



Consumer Federation of America

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CFA Supports Linking National School Lunch Program and Animal ID

Consumer Federation of America supports Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro's inclusion of language in the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee Markup of the FY09 Appropriations bill requiring USDA to purchase meat products for the National School Lunch Program from livestock premises registered through the National Animal Identification System. While CFA believes that an animal ID system should be mandatory rather than voluntary as USDA has suggested, CFA strongly supports Congress taking action to improve traceability of foods that cause foodborne illness.

No company has a right to sell food products to the School Lunch Program. In fact, there is a special responsibility inherent in selling to the Program. This was recognized by the institution of a zero tolerance for both *E. coli* O157:H7 and *Salmonella* in ground beef sold to the School Lunch Program. There is no zero tolerance for *Salmonella* in other ground beef but USDA thought it important to provide extra protection to school children.

CFA recognizes that some cattlemen are loathe to let anyone know how many cattle they own or for anyone to be able to trace animals back to the point of origin. For many years, however, CFA has maintained that producers have a responsibility to be part of a traceability system. When using public money to purchase products to be fed to the nation's children, we cannot think of any excuse whatsoever for not imposing this requirement.

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Consumer Federation of America is a non-profit association of over 300 organizations, with a combined membership of over 50 million Americans. CFA's Food Policy Institute was created in 1999 and engages in research, education and advocacy on food and agricultural policy, agricultural biotechnology, food safety and nutrition.