



January 13, 2010

The Honorable Ron Kirk  
United States Trade Representative  
600 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Trade Representative Kirk:

On January 8, the U.S. Cattlemen's Association (USCA) and the National Farmers Union (NFU) filed joint comments in response to the December 4, 2009 Federal Register Notice regarding the country of origin labeling (COOL) challenge filed by Canada and Mexico with the World Trade Organization (WTO). The joint comments were limited to specific parameters as published in the Federal Register request. A copy of the joint comments is attached for your reference. Also attached is a white paper further exploring the facts of the case.

A close examination of the data and facts surrounding this international challenge of a domestic law reflects that North American cattle trade has been impacted by the volatility in exchange rates, Canadian and U.S. feed prices, climate conditions, escalating transportation costs, competing protein sources, a weakened economy, a subsequent decline in demand for beef products and a substantial decline in Canadian cattle herds.

These factors have all been recognized by leading analysts, organizations and agencies in Canada and the United States. Ignoring these factors masks the true market forces that have been key in cattle trade flow changes. We hope the attached documents, which explore these trade influences, provide clarity to the issue.

When COOL was mandated by Congress in the 2008 Farm Bill, the action fulfilled a decade of work by cattle producers to see their product differentiated in retail cases in a manner that provides meaningful point-of-purchase information to consumers. All sectors of the industry, including production and processing were involved in the sensitive negotiations finalizing the language in the COOL law. Of late, twenty-six U.S. Senators sent a letter to you and the Secretary of Agriculture urging a vigorous defense of the COOL law at the WTO. Your continued support for the U.S. COOL law is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger Johnson".

Roger Johnson, President  
National Farmers Union

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Wooster".

Jon Wooster, President  
U.S. Cattlemen's Association