

Country of Origin Labeling on Dispenser Pumps

Labeling dispenser pumps with country of origin data is impractical, and would be overly burdensome with little benefit. Because the U.S. petroleum distribution system is fungible (products are constantly being mixed), it is completely incompatible with country of origin labeling. Such origin data would need to be recalculated every time a pipeline batch moves, a storage tank is filled, and a retail station receives a delivery.

Refineries process a variety of crude oils

Complex refineries in the U.S. are no longer dependent on a particular crude oil source, but are designed to accept a wide range of crude oils that come from numerous countries. Refiners make purchasing decisions based on the crude's chemical properties and the ratios of finished fuels they intend to create. Refiners often exchange crude oils and feedstocks, and blend crude oils based on refinery economics and market conditions. In a refinery, crude oil molecules are separated, broken apart, combined, and blended together. It would be complex and extremely imprecise for a refinery to determine where a particular finished fuel stream originated.

Fuels are further mixed in the distribution system

Fuels from several refineries are mixed together in common tanks in preparation for pipeline shipment. Again at pumping stations along the pipeline, products are transferred in and out of tanks, along the pipeline, constantly mixing with other gasolines of similar quality. The receivers of the products are not concerned with receiving the same molecule they purchased at the front end of the pipeline; they are concerned with receiving a certain volume with specific properties. One batch of gasoline could come several refineries, and originate in numerous countries.

Retailers see further fuel mixing

At the pipeline destination, batches are moved into tanks, along with product remaining from previous batches. The fuel is then piped to a loading rack where ethanol is added, and transferred onto a tank truck destined for a retail station. At the retail station, the fuel is blended with other gasoline from previous deliveries. Thus, at each point of transfer, fuels are mixed. Retail labels listing numerous countries, which need to be changed for every retail delivery, are completely impractical to implement.