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USDA



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President George W. Bush
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
Washington D.C. 20500

June 4, 2001

Dear President Bush:

00-036A
00-036A-2
Jeanne Youngquist

Attached please find an e-mail that I have sent to the Senators and Representatives of "The Great State of Washington".

I think there are many important points made and I hope your have time to read them. I spend a lot of time worrying about America's Food Source. I am on the Board of Directors of Skagitonian's to Preserve Farm Land, and The Food Alliance, which are both trying to preserve our farmers, and our agriculture base.

I jot down ideas, I preach to the choir, and I fear that my worries are being realized. I went been back to Washington DC, with the Farm Bureau while my husband was there as a member of the Land Grant University Delegation. I am trying to voice my worries to people that can make a difference, you and our Congress, etc.

I also enclosed a couple ideas that could help America's farmers, and American Food Productions Companies, and Corporations.

Low interest loans are something-I did not mention, but would make a huge difference for all of us floundering farmers.

I fear that America's Agriculture, not just Washington's, is in a tailspin.

Help!

Sincerely

Jeanne Youngquist

Handwritten signature of Jeanne Youngquist

04-4181523

FSA
FSIS

STRAWBERRIES, RASPBERRIES, CUCUMBERS & CAULIFLOWER

Jeanne Youngquist
2001
Mike and Jean's
16402 Jungquist Rd.
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
360-424-7220



May 30,

I noticed that there are several "Country of Origin" bills appearing in Congress. This is great!
I have compiled a list of valid reasons for your support of an effective Country of Origin Bill:

1. The public is being misled "LIED TO" in the market place.
2. The safety of our food is jeopardized.
 - a. Unsafe production methods, (chemical, human waste, and even the use of contaminated irrigation water).
 - b. Unsanitary harvest conditions
 - c. Skirted regulations. No USDA inspections at site of harvest or processing.
3. Americas food source is threatened, and is probably just a big joke right now.
4. American farmers cannot afford to compete. The shame is that they cannot compete against our own companies, who are producing in foreign countries, re-importing and with value added, distributing or re-exporting and selling products as if they were grown in the United States of America. Our Import-Export statistics are skewed, with our own American Corporations being big importers, of foods they once grew here.
5. Inhumane use of cheap labor. Exploitation of children.
6. Farmers are paying property and other taxes, to the support of institutions, which are feeding food produced in foreign countries. Penitentiaries, schools, hospitals, daycares, nursing homes, etc., every institution funded with direct tax support, State or Federal Grant, DSHS, Medicare, and/or Medicaid money.
7. If it were affordable for corporations to return production of food to America, we would have good use of our farmland.

What is happening?

1. Big American corporations are taking production out of this country, re-importing product and packaging it as American.
2. The present "Country of Origin" regulations do not cover value added.
3. These American food companies, retailers, food manufactures and importers are fighting the labeling, and import tariffs.
4. NAFTA has made it opportunistic for America to produce where the costs are lower and import. For example a big corporation is having the little pickles grown in India and imported in bulk. These small pickles are put in jars along with American grown and labeled from their point of distribution. In India cheap labor picks tiny pickles every day. There are no sorting, or grading costs because they only get the one size. Ask Gerber where they will import their apricots from next year, "Turkey". Then look at a Gerber baby food jar of meat, is it labeled grown in Argentina? "No", but that is where it came from.
5. Big pig farmers, and dairy are taking their production to Mexico, as are fresh and frozen fruit and vegetable growers and packers. In so doing they avoid a lot of environmental, ecological issues.
6. Big business is using our government and is **selling us out**. It is no longer affordable to produce food in America. This is the biggest "**Fleecing of America**" ever. But the pockets of the stockholders continue to be lined.
7. Big retailers have threatened corporations of American grown products, with losing their shelf space, when they have tried to support Country of Origin labeling.
8. The industry "Agriculture" does not have money to lobby, nor to fund candidates. We cannot compete against the huge group fighting this issue. Farmers are fighting too many desperate survival issues, operating budgets and bank funding. America is depending upon our leaders good judgment not to make decisions backed with the big bucks.

What is happening is truly threatening and frightening.

Do not let the opportunity to turn things around slip through our fingers. Oppose big money and support American's agriculture and corporations to assure a future of our food source.

I suggest that we follow Europe's lead in being very protective of our food source.

Support Country of Origin Labeling; feed Americans, American grown food, feed those in tax supported institutions, food produced in our country by our taxpayers.

STRAWBERRIES, RASPBERRIES, CUCUMBERS & CAULIFLOWER

Mike and Jean's
BERRY FARM

TWO PROPOSALS:

Sales Tax on Farm Machinery and American-Grown-Only Sales to Institutions

1. **Sales tax on farm machinery, and machinery property tax.** County commissioners from Sacramento are asking for relief of these taxes. I would also include **taxes on parts and repairs.** California, Washington, Nevada and Hawaii are the only states that charge the full sales tax on farm equipment, of the 45 U.S. states that collect sales tax. 33 states totally exempt new agricultural machinery from sales tax.

Hoy Carman, a professor of Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of California, Davis, says that of the remaining 12 states that charge sales tax on Ag. Machinery, eight do so at a reduced rate and six of those eight reduce rates by 50 percent or more. California assesses sales tax on the gross amount of the equipment even when the purchase involves a trade in. Washington also assesses at **full tilt** but on a trade in balance.

2. Sacramento, California commissioners are also asking that **all produce served in jails, juvenile halls and other facilities be American Grown.** I want to emphasize that this would not be a product of America, but American grown products: food from the "we's" of American farming not the "they's." The "we's" are the American farmers who grow their **commodities in American soil**, and the "they's" are the ones that grow theirs in foreign soils, import them and call them, with value added (packaging), Products of America.

I would want this to be taken a step further to include any establishments that receive state or federal funds. **That would include our universities, public schools, any private schools or daycares that receive DSHS funds, hospitals and nursing homes, etc that receive Medicare or Medicaid.**

Farmers pay property taxes funding schools. Why should they and other taxpayers' dollars go to support the production of food grown in foreign countries, especially with the compromises being made in doing so? Compromise of food safety, work ethics, of stewardship to our land, the environment, and community well being are all involved. Without support of American farmers and grown in America, we are jeopardizing our national security, as well as Canada's and Mexico.

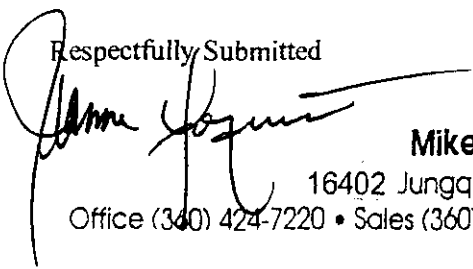
This is a back-door approach to fighting for point-of-origin-labeling. The "they's" of American Agriculture fight point-of-origin labeling, wanting to stay incognito, wanting the anonymity and the secrecy. This deceives the American consumer. One corporation in particular would not want American mothers or grandmothers to know that baby food meats are imported from Argentina and not labeled with the true country of origin. The health of our nation and our children is being compromised, especially in this situation with the threat of mad cow and foot and mouth diseases. Consumers deserve to know that a portion of the tiny pickles that the consumer pays the most for, and that our farmers are likewise paid the most for, are being imported from India. In India they can afford to pick the little ones each day, requiring no sorting or grading.

The fight that continues against point-of-origin labeling is supported with high finance and threats from the big corporations and conglomerates: the "they's." Shelf space has been used as a threat to American companies who have sought point-of-origin labeling. Shelf space is everything to a company. Shelf space is an effective threat today with so few huge grocery chains and buyers controlling purchasing channels.

Maybe our legislature can sneak in the back door to help level the playing field, and at least allow us the sale of only American grown products to tax supported institutions.

The present point-of-origin labeling policy is the true enemy of the American farmer, American Agricultural infrastructure, American health, and American national security. Point-of-origin labeling is the reason for our liquid borders as well. It is not only the foreign commodities that depend upon ease of entry but also the "they's" of our American farmers, corporations and conglomerates.

Respectfully Submitted



Mike and Jeanne Youngquist

16402 Jungquist Road • Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Office (360) 424-7220 • Sales (360) 428-3917 • Residence (360) 424-5015 • Fax (360) 424-7225



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety
and Inspection
Service

Washington, D.C.
20250

AUG 13 2001

Ms. Jeanne Youngquist
Mike & Jean's
16402 Jungquist Road
Mount Vernon, Washington 98273

Dear Ms. Youngquist:

Thank you for your June 4, 2001, letter to President Bush enclosing a copy of your electronic mail message to the Washington congressional delegation in support of mandatory country-of-origin labeling of agricultural produce.

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) of the Department of Agriculture is responsible for ensuring that meat, poultry, and egg products are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled. FSIS enforces the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Poultry Products Inspection Act, and the Egg Products Inspection Act, which require Federal inspection and regulation of meat, poultry, and processed egg products prepared for distribution in commerce for use as human food.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of the Department of Health and Human Services has jurisdiction over food other than meat, poultry, and processed egg products, such as fruits and vegetables. Because of your interest in country of origin labeling of fruits and vegetables, we are referring your correspondence to the FDA for consideration.

With regard to meat and poultry products, the Conference Report accompanying the FY 2000 Agriculture Appropriation Act, P.L. 106-387, asked the Secretary of Agriculture to determine the best terms to use on labels to inform consumers that the beef products are U.S. products. The Conference Report stated that a lack of clarity regarding the definition of the terms hinders the ability of U.S. producers to promote their products.

To address the problem of lack of clarity in the definition of terms, on August 7, 2001, FSIS published in the *Federal Register* an advance notice of proposed rulemaking, *Product Labeling; Defining United States Cattle and United States Fresh Beef Products*. We are enclosing a copy of an August 7, 2001, news release about the advance notice of proposed rulemaking.

The advance notice seeks comments and information from the public to assist the Agency in establishing a clear working definition of cattle and fresh beef products that may be labeled as products of the United States. FSIS would like to receive comments on whether such beef products should bear labeling claims that are different from the claims that are permitted under FSIS' current policy on beef products from animals that are documented to have been born, raised, slaughtered, and processed in the United States.


Ms. Jeanne Youngquist
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The public comment period for the advance notice of proposed rulemaking closes October 9, 2001. Your June 4, 2001, correspondence to the President is being forwarded to the FSIS docket clerk to be included in the official records of public comments.

With regard to an industry petition submitted last year asking for the creation of a voluntary U.S. beef certification program, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service is reviewing that petition.

Your interest in promoting U.S. agricultural produce is appreciated. The issues you wrote about are of great significance to farmers, and we will do our best to address them in a reasonable and comprehensive fashion.

Sincerely,


Philip S. Derfler
Deputy Administrator
Office of Policy, Program Development
and Evaluation

Enclosure

cc: Ms. Anne Crowther
Director, Agency Liaison
The White House
Room 592, Eisenhower Executive Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20502

Department of Health and Human Services
FDA, CFSAN
200 C Street SW.
Washington, D.C. 20204