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Senators want Country-of-Origin-Labeling for Dairy

By Sara Wyant

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U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH), chair of the U.S. Senate Agriculture Subcommittee on Food, Nutrition, and Family Farms, joined U.S. Sen. Russ Feingold (D-WI) and U.S. Sen. Al Franken (D-MN.) to introduce the Dairy Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) Act, which would extend mandatory country of origin labeling to dairy products. Almost one year ago, Feingold joined with then New York Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton to introduce a similar measure.

“Ohioans and all Americans have a right to know where their food was produced,” Brown said. “This bill supports both families and farmers by requiring country of origin labeling on all dairy products. With increasing dairy imports, country of origin labeling provides critical information as households decide how to feed their families.”

Last year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) current COOL law went into effect requiring country of origin labeling of meats, produce and nuts. The Dairy COOL Act would extend the current law to include dairy products-milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, and butter.

“This legislation will help American dairy farmers stand out in a crowded marketplace,” Franken said. “They need every tool at their disposal to weather the current dairy crisis. And this isn’t just about helping our farmers. When Minnesota families fill their shopping carts, they have the right to know what country their milk and cheese came from.”

“Without strong labeling requirements, American farmers and consumers are at a real disadvantage,” Feingold said. “Consumers looking for premium Wisconsin and U.S.-made dairy products should be able to quickly and easily identify them in stores. With the discovery last year of widespread use of melamine in Chinese dairy products, consumers deserve to know whether the milk used to produce the dairy products they buy meets the high safety standards used in the U.S. This truth in labeling legislation will help consumers looking for high-quality dairy products made in Wisconsin get exactly what they are looking for.”