



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

April 24, 2020

Administrator Paul Kiecker  
Food Safety Inspection Service  
US Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250-3700

Dear Administrator Kiecker,

I believe the announcement by the Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) that it would begin the rulemaking process to alter the definition of the voluntary "Product of USA" label for beef is an important first step for improving the market. Consumers have demonstrated they will pay more for organic or grass-fed beef. Montana and America produce superior beef, and I believe Montana producers would benefit from having more clarity in the supply chain. Requiring beef to be slaughtered inside the United States in order to qualify for the "Product of USA" label is a positive step that will benefit producers as well as consumers wanting to buy safe and high-quality American beef.

A further step to improve the "Product of USA" label should include its application only to beef that is born, raised, and slaughtered in the United States. Montana's expansive border with Canada leads to shared operations and supply chains. Some Montana producers sell feeder cattle into Canada that are then returned to the United States for slaughter. Others buy stock from Canada to build up their herds and keep them around for years. These examples show the complexity of altering the label. These are complex issues, but under "Product of USA" or an equivalent, consumers need to be able to trust that beef labeled USA is not really coming from another country.

To help ensure that these realities are addressed, and the voices of some of the best beef producers in the world are included in your rulemaking process, I request that you hold a public listening session in Montana. The wide variety of producers and organizations representing them here make it an excellent location for such a forum.

If I or my staff can be helpful to publicize this proposed rulemaking process or a future public listening session in Montana, please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff. I look forward to your work on this important rulemaking.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "G. Gianforte".

Greg Gianforte  
Member of Congress