



Take Action to Protect Your Right to Know!

Congress Debates Whether to Overturn Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) and Preempt State Mandated GMO Labeling

By Patty Lovera, Food and Water Watch

When the Senate comes back to Washington in September 2015, they will consider two critical issues that determine how much information we get about our food. This summer, the House did the wrong thing and passed bad bills on both Country of Origin labeling and GMO labeling. Now we need the Senate to stand up for consumers' right to know.

In June, the House voted to repeal the rules for mandatory country of origin labels (COOL) for chicken, beef and pork. The House vote followed the World Trade Organization's decision that said labeling which country our food comes from is a trade barrier. But rather than wait to see how the WTO decision process plays out, the House voted to repeal the U.S. law that requires these popular common-sense labels.

And now the Senate has a bad bill of its own that would make country of origin labeling for most beef and pork voluntary. A voluntary labeling program effectively means no labeling at all, since most meat companies and retailers don't want to provide consumers with this information. We had to fight for years to make labeling mandatory for exactly that reason.

On GMO labeling, in July the House passed the "Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act," which many people think is better described as the Denying Americans the Right to Know (DARK) Act. This bill not only blocks states from requiring mandatory GMO labeling (including preempting laws already passed in Vermont, Maine and Connecticut) but also blocks state and local governments from enacting regulations or bans on planting GMO crops.

The Grocery Manufacturers Association, an industry group that represents Monsanto, Nestlé, Dow and Pepsi, is pushing this bill because it would let them continue to keep quiet about their production and use of GMO foods and stop the momentum the grassroots movement for GMO labeling has created at the state level.

Call the Congressional switchboard at (202) 224-3121

Ask to be connected to your Senators. Tell them to:

- 1.) Vote against any effort to repeal or weaken COOL (including making labeling voluntary)
- 2.) Vote against the Senate version of HR 1599, the Safe and Affordable Food Labeling Act (aka DARK Act)

We all have the right to know about what is in our food and where it comes from!



WINNERS - FOOD SOVEREIGNTY PRIZE
Cella Langer and Emmet Fisher
Oxheart Farm Mt. Horeb, WI



WINNER - FOOD SOVEREIGNTY PRIZE
Carsten Thomas
Moorhead, Minnesota

FAMILY FARM DEFENDERS HONORS

Winners of The 2015 John Kinsman Beginning Farmer Food Sovereignty Prize at UW-Madison Award Ceremony

Family Farm Defenders was pleased to celebrate the winners of this year's John Kinsman Beginning Farmer Food Sovereignty Prize at an award dinner held at the UW-Madison's Pyle Center on Sat. March 14th. Over 100 people attended this year's ceremony, including John Kinsman's widow, Jean, and many of their extended family.

Marty Strange, co-founder of the Center for Rural Affairs and author of the book, *Family Farming: a New Economic Vision*, gave the keynote address titled "Family Farming - From Deep Roots the Remnant Restores." Mr. Strange was introduced by UW Prof. Jack Kloppenburg, who gave an inspirational update on the growing success of the Open Source Seed Initiative (OSSI) which he helped officially launch last year.

Over 30 farmers were nominated from across the U.S. for this year's John Kinsman prize, making it particularly competitive. This year's winners included Carsten Thomas from Moorhead, MN and Emmet Fisher and Cella Langer from Mt. Horeb, WI. Carsten operates a diverse organic farm in the Red River Valley, honoring Native food heritage, and also offers many hands-on environmental education programs. Cella and Emmet own Oxheart Farm producing food for farmers markets and a community supported agriculture (CSA) program. Cella & Emmet also manage the Farley Center's Farm Incubator and Land Link program outside Verona, WI. Both of this year's winners were on hand with their families to accept the \$2,000 award in person, as well as, a local food fair trade gift basket.

The Beginning Farmer Food Sovereignty Prize is named after FFD founder and longtime president, John Kinsman, who dedicated his life to advocating for family farming and to promoting food sovereignty. John passed away in Jan. 2014, and Family Farm Defenders has been proud to continue this award in his honor and to further his legacy.

Previous prize winners of the prize include in 2011:

Lindsey Morris Carpenter of Grassroots Farm, near Monroe, WI, and Daniel and Hannah Miller of Easy Yoke Farm near Millville MN. In 2012: Nancy and Jeff Kirstein, Good Earth Farm, Lennox SD and Tracy and Dick Vinz, Olden Produce, Ripon, WI In 2014: Blain Snipstal of Five Seeds Farm near Sparks, MD and Jed Schenkier and Will Pool of Loud Grade Produce Squad in Chicago, IL.