
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CANADIAN PORK COUNCIL REACTS TO VOLUNTARY PRODUCT OF USA ANNOUNCEMENT

March 13, 2024 (Ottawa, Ont.) - The Canadian Pork Council is disappointed comments from the pork industry on both sides of the border were not taken into consideration in the finalized rule, announced Monday by United States Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, mandating that all meat products sold with a "Product of the U.S.A." label be derived from animals raised, slaughtered, and processed in the United States.

The new policy, commonly known as voluntary country of origin labelling (V-COOL), will come into effect by January 1, 2026.

"The integration within our industry on both sides of the border has been a point of pride for us, and for our American counterparts at the National Pork Producers Council," said CPC chair René Roy. "These changes, like the original mandatory policy successfully challenged at the World Trade Organization, will have an impact on trade in the integrated Canada/U.S. market, and we are again expressing our disappointment that the final rule did not consider the concerns expressed by Canada and by our American colleagues."

The original law, which sought to enforce mandatory country of origin labelling, was repealed by the United States Congress in 2015 following a 2014 ruling by the WTO that found the labelling regulations discriminated against Canada and Mexico. Canada and Mexico were granted the authority to impose retaliatory tariffs if the original country of origin labelling restrictions were not removed.

"Our comments, and the comments from our American counterparts, were aligned, because the Canadian and American pork industries serve as an example of international trade that benefits both sides. This regulation will force division into an aligned industry that will only increase costs for producers, for processors, and ultimately for consumers.

"Labelling these regulations as "voluntary", when the regulation is very prescriptive on what must happen with labelling, will have an impact," Roy added. "We are pleased the Government of Canada has already indicated it will be looking at options to correct the protectionist nature of these proposed regulations, and we ask the federal government to be vigilant to protect our market access."

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About the Canadian Pork Council:

The CPC is the national voice for pork producers in Canada. A federation of nine provincial pork organizations representing more than 7,000 farms, the organization plays a leadership role in achieving and maintaining a dynamic and prosperous Canadian pork sector. The CPC serves its membership through national and international advocacy efforts as well as through the development and implementation of initiatives, such as food safety, animal care and health, traceability, environment and sustainability, international trade and nutrition.

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