



PO Box 2136 • 1415 12th Ave SE
Jamestown, ND 58401
800-366-8331 • 701-252-2341
ndfu.org

May 18, 2020

The Honorable John Hoeven
338 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin Cramer
400 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Sen. Hoeven and Sen. Cramer,

On behalf of North Dakota Farmers Union (NDFU), thank you for your support of family farmers and ranchers impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. NDFU is the largest general farm organization in North Dakota representing over 48,000 farm and ranch families, members and their energy and agricultural supply cooperatives. As a long-time supporter of mandatory Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL), we urge you to cosponsor S. Res. 575.

The last several months have been incredibly challenging for North Dakota's ranching families. The coronavirus pandemic began to have sharp impacts when many ranchers were entering a marketing cycle. Despite high consumer beef demand and packer margins, cattle prices have dropped by 25-30%. Supply chain disruptions have increased the discrepancy between boxed beef and live cattle prices and created future uncertainty.

The immediate assistance you secured in the CARES Act will help keep livestock producers afloat. Your calls for a comprehensive federal investigation into packer price-fixing are an important step toward preventing market manipulation. At the same time, our rancher-members have made it clear that more needs to be done.

Mandatory COOL is critical for improving fairness and transparency in the beef and pork industries. Our policy directly supports S. Res. 575, which calls on the U.S. Trade Representative to reinstate mandatory COOL through trade negotiations. This is the Senate's first bipartisan push for COOL since the law was repealed in 2015. We encourage you to cosponsor the legislation and work toward its passage.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. We look forward to working with you to improve market fairness, establish truth-in-labeling and expand access to local and regional slaughter.

Sincerely,

NORTH DAKOTA FARMERS UNION

Mark Watne
President

