



Tel: 202-626-8700
Fax: 202-626-8722
50 F Street, NW Suite 900
Washington, DC 20001
www.ncfc.org

July 21, 2015

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner:

The National Council of Farmer Cooperatives (NCFC) urges you to support H.R. 1599, *the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act*, when the legislation is taken up on the House floor later this week.

Since 1929, NCFC has been the voice of America's farmer cooperatives. Our members are regional and national farmer cooperatives, which are in turn comprised of nearly 3,000 local farmer cooperatives across the country. NCFC members also include 26 state and regional councils of cooperatives.

Farmer cooperatives handle, process and market almost every type of agricultural commodity; furnish farm supplies; and provide credit and related financial services, including export financing. Farmer cooperatives also provide over 250,000 jobs, with a total payroll in excess of \$8 billion, and contribute significantly to the economic well-being of rural America.

H.R. 1599 will, for the first time, set a national standard for the labeling of foods from crops developed using biotechnology. By doing this, it will benefit both producers and consumers. For farmers, co-ops and food companies, the bill will provide certainty about labeling standards. This would eliminate the possibility of a 50-state patchwork of labeling laws for genetically modified (GMO) foods that would throw supply chains into disarray and lead to increased costs being passed to the two ends of that chain—the farmer and the consumer.

For the American consumer, H.R. 1599 will expand the options they have at the supermarket. Those who want foods without GMOs would have a new label, verified by a program overseen by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, that provides them with the assurance that they are getting what they are paying for. At the same time, consumers who prioritize other attributes, such as price or quality, will still have the option to purchase those products.

Make no mistake—H.R. 1599 will expand consumer choice and give consumers who want it more information about the food they eat, not less. One need only look to USDA's highly successful Certified Organic Program, on which this new program is based, to see why. Since its inception over 20 years ago, the program has seen the creation of an entirely new market segment and has spurred the creation of thousands of new small businesses. The new labeling program in this bill promises a similar result.

Again, we urge you to vote yes on H.R. 1599, *the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act*, when it comes up for a vote this week.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chuck Conner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chuck Conner
President & CEO