

# North Dakota Farmers Union

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October 3, 2001

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

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To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the 28,000 family farm and ranch members of the North Dakota Farmers Union, I am writing in response to the proposed rulemaking regarding the definition and labeling of U.S. cattle and beef products.

North Dakota Farmers Union strongly supports the Food Safety Inspection Service's current definition for voluntary labeling of cattle and beef products as "born, raised, slaughtered and processed in the United States." All other definitions would mislead consumers and damage the integrity of the U.S. beef industry. We oppose the petition, submitted in September 2000, that would allow imported beef products to carry the "Beef: Made in the USA" label if the animals have been fed in the United States for 100 days and then processed here.

U.S. producers spend significant time, money, resources and energy producing top quality livestock. Cattle and beef products that were born and partially raised in another country should not be labeled under the same category as those born, raised, slaughtered and processed under America's unparalleled standards. Our nation has an international reputation for growing and producing high quality beef. Labeling can be a valuable marketing tool to help promote U.S. products and to allow producers to better compete in the marketplace. As a matter of choice, many consumers may wish to purchase meat from animals born and raised in the United States.

While the clothes we wear and the cars we drive bear a country-of-origin label, the foods we feed our families do not. Consumers deserve the right to know the origin of their food. This is why North Dakota Farmers Union strongly supports a mandatory labeling program with a uniform definition for domestic beef as born, raised, slaughtered and processed in the United States.

It is our request that FSIS implement meaningful labeling regulations for cattle and beef products.

Sincerely,

NORTH DAKOTA FARMERS UNION

Robert Carlson  
President