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## What is Country of Origin Labeling (COOL)?

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Many producers and consumers have heard about the Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) in regards to Beef, Pork and Lamb products. However, the law also includes fish, perishable agricultural commodities and peanuts. The first implementation of the COOL Law came into effect in January 2004. In this implementation the law required COOL for farm-raised fish and shellfish. The law also delayed implementation of the balance of the commodities until September 30, 2006. In another law on November 10, 2005 the balance of commodities requiring COOL was once again delayed until September 30, 2008.

The 2007 Farm Bill has language in it specifying that Beef, Pork and Lamb products from whole muscle and ground meats must have a Country of Origin Label by September 30, 2008. Since the Country of Origin Label has been passed into effect, any animal born on or after July 15, 2008 would have to have a signed affidavit from the suppliers, markets, ect. to verify its country of birth, production and processing. In other words when a producer sells an animal they would then provide production records or another affidavit to verify country of birth to the person or location of which they are selling their animal to. Sellers are responsible for providing information on the animal's locations of production to the buyer.

The COOL law applies to all beef, pork, lamb, fish, perishable agricultural commodities and peanut products which are to be sold in a retail setting where the retailer is acquiring \$230,000 or more annually of that commodity regardless of their age or gender. Any animal without country of origin verification can only be used in a restaurant, cafeteria, food stand, or other foodservice venue. If an individual is selling less than \$230,000 annually on the commodity product or if the retailer is selling processed foods they are not required to carry Country of Origin Labels.

The labeling language is for US Origin the animal has been born, raised, and processed in the US. For a Product of the US and a Foreign Country of Origin Label the animal would have originated in another country and was raised and processed in the US. For the Foreign Origin Label the animal and or product would be imported into the US from a foreign country. Ground products will require a label stating all countries of origin which are in that ground product.

### Sources:

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