

# R-CALF says COOL is working

By Julie Harker

The head of R-CALF USA says regardless of what is going on with the World Trade Organization on U.S. Country of Origin Labeling, the program is working.

“Consumers are preferring a domestic product. They’re looking for the labels. And, that makes the Canadian and Mexican beef less competitive in our marketplace. That’s why problems that Canada and Mexico have complained of to the WTO are happening!” says R-CALF CEO Bill Bullard. He tells Brownfield Ag News says there is less demand for foreign products in the U.S. when consumers can choose domestic food products.

Bullard says the U.S. should appeal the WTO ruling that the revised COOL rule still discriminates against beef from Canadian and Mexican and that the “U.S. cattle lobby” says will result in trade retaliation.

“It is a ‘sky is going to fall’ argument,” Bullard tells Brownfield, “We think it is baseless. We think the United States has every right to implement country of origin labeling. We think we have the tools to address any concerns that the World Trade Organization brings regarding our trade obligations.”

Bullard says the U.S. should not allow a foreign international tribunal – the WTO – to make decisions about what happens here. He adds that if cattle producers want prices to remain high, COOL should be expanded to include restaurants. Right now, it only applies to retail sales.

Bullard says the WTO decision “runs afoul of U.S. court decisions” on COOL.

AUDIO: Interview with Bill Bullard (4:30 mp3)

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