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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 2 ---U.S. Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kans.) cosponsored today legislation that would require meat and meat food products composed wholly or partially of imported meat be labeled as such at all stages of distribution.

Dole points out that the present ruling covers a "rather insignificant portion of the total meat imported." The Federal Meat Inspection Act presently requires only the meat brought into the United States in self-contained packages and sold to the consumer in these same packages be labeled as "imported."

The Kansas Senator explained:

Most imported meat comes into this country in 50 and 60 pound blocks. This meat is labeled as to national origin as long as it remains in these frozen blocks. The general practice, however, is to thaw the blocks, grind the meat, add fat trimmings from domestic beef, and then sell the final product as hamburger. As a result, the housewife who buys the hamburger has no way of determining whether it contains imported meat that has been frozen, and therefore, should not be frozen again.

"This legislation is intended merely as a means of protecting the American consumer," Dole said. "The U.S. Department of Agriculture warns that thawed meat should not be refrozen; Dole said, "but despite this knowledge, we continue to let the American consumer risk refreezing packages of hamburger containing previously thawed, imported meats."