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Statement on “Product of USA” Labelling

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Today, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) changed its voluntary “Product of the USA” labeling regulations. The new regulations limit claims so only products made from livestock born, raised, harvested, and processed in America can be labeled “Product of the USA.”

Though voluntary, this rule is broader than mandatory Country of Origin Labelling (COOL), which was repealed by congress in 2015. The updated regulations also include processed products and products for foodservice, which were not subject to mandatory COOL.

Canada and the U.S. enjoy the largest bilateral agricultural trading relationship in the world, creating jobs and economic opportunities in both countries. At a time when countries are combatting supply chain challenges, food inflation and food scarcity, this change to “Product of USA” labelling regulations introduces unnecessary costs and interrupts efficient supply chains.

Canadian and American meat and livestock sectors form a vital partnership, collaborating to stimulate economic growth and feed our communities with safe, high-quality products in a way that is resilient and mutually beneficial.

“Our meat and livestock industries share common interests, objectives and high standards. We respect similar animal health, food safety and environmental standards that allow us to produce high-quality products on a level playing field,” said Janice Tranberg, President of the National Cattle Feeders’ Association.

The integration of the Canadian and American meat and livestock supply chains has consistently delivered benefits to consumers and producers alike, fostering affordability, accessibility, and quality assurance. However, concerns have been raised about the potential for increased costs to consumers resulting from the revised labelling regulations.

In the face of these challenges, Tranberg emphasized the resilience and strength of the partnership between Canada and the United States. “Together, we are stronger and more resilient,” she affirmed, highlighting the need for collaborative efforts to navigate the evolving landscape of global trade and agricultural practices.

Notes

Canada-U.S. trade in meat and livestock is mutually beneficial.

- Total trade in live cattle, hogs, beef and pork between the U.S. and Canada was over US\$6.2 billion in 2021.
- The U.S. imports a significant number of live cattle and hogs from Canada every year, with the meat often being exported back to Canada as value-added products like steaks, patties and hams.
 - In 2021, more than 638,000 head of cattle (excl. for breeding and dairy) were imported from Canada.
 - Canada bought US\$775M in beef from U.S. facilities.
 - Plus, Canada purchased US\$1.17B in pork.
 - This includes further processed products, like US\$227.3M in sausages, which contribute to even more growth to the U.S. agriculture sector.
- The U.S. also sends a significant – and growing – number of live cattle to Canada. In 2021, 377,571 head of U.S. cattle (excl. for breeding and dairy) were exported to Canada, an increase of 247% since 2017.

For more information

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