



June 26 Update

Senate Agriculture Committee Ranking Member introduces voluntary meat labeling bill – Senate Agriculture Committee Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., introduced legislation to allow for voluntary country of origin labeling (COOL) of meat while the Chair of the Committee Senator Pat Roberts, R-Kan., called for full repeal. This week the committee held a hearing on country-of-origin labeling and all but one witness called for full repeal. California Farmers Union and California Dairy Campaign strongly support mandatory country-of-origin labeling of meat so farmers can distinguish their products and consumers can make an informed choice. CFU Vice President George Davis traveled to Washington, DC last month as part of a National Farmers Union targeted legislative fly-in to call on lawmakers to continue mandatory COOL of meat. “Despite strong public support for food labeling, some members of Congress are eager to repeal this law. NFU vehemently opposes repeal,” said NFU President Roger Johnson. “We thank Senator Stabenow for her leadership and insight on this issue. While NFU is not pleased that Congress is intervening in the WTO process, this approach is much improved from the House bill that would repeal COOL even beyond the scope of the WTO dispute,” he said.

Congress passes TPA and sends legislation to President – This week Congress passed Trade Promotion Authority and Trade Adjustment Assistance in separate measures and the TPA bill has now been sent to President Obama. The Senate passed TPA by a vote of 62 to 37 with Senator Boxer voting against the measure while Senator Feinstein supported it. In response NFU President Johnson said, “The U.S. trade deficit for last year totaled over \$500 billion, and that deficit is largely due to these flawed ‘free trade’ agreements.” “Our trade deficit is a net drag on our economy by a full 3 percent, which means lost jobs and lower wages for working Americans, the House had the right approach last week when it rejected this misguided measure” he said. Johnson noted that despite today’s vote, TPA is not a done deal. NFU will continue its fight against this legislation in each of its forms and for a more balanced approach to trade. “NFU will continue to work for a trade policy that prioritizes domestic food production and goods supply chains instead of flawed policies that force family farmers and ranchers out of business, depress wages and export too many of our best jobs,” he said.

Water Legislation Introduced: California Rep. Valadao introduced legislation, H.R. 2898 the “Western Water and American Food Security Act of 2015” this week. The bill would make more water available in California and bordering Western states. The legislation would require federal agencies to use current and reliable data when making regulatory decisions and provide federal regulators with direction and flexibility to capture water during periods of greater precipitation. Original cosponsors of Congressman Valadao’s legislation from California include Reps. Ken Calvert (CA-42), Paul Cook (CA-08), Jim Costa (CA-16), Jeff Denham (CA-10), Duncan Hunter (CA-50), Darrell E. Issa (CA-49), Stephen Knight (CA-25), Dough LaMalfa (CA-01), Kevin McCarthy (CA-23), Tom McClintock (CA-04), Devin Nunes (CA-22), Dana Rohrabacher (CA-48), Edward R. Royce (CA-39) and Mimi Walters (CA-45).