United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 25, 2007

Senator Tom Harkin
Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry
Room SR-328A
Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC. 20510-6000

Dear Chairman Harkin:

As long-time supporters of mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (COOL), we write to urge you to include companion language within your chairman's mark that reflects the COOL compromise reached during consideration of the House-passed farm bill.

Because of USDA's inability over the past five years to create a workable and common-sense rule, now is the time for congressional intervention to ensure the long-awaited implementation of mandatory COOL. The consensus reached by strong COOL proponents and COOL opponents represents a reasonable compromise and finally clears the way to timely and reasonable implementation. The problems and concerns created by USDA among producers, packers and retailers are alleviated by this compromise language.

Failure of the Senate to include identical language to solidify this agreement from the onset of our farm bill debate creates an unnecessary opportunity for some to generate obstacles at a time when great momentum forward has been achieved.

Numerous consumer polls have consistently shown widespread support for COOL. In July 2007, Consumers Union conducted a poll that found 92 percent of respondents believed imported food products should be labeled with their country of origin. Zogby International conducted a consumer poll in August 2007 and found 95 percent believe consumers have a *right to know* the country of origin of the foods they purchase. These two latest polls are just further verifications of information we have known for years; consumers want to know where their food comes from and including the House farm bill language within your mark will allow a step in the right direction toward finally making that desire a reality.

We appreciate your attention to this issue and look forward to finally witnessing the benefits to American consumers and producers upon the long-awaited and successful implementation of mandatory COOL.

Sincerely,

Tim Johnson
United States Senator

Mike Enzi
United States Senator

Byron L. Dorgan
United States Senator

Max Baucus
United States Senator

Claire McCaskill
United States Senator

Barack Obama
United States Senator

Herb Kohl
United States Senator

Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

Jon Tester
United States Senator

Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator

John Barrasso
United States Senator

Hillary Rodham Clinton
United States Senator

Jeff Bingaman
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Ken Salazar
United States Senator

John F. Kerry
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Patty Murray
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Russell D. Feingold
United States Senator

Christopher J. Dodd
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Richard Shelby
United States Senator

Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator

Jeff Sessions
United States Senator

Kent Conrad
United States Senator