

Senate Passes Spending Bill

On Jan. 22, the Senate passed the omnibus appropriations bill, which included a two-year delay of mandatory country-of-origin labeling (sometimes referred to as COL or COOL). After weeks of debate, the final package passed

by a vote of 65 to 28.

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) supported passage of the bill. The National Farmers Union (NFU) expressed disappointment in the bill's passage.

"This brings great relief to cattlemen who were worried that desperately needed agriculture appropriations might be delayed," said Eric Davis, Bruneau, Idaho, cow-calf producer and former NCBA president. "We're all thankful that

Senate democrats recognized the importance of getting this budget package done."

Following the Dec. 23, 2003, announcement of the first-ever case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in the United States, cattlemen have been focused on animal health issues and reopening export markets. "These priorities can't be put off while the nation has more debate on country-of-origin labeling," Davis said.

"I am appalled that this attack on the country-of-origin food labeling law was not debated in public," said NFU President Dave Frederickson, who said the outcome would not be the final push to implement mandatory country-of-origin labeling by the end of the year. He said NFU would be working with country-of-origin labeling supporters in Congress to make sure it showed up again in other must-pass legislative vehicles in 2004.

The subject of country-of-origin labeling is predicted to be one of the hot issues discussed at the 2004 Cattle Industry Convention and Trade Show. Visit the real-time coverage Web site provided by Angus Productions Inc. (API) for updates on this issue. The Web site, www.4cattlemen.com, is sponsored by Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc.

For more on country-of-origin labeling, visit API's topic site at www.countryoforiginlabeling.info. It is not the purpose of this Web site to take a stance on the issue, and posts don't necessarily reflect the opinions of the American Angus Association or API. The purpose of the Web site is to serve as a gateway to information regarding the current interpretation of legislation, to inform you of meeting dates that relate to country-of-origin labeling and to make you aware of current actions being taken by cattlemen across the country. We will share the various viewpoints on the issue and the underlying reasons for those viewpoints. By doing so, API hopes to equip you with the information you need to make decisions and to conform to the law.



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