

# Iowa Cattle COOL Guidelines and Recommendations

**M**andatory Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL) will begin Sept. 30, 2008, and cattle producers must be prepared when the law is implemented. Cattle present in the United States on or before July 15, 2008 that remain continuously in the country are considered to be of U.S. origin. Currently cattle imported directly for slaughter are identified at the time of border crossing. Feeder cattle imported from either Mexico or Canada are permanently identified with a brand. However, with mandatory COOL, buyers may still request a signed affidavit from the seller declaring the origin of the cattle. The following guidelines provide a practical method for sellers to be able to document the origin of the cattle if audited by the USDA or a buyer. This allows the seller to sign an affidavit of origin with confidence.

## **Foundation:**

- Producers maintain auditable records at their farm or ranch using existing management records and information.
- Sellers self-declare the product category (country where born and raised) with a signed affidavit passed to the buyer.
- Animals can be group identified if they are of the same product category. Animals of a different product category must be identified or penned separately.

## **Recommended Documentation**

Producers' existing on-farm records are sufficient to document animal origin and movement for a given time period such as a year or quarter. These records include the following:

- Beginning inventory
- Additions (births, inshipments,\* purchases,\* leased,\* or customer cattle\*)
- Removals (sales, deaths, outshipments)
- Ending inventory

*\*Additions from other sites must have adequate documentation (signed affidavits) of origin.*

Examples of operational and financial records that can be used include:

- Balance sheet, income statement, other financial records
- Scale tickets and purchase and sales receipts
- Closeout records and/or feed records or bills
- Health papers, vaccination or other health treatment records or receipts
- Shipping records
- Calving books

Operations should also prepare a brief written statement of standard operating procedures (SOP) for record keeping, animal or group identification methods, or other documenting procedures that are followed as part of their normal management system. This proactive measure communicates to employees and buyers how records of origin are kept on your farm.

## **Examples of how the Iowa Cattle COOL Guidelines could be used:**

- Cowherds maintain inventory records at home and sell calves with a signed affidavit stating that the calves were born in the United States
- The marketing agent (if used) passes signatures to the buyer or keeps the signed forms from sellers on file and records the seller's name or number on the buyer's invoice and issues the buyer a signed affidavit stating the origin of the cattle.
- The feedlot or stocker operation maintains the signatures on file for any additions to the feedlot and develops a standard operating procedure for identifying cattle by product category. The current requirement to brand imported cattle simplifies identification. However, if the normal management procedure is for the feedlot to tag cattle, those of a different category could have a different colored tag.
- When the cattle are sold, the seller should notify the buyer as to the product category on the signed affidavit. For example, "Orange tag born in Mexico, green tag born in Canada, and white tag born in U.S."

The Iowa Cattle COOL Guidelines were originally prepared by the Iowa COOL Coalition, representing the following organizations: the Iowa Farm Bureau, Iowa Cattlemen's Association, Iowa Pork Producers Association, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, and the Iowa Pork Industry Center and Iowa Beef Center at Iowa State University.

## Examples for cow-calf and seedstock herds

suggested information	supporting materials
Beginning and ending inventory by class, e.g., cows, bulls, bred heifers, virgin heifers, calves on cows, weaned calves, etc.	Production records, balance sheet, vaccination and health records or bills, feed records or bills, Beef Quality Assurance certification
Individual breeding stock identification	Eartag, brand, tattoo
Number of calves born	Calving book, eartag calves
Number and description of incoming cattle by designation. Designate separately.	Purchase receipts, scale tickets, identification system
Number of sales or removals	Sales receipts, scale tickets, income statement
Record of deaths or missing cattle	Note in production records
Pen and pasture information	Site map with capacities

### Additional steps:

Individual identification of calves with visual or electronic tags.

Have veterinarian Green Tag calves and have numbers on file at IVMA.

## Examples for cattle feedlots and stocker operations

suggested information	supporting materials
Develop standard operating procedure for group or individual identification to assure separation by designation	Description of eartag system, plan for noting additions to a group (tag color, notch in tag), method for handling non-U.S. cattle
Beginning and ending inventories	Production records, balance sheet, feed records
Number and description of incoming cattle by designation.	Purchase receipts, scale tickets, identification system
Number of sales or removals	Sales receipts, scale tickets, income statement
Record of deaths or missing cattle	Note in production records
Pen and pasture information	Site map with capacities

### Additional steps:

Do not mix cattle of different designations in the same group.

Individual identification of cattle with visual or electronic tags.

For more information on COOL, check out the Iowa Beef Center and USDA COOL web pages online:

<http://www.iowabeefcenter.org/content/COOL.htm>

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/cool.htm>

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