

# COOL Facts!

The TRUTH about Country-of-Origin Labeling

## - VOLUNTARY VS. MANDATORY -

**MYTH:** A delay on COOL is necessary to provide Congress the opportunity to consider legislation implementing a “workable” COOL program.

**FACT:** A voluntary COOL program is *not* a “workable” option. Advocates of a voluntary program are the same interests that have opposed mandatory COOL from the beginning, and refuse to participate in a voluntary program. Processors and retailers are unlikely to voluntarily label products they import or blend, if labeling would result in lower profit margins.

**MYTH:** The “industry” supports repealing a mandatory, for a voluntary, COOL program.

**FACT:** Producers and consumers remain united in their support for implementing the mandatory law as directed in the 2002 Farm Bill for **ALL** commodities. Only the packing, retailing and importing industries support repealing mandatory COOL for a voluntary program.

## Opinion Poll

AgriTalk.com asked the following question on a weekly online poll in 2005:  
What form of country-of-origin labeling do you prefer?

**Mandatory:** 80.1%

**Voluntary:** 15.5%

**Doesn't Matter:** 4.3%

**MYTH:** Voluntary COOL is the only way to make the program workable.

**FACT:** Mandatory COOL will be workable with common-sense implementation that has little bureaucratic or financial burden on producers, processors and retailers. Mandatory seafood COOL has already been implemented and has not been problematic for producers, processors or retailers. Voluntary COOL simply won't work; it will kill the 2002 Farm Bill program that has not even been implemented.

## COOL Thought

*The more participation there is in the COOL program, the more promotion there is of American products!*

**MYTH:** Voluntary COOL would see just as much participation and compliance as a mandatory program.

**FACT:** A voluntary COOL program has been on the law books since 1998, yet packers, processors and retailers refuse to participate. **Voluntary COOL is like a voluntary speed limit, it's not realistic!** Companies that import cheaper, often lower-quality products will not voluntarily participate.

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