

National Cattlemen's Beef Association Statement on Industry-wide Affidavit for Country of Origin Labeling (COOL)

Andy Groseta, NCBA President

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“The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) is pleased to join an industry-wide coalition in announcing the development of a standardized affidavit to declare country of origin for livestock throughout the marketing chain. The affidavit is available online here

(<http://www.beefusa.org/uDocs/countryoforiginaffidavit453.pdf>).

“Tomorrow, NCBA and other representatives from throughout the livestock and meat industries will meet with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Under Secretary Bruce Knight to present this affidavit.

“Our goal was to create a simple, efficient, and effective means of declaring livestock origin from conception to consumer, and we believe this affidavit does exactly that. Producers can fill in information specific to their cattle and assert the origin of any animal being sold. Livestock marketers further along the ownership chain can use individual affidavits to create a single, combined affidavit for a group of animals.

“Representatives from every point in the supply chain unanimously agreed to use this standardized affidavit, which will greatly ease the burden that mandatory COOL places on producers.

“NCBA has focused on implementing COOL in a manner that provides maximum benefit and minimal disruption to our ranchers. We believe this affidavit will be a significant help in that effort.

“Additionally, NCBA is working with our industry partners on the issue of so-called ‘gap cattle,’ which are animals traded in the period between July 15, 2008 (the date that declared all livestock present in the U.S. as being of U.S. origin) and the September 30, 2008 implementation deadline. We are well aware that owners of these animals would be very hard pressed to recreate the paper trail documenting origin. The industry consensus is that current owners should be considered to have first-hand knowledge of those cattle. Therefore, these animals should be allowed to move through the marketing chain using the standard affidavit.

“NCBA will continue to work on behalf of our cattlemen to put in place an effective and accurate labeling system. Additionally, we will be leading the effort to educate producers on how to comply with the new rule.

“For more information about the industry consensus, please read our stakeholder letter (<http://www.beefusa.org/uDocs/countryoforiginaffidavitcoverletter.pdf>)

Andy Groseta is a rancher from Cottonwood, Arizona, and president of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) has represented America's cattle producers since 1898, preserving the heritage and strength of the industry through education and public policy. As the largest association of cattle producers, NCBA works to create new markets and increase demand for beef. Efforts are made possible

through membership contributions. To join, contact NCBA at 1-866-BEEF-USA or membership@beef.org <<mailto:membership@beef.org>> .

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