

# COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN LABELING

PROTECTING FAIR MARKETS, RURAL PROSPERITY,  
AND LAND STEWARDSHIP

A free market economy depends on transparency. Without information consumers can't make informed decisions about what they buy. Producers don't know if they are getting a fair price for the food they raise.

American shoppers know where our shovel, shirt, or boots come from – and even most of our food – but we're left in the dark when it comes to beef. Large multinational meatpacking corporations have used wealth, influence, and intimidation tactics to carve out an exemption to prevent Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL) for beef and pork. **That's not cool.**

**Consumers deserve the right to choose USA beef.**

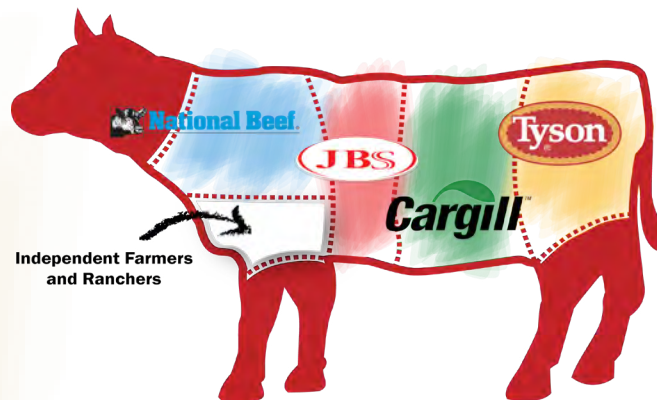
**Farmers and ranchers deserve the right to an honest market.**



## COOL is part of reforming a rigged system

**Four big meatpackers – JBS, Cargill, Tyson, and National Beef Packing – control 85% of the meatpacking market.<sup>1</sup>**

- **When there's so little competition in the market, meatpackers have unlawful power to control prices.**
- **This concentration of market power results in customers paying more for beef, while America's ranchers are paid less.**



## Monopoly corporations are extracting wealth from our rural communities

Meatpacking corporations flood U.S. markets with cheaper beef from other countries, driving down what they pay for American-raised beef, where we have higher safety standards and strong worker protections. **They get away with this by keeping consumers in the dark about the beef we're purchasing.**

**17,000 hardworking ranchers have gone out of business *each year* since 1980<sup>2</sup> largely because of market abuses by meatpacking conglomerates.**

Agriculture is the backbone of rural economies, and these abusive tactics steal wealth from our communities. Funds that should go to our small businesses, schools, firefighters, roads, and hospitals instead go to bloated corporate salaries and shareholder payouts. **Mandatory Country-of-Origin Labeling plays a big role in restoring respect for rural America in our national policies.**

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## Restoring a fair system

Mandatory Country-of-Origin Labeling was the law of the land in the U.S. from 2009 until 2015. Congress repealed COOL in 2015, caving to meatpacker lobbyists who engineered false myths that labeling the origin of beef (as we do with almost all other goods, including food) could violate trade laws.

**Since COOL was repealed, the price paid to ranchers for cattle has declined by as much as one dollar per pound<sup>3</sup> (a \$500 - \$850 loss per calf), even as demand for beef has remained steady or increased. Corporations are stealing profits, cheating our ranchers and rural economies.**

## Protecting our working landscapes

Family ranchers are the stewards of Montana's vast grasslands, protecting the working landscapes that define the iconic beauty of Montana's open range.

Without policies like COOL to ensure fair markets for ranchers, we are in danger of losing our grasslands to developers or to multinational meatpacking corporations who aren't concerned about the long-term care of our grasslands and open spaces.

## No Farm Bill without COOL

The best way to restore Country-of-Origin labeling is to include it in the 2024 Farm Bill, which is currently being negotiated. **We need to tell Montana's full congressional delegation that Montanans will not accept a Farm Bill unless it includes mandatory Country-of-Origin Labeling!**

## Restore COOL, restore respect for rural Montana

At least one member of Montana's congressional delegation has shown steadfast support for COOL, but we need the support of all U.S. Senators and Representatives from Montana. **Please lend your voice to let Sen. Daines, Sen. Tester, Rep. Rosendale, and Rep. Zinke know that we expect them ALL to stand up for rural Montanans instead of corporate meatpacking conglomerates.**

**TAKE ACTION! Visit [NorthernPlains.org/SupportCOOL](https://NorthernPlains.org/SupportCOOL)**

**Sign our letter to Montana's congressional delegation telling them not to pass a Farm Bill without mandatory COOL!**

- Sources:** 1. Reuters, "Explainer: How four big companies control the U.S. beef industry," June 17, 2021, reuters.com  
2. Time Magazine, "Why This Bipartisan Group of Senators Has Beef With the 'Big Meat' Industry," April 28, 2022, time.com  
3. Public News Service, "Ranchers Want to Restore 'Truth in Labeling' for Meat Origins," February 16, 2021, publicnewsservice.org

