COOL Facts

Mike Johanns on COOL: "The administration position is a voluntary approach," Johanns replied when pressed on his labeling views. "As secretary, I would support the administration position."

THE FACTS ARE:

*Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) is product labeling that tells consumers what country their food came from.

*Many states, including North Dakota, and over 30 countries have some form of COOL.

*A recent poll by Public Citizen found that 85% of consumers favor Mandatory COOL for meat, seafood, and produce.

*Just because beef products have the USDA label, does not necessarily mean that the beef is USA born, raised, fed and slaughtered. Many North Dakota cattle producers feel that COOL will benefit them in the market place.

*Congress, in the 2002 Farm Bill, made COOL the law. Opponents of COOL have prevented consumers from knowing where their beef comes from, ever since.

*Delayed implementation of COOL has occurred twice.

*International agribusiness does not like labeling laws. They want the cheapest commodities on a worldwide basis without having to report to customers where the food comes from.

*Country of origin labeling costs virtually nothing. According to the Florida Department of Agriculture, a state where COOL for producehas been law for more than 20 years, it costs supermarkets 1or 2 man-hours per store a week - that's far less than one cent per household per week.

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CAFTA FACTS

Central Americal Free Trade Agreement

*Mike Johanns says ""CAFTA is good for America's farmers, it is good for America's ranchers and it's good for the entire American economy--and we are going to fight to get it approved."

THE FACTS ARE:

*CAFTA is modeled after NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement). NAFTA has been in effect for 11 years and all involved countries, including the United States, have seen the detrimental effects on commodities and jobs. CAFTA would extend this failed model to six more countries.

*Chapter 11 of NAFTA grants private corporations the right to sue local, state and federal governments when laws are passed that affect a corporation's ability to make a profit--even if those laws protect the health and safety of citizens. The Canadian Cattlemen for Free Trade have filed a Chapter 11 case against the United States on the grounds that the embargo against Canadian beef takes away Canadian beef producers' ability to make a profit. This is also in CAFTA.

*The so called *sugar deal*, only protects our sugar producers and markets for the next 18 months or, until the next FarmBill goes into effect. This leaves the fate of the US sugar market up to the six Central American Countries in the agreement.

*CAFTA will further threaten family farmers and ranchers by continuing to favor corporate agribusinesses that flood local markets with cheap imports that keep commodity prices low.

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