



# UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

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## **UFA objects to canned and smoked salmon exclusion from Country of Origin Labeling.**

The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service today (yesterday) released the Interim Final Rule on Country of Origin Labeling (COOL).

"United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) strongly objects to the exclusion of canned and smoked salmon products from COOL labeling requirements, as doing so dilutes the effectiveness of this law for consumers and producers of seafood," said UFA Executive Director Mark Vinsel.

UFA worked closely with Senator Lisa Murkowski and Governor Frank Murkowski to secure both Country of Origin and Wild and Farmed labeling of seafood. UFA sought labeling of all product forms of salmon, including canned and smoked salmon, that are not ingredients of a prepared food item.

Canned and smoked salmon were covered under the proposed rule which received 5,600 public comments last winter. UFA objects to the agency's exclusion of these product forms from the final interim rule.

The overwhelming number of public comments showed that consumers want to know where their food comes from and how it is produced. These comments were originally posted on the USDA Country of Origin website ( <http://www.ams.usda.gov/COOL/> ), but were recently removed. The public comment included a detailed comment from Alaska Governor Frank Murkowski with his request, "...that USDA clearly identify canned salmon as a covered commodity under COOL regulations."

Recent years have seen a large influx of salmon into the US from other nations. Canned and smoked salmon make up the bulk of Alaska salmon in the marketplace. By excluding these product forms from the COOL law, consumers may not be informed about the origins

### UFA MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Alaska Crab Coalition • Alaska Draggers Association • Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association • Alaska Trollers Association • Armstrong Keta At-sea Processors Association • Bristol Bay Reserve • Concerned Area "M" Fishermen • Cordova District Fishermen United • Crab Rationalization and Buyback Group • Douglas Island Pink and Chum • Fishing Vessel Owners Association • Groundfish Forum • Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association • Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association • Kodiak Seiners Association • North Pacific Fisheries Association • North Pacific Scallop Cooperative • Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association • Old Harbor Fishermen's Association • Petersburg Vessel Owners Association • Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation • Purse Seine Vessel Owner Association • Seafood Producers Cooperative • Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association • Southeast Alaska Seiners Association • Southeast Alaska Herring Seine Marketing Association • Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association • United Catcher Boats • United Salmon Association • United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters • Valdez Fisheries Development Association • Western Gulf of Alaska Fishermen

or methods of production used for the canned and smoked salmon products they buy. Consumers have a right to such information and many requested just that while Congress debated the issue, and again during the comment period.

UFA believes USDA should respect the wishes of the public and enact COOL legislation for canned and smoked salmon, in addition to those salmon forms already covered in final rule.

"With exclusion from the COOL law of the predominant product form for Alaska salmon, consumers will have no information as to the origins of the canned and smoked salmon they buy. Consumers have the desire and the right to know where these seafood products were produced and their methods of production, just as with other forms of salmon and other seafood," said UFA Executive Director Mark Vinsel.

"UFA thanks the writers of the hundreds of public comments that specifically requested the inclusion of seafood in all product forms. Unfortunately, our requests and the support of our delegation in Washington and our Governor have been ignored, but a 90-day comment period gives us an opportunity for further input."

United Fishermen of Alaska is Alaska's largest commercial fishing trade organization, representing 33 Alaska commercial fishing organizations.

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