



The premier representative of the cattle industry since 1974

Contact:

Bill Hyman, Executive Director
Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas
Office: 512.620.0162 / Cell: 830.857.3500

M-COOL Will Benefit Beef Industry

Lockhart, Texas – July 10, 2007 – For Immediate Release – The Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas looks forward to working with the U.S. Congress and the Department of Agriculture as they begin to work towards implementation of Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (M-COOL) for beef. ICA remains committed to making sure USDA will take a positive approach in writing the final rules for M-COOL. ICA believes the rules should be simple, easy to follow, and above all, not disruptive to our livestock marketplace.

Newly elected ICA President H. G. “Peanut” Gilfillian from Stowell, Texas said “Now cow/calf producers have the opportunity to speak and be heard during the USDA M-COOL comment period. It is time to let USDA know that we support an efficient and verifiable program that will allow U.S. producers the chance to spotlight our born, raised, and processed beef.”

USDA and Congress are on track to initiate M-COOL on or before September 2008 and Congressional leaders have made it clear the law will be implemented. Recent news releases by longtime opponents of M-COOL have attempted to erode producer support for the program by continuing to reference the possible extreme costs associated with the requirements of the proposed rules. These rules are simply proposed rules and are far from being adopted. Criticism of the proposed rules has become an effort by some to muddy the waters and create chaos. The M-COOL legislation, which was passed by Congress in 2002, remains the same as originally written. The initial proposed rules will still need to be redrafted to insure clarification and simplification. ICA and other grassroots producer groups will be working with the beef industry and USDA to adopt workable rules and reporting requirements.

All foreign live cattle transported into the United States are currently permanently identified as to country of origin. All domestic cattle that are unmarked would be cattle of U.S. origin. Admittedly this is not a “zero tolerance” system but it is what we now have and will be of no cost to the producer. Persons who attempt to blatantly circumvent this system will be subject to penalties and fines. The packing and the retail industry is currently segregating beef by quality and grade. They should have little trouble incorporating the new rules. The advancement of branded beef programs such as “Angus Beef,” bear witness to the fact that the packers and

retailers are able to separate and identify beef when they desire. Beef, born, raised and processed in the United States is basically a program which identifies the product of U.S. ranchers. M-COOL may not necessarily raise the value of U.S. calves, but the program will halt the practice of using cheap foreign cattle and beef to leverage down prices and stop foreign beef from being sold as U.S. beef.

Cattlemen from across the state are invited to join ICA in supporting mandatory country of origin labeling. ICA is fighting for your industry and we need your help. Our United States beef is the safest and highest quality in the world and our own citizens deserve the right to choose our product.

ICA was founded in 1974 to provide strong leadership for Texas cow/calf producers and has grown from its 17 original members to become a voice for thousands of cattle producers. For more information about ICA, visit www.icatexas.com.

-30-