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FSIS Docket Clerk
Docket #00-036A
Department of Agriculture
Food Safety & Inspection Service
Room 102 Cotton Annex Building
300 12th St SW/Washington, DC 20250-3700

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00-036A
00-036A-8
Anna Harlowe

To Whom It May Concern

We are writing in response to your call for comments on regulations to define what cattle and beef products can be labelled as "Products of the U.S. (Docket #00-036A). We urge you to define this category as only those animals born, raised, and slaughtered in the United States.

It is vital that the standard for beef products to qualify for a "Made in the USA" label be simple and truthful. Allowing animals that are born in another country and live in the US for as little as 100 days is not truthful. This kind of loophole creates a label with much less meaning, which does not help American ranchers and farmers who could use it to better market their product, and is down right deceitful. It also diminishes the ability of consumers to know where their food is produced and thus to make meaningful choices of which products to buy based on their concerns about safety, environmental, or labor standards, or purity in different countries.

As we continue to hear about other countries' problems with mad cow disease, bacterial contaminations, unsafe food handling practices, and other health concerns, consumers are becoming aware and concerned about the origin of their meat products. To many of us, there is a big difference between an animal that was born, raised, and slaughtered in the US, and one that was imported for only the last 100 days of its life. Allowing the 100 day exception to the labeling rules would obscure that difference, and does not allow consumers to act upon their desires to buy homegrown products.

We believe that most consumers want to know where the food they feed their families comes from. and that we have a right to know as much about our food as we do about other manufactured products. We urge you to make sure that the criteria for which beef products qualify for the "Product of the USA" label are strong enough to allow us to do that.

Sincerely,

Anna Harlowe
Anna Harlowe
Issues Coordinator