

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**November 25, 2003**

### **Texas Ag Groups Applaud Postponement Of COOL Regulations**

Congressional action today postpones implementing the mandatory country-of-origin labeling law (COOL) until September 2006. The law, originally scheduled to go into effect September 2004, calls for certain commodities such as beef, pork and fresh and frozen vegetables to be labeled as to their country of origin.

Texas ag groups have serious concerns about mandatory COOL. Estimates show the law will place tremendous costs on the beef industry without providing any benefits to producers or consumers.

Leaders with the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, Texas Cattle Feeders Association, Texas Pork Producers Association and Texas Produce Association welcomed the action and expressed appreciation to Congress for giving the industry time to seek alternatives to the government-mandated program.

According to TSCRA President Bob McCan, "This will give us breathing space to secure much-needed changes to the law. As the law reads now, it would have devastating financial consequences to the beef industry."

TCFA Chairman Ernie Morales added, "The delay will allow us to work on a market-driven labeling program that will be beneficial to producers and consumers rather than being a cost burden to the entire beef industry."

McCan, Morales, Ken Horton with the Texas Pork Producers Association and John McClung, president of the Texas Produce Association, lauded the leadership of Rep. Henry Bonilla, (R-Texas) on COOL. Rep. Bonilla, chairman of the House subcommittee on agricultural appropriations, initially introduced an amendment to the agricultural spending bill to postpone implementation of COOL and led the effort in passing the final language. They also commended the work of House Ag Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.) and Ranking Minority Member Charles Stenholm (D-Texas) on the issue.

(end)

**For information:**

**Crystal Bryant at TSCRA (800) 242-7820**

**Burt Rutherford at TCFA (800) 299-8232**

**Ken Horton at TPPA (512) 453-0615**