

September 24, 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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Zelma Dean Bechon

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the proposed rulemaking regarding the definition and labeling of U.S. cattle and beef products.

As an Oklahoma beef producer, consumer who is concerned about my livelihood and what I feed my family, I strongly support the definition of U.S. cattle and beef products for labeling purposes as "born, raised, slaughtered and processed in the United States." All other definitions mislead consumers and damage the integrity of the U.S. beef industry.

U.S. producers spend significant time, money, resources and energy in order to produce top quality livestock. **Cattle and beef products that were born and partially raised in another country should not be labeled as a product of the United States!**

We buy clothes, cars and many other manufactured goods that bear the country-of-origin label; and yet, there is no requirement for country-of-origin labels for the food we feed to our families. As a matter of choice, many consumers may wish to purchase meat from animals born and raised in the United States.

I strongly support a mandatory labeling program with a uniform, consistent definition for domestic origin born, raised, slaughtered and processed in the United States.

I oppose the petition submitted in September 2000, that would allow imported beef products to be fed in the U.S. for **100 days**, processed in the United States and would receive a country of origin label, "Beef: Made in the U.S.A."

I strongly insist that FSIS implement meaningful labeling regulations for cattle and beef products. Thank you for your consideration.

Zelma Dean Bechon