



Country of Origin Labeling Program (COOL)

Description

Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) Program is a requirement that was signed into law under Title X of the 2002 Farm Bill. This law requires certain food retailers (supermarkets and grocery stores) to provide country of origin labeling information for fresh muscle cuts of beef (including veal), lamb, pork, goat, chicken; ground beef, ground lamb, ground pork, ground goat, and ground chicken; farm-raised fish and shellfish; and, wild fish and shellfish. Congress passed an expansion of the COOL requirements in 2008 to include more perishable agricultural commodities (fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables); peanuts, ginseng, pecans and macadamia nuts.

Activities

The USDA is responsible for monitoring and enforcing COOL laws. The California COOL Program conducts retail reviews throughout the state to assist USDA in determining if stores are in compliance with COOL law. A COOL review includes a physical review of covered commodities to verify label compliance and a review of records to obtain supplier information for traceback purposes (commodity chain of custody).

Program Importance

The COOL Program provides the consumer educated choices in the products they buy, and builds consumer confidence in the foods they eat by knowing where it originates. Consumers enjoy the education and choice the COOL Program brings, which helps to promote consumer confidence and fiscal support to retailers. COOL Program requirements are uniform for all supermarkets and grocery stores, creating and promoting fair competition in the marketplace.

Budget/Staffing

The Program receives federal funding from USDA. There is no permanent staffing for the COOL Program. Staff from other programs perform the work, which is seasonal.

Forecast

Consumers appreciate the education and choices that COOL provides. The federal funding for the Program is expected to remain stable.

For more information, please contact:
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