Declaration of Origin" statements in your operation to eliminate duplicative onerous CoO procedures.

In addition to using an affidavit/declaration of origin, the U. S. Department of Agriculture permits packers to rely on the presence of an official ear tag and/or marking on animals that are part of a National Animal Identification System (NAIS) compliant system or other official identification system, such as the Canadian or Mexico official systems. For information on the use of COOL compliant identification systems, we strongly suggest you contact a USDA representative.

For questions or further information respective to the attached documents, please feel free to contact any of the assigned organizations and or companies in implementing CoO procedures in your operation.

Sincerely,

**American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Foods Group  
American Hereford Assn.  
American Meat Institute  
American Sheep Industry Assn.  
Cargill Meat Solutions  
Chicago Mercantile Exchange  
Dairy Farmers of America  
Food Marketing Institute  
FPL Food  
Greater Omaha Packing Co.  
John Morrell Co.  
Kansas Livestock Assn.  
Livestock Marketing Assn.  
National Cattlemen's Beef Assn.  
National Farmers Organization  
National Farmers Union**

**National Livestock Producers Assn.  
National Meat Assn.  
National Milk Producers Federation  
National Pork Producers Council  
Pork Board  
R-CALF USA  
Smithfield Beef Group  
Texas Cattle Feeders Assn.  
Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Assn.  
U. S. Cattlemen's Assn.**