

SB 2215

LINDA LINGLE
Governor



SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DUANE K. OKAMOTO
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512

LATE

TESTIMONY OF SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 2008
2:45 P.M.

SENATE BILL NO. 2215
RELATING TO MEAT

Chairperson Tokuda and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill No. 2215 relating to the country of origin labeling (COOL) of beef, pork, poultry and lamb. The Department of Agriculture believes that COOL is important for both our producers and consumers but prefers that it is handled at the federal level rather than the state implementing its own law.

National COOL legislation has already been passed and implemented for wild and farm raised shellfish. Implementation for other commodities covered under this Act is supposed to start on September 30, 2008.



**TESTIMONY OF THE STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL
TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE, 2008**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. NO. 2215, RELATING TO MEAT.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

DATE: Thursday, January 31, 2008 **TIME:** 2:45 PM

LOCATION: State Capitol Room 224
Deliver to: Committee Clerk, Room 218, 1 copy

TESTIFIER(S): Mark J. Bennett, Attorney General
Or Margaret S. Ahn, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Tokuda and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General opposes this measure because of its similarity to a federal law and regulations that are supposed to be implemented later this year. Not only could the federal law and regulations render this bill unnecessary, but the State would also be prohibited from passing any law that conflicts with the federal law under the United States Constitution's Supremacy Clause.

This bill seeks to impose a country of origin labeling requirement for foreign meat produced outside of the United States. Proposed section 148-B(b) requires that meat, including packages containing a blending of foreign and domestic product, that is produced outside of the United States and offered for retail sale in Hawaii, must be labeled with the country of origin. This bill's proposed section 148-B(c) requires that products for which retail vendors cannot determine the country of origin must be labeled "country of origin unknown."

The federal 2002 Farm Bill similarly requires retailers to provide country of origin labeling for certain foods, including certain meats. Implementation of the relevant portions of this law has been delayed, currently to September 30, 2008.

We respectfully suggest the Committee hold this bill in order to first consider the effect, if any, of the federal law and regulations governing the same subject.



Hawaii Farm Bureau
F E D E R A T I O N

2343 Rose Street, Honolulu, HI 96819
PH: (808)848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921

January 31, 2008

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

TESTIMONY ON SB 2215
RELATING TO MEAT

Chair Tokuda and committee members:

My name is Alan Takemoto, Executive Director, of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, which is the largest non-profit general agriculture organization representing approximately 1,600 farm and ranch family members statewide.

The Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBF) supports the intent of SB 2215, which requires grocers to list the country of origin of all beef, pork, poultry, and lamb sold. We believe that it is important to notify the consumer what country or origin their food is coming from. As food safety certification is being demanded by the consumers and tracing the food products down to the farm operation is becoming a requirement, we would agree that we need to know where our meats and other agricultural products are coming from, especially when it is coming in from other countries.

We also recognize the difficulty of tracing the meat when it goes through the slaughterhouse, meat packing houses and processing plants and then to the retail grocers. Labeling may be difficult as the meat product may also go through several different states. However, the country of origin labeling concept would help the U.S. and local agricultural industry in Hawaii by encouraging our local residents to buy local.

Thank you.

AHW, 01-31-08 at 2:45 pm

To Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair English and members of the Senate Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs Committee

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2215, RELATING TO MANDATORY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELING FOR MEATS

In this era of globalized agribusiness, perilously high rates of imported foods and grocery price spikes of 17% over the past year, this country-of-origin labeling law is one piece of legislation needed to support Hawai`i's agricultural industry.

The National Farmers Union believes that domestic producers deserve the right to distinguish their high quality products from imported ones. We also believe that consumers deserve the right to know where their food comes from.

In the 2002 Farm Bill, Congress passed a law requiring mandatory country-of-origin labeling for agriculture products. Five years later, that law still has not been implemented by the USDA. Because the federal government has chosen not to act, we are asking the state to please do so.

aloha kakou,
Shawn James Leavey
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COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
Senator J. Kalani English, Vice Chair

from Animal Rights Hawai'i
for hearing on Thursday, January 31, 2008
2:45 pm, Conference Room 224
re: SB2215
position: support

Chair Tokuda and Members of the Committee:

We support state action on implementing COOL (country of origin labeling) on meat sold in Hawai'i. The Bush administration has delayed federal implementation of COOL for several years, so we feel it important the the State of Hawai'i take the lead on this.

For several years up to 20,000 pigs per year have been brought to Hawai'i from Canada just for slaughter. These pigs have endured thousands of miles of transport from Alberta, Canada, by truck and sea, hundreds dying en route, simply to be killed here at the Hawai'i Livestock Cooperative on O'ahu. Their corpses are then labelled "Island Produced" and sold to local supermarkets, luaus and restaurants.

This is a lie and dupes consumers who believe that they are supporting local farmers.

Please proceed with this legislaton which will address consumer fraud and make it easier for Hawai'i's consumers to make informed choices.

Cathy Goeggel
Director, Research and Investigations
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