

# WHERE DOES IT ALL COME FROM?

Country of Origin Labeling is an active issue in Congress, and legislators are hashing out new regulations for the latest list of commodities. While these new rules do not apply to restaurants, SYSCO is helping customers understand and prepare for the changes.



**AT SYSCO**, our commitment to food quality is a constant—but one that is always evolving to meet the needs and concerns of our customers. Today more and more consumers—restaurant operators and retail shoppers alike—are demanding to know the origin of the food that they purchase, prepare, serve and consume. Furthermore, when there are options, they want to be able to choose where those foods come from. SYSCO currently assists in this effort by requiring Country of Origin Labeling on imported products and key agricultural products.



Not every product or customer is affected. Processed foods, such as cooked and canned fruits, salad mix or peanuts in a candy bar, are not covered by the new regulations. Also, restaurants, cafeterias and food stands are exempt from these labeling requirements.

Recordkeeping is an essential element of the new regulations. Grocery retailers and suppliers will be required to maintain records for one year from the date of origin. SYSCO has already upgraded its computer system to include country of origin information as part of the invoice for those customers who will need to comply with the new requirements.



Retailers, such as supermarkets, and suppliers have a growing responsibility to provide this information. A Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling law for beef, lamb, pork, fish, perishable commodities and peanuts is set to go into effect in September 2008. The regulation requires retailers to notify customers of the origins of all such commodities with a clear and visible sign on the food item, or on a display or bin in which the item is contained. This is a departure from current regulations, under which a retailer or supplier may remove product from a labeled container and display and sell it without country of origin information.

The ability to make informed purchasing decisions is important to every consumer, whether at the retail or wholesale level. SYSCO is committed to being a part of that process by providing the most complete and accurate information we have at our disposal.

