

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 6299

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Regarding animal inspections.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Agriculture & Rural Economic Development (originally sponsored by Senators Schoesler, Hatfield and Shin).

**Senate Committee on Agriculture & Rural Economic Development**  
**House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources**

**Background:** The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Animal Health Program is charged with protecting animals and the public from communicable animal diseases. Program officials monitor movement of animals across state lines, set requirements for reporting and controlling diseases, and conduct testing and investigations.

It is generally illegal to bring an animal into Washington without an official certificate of veterinary inspection (CVI) verifying that the animal meets Washington health requirements. Persons importing livestock destined for slaughter within three days after entry are exempt from this requirement.

WSDA may enter animal premises at reasonable times to conduct tests, examinations, or inspections for animal diseases when there is reasonable cause to investigate disease. Interference is illegal. If it is denied access, or an animal owner fails to comply with an agency order, WSDA may apply to a court for a warrant authorizing access.

Cattle must be inspected when ownership is transferred. WSDA officials perform inspections when livestock are consigned to public livestock markets for sale. For private transactions involving fewer than 25 head of cattle, buyers and sellers may jointly complete a self-inspection certificate. The self-inspection process does not involve WSDA inspectors, and information regarding specific transactions is not recorded by the agency.

Livestock brands may be inspected to verify ownership. WSDA issues official brand inspection documents.

**Summary:** To retain an exemption from a CVI requirement, persons importing livestock into Washington for slaughter must deliver the livestock within 12 hours after entry to (1) an approved, inspected feed lot for slaughter; (2) a federally inspected slaughter plant; or (3) a licensed public livestock market for sale and subsequent delivery within 12 hours to (a) an

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approved, inspected feed lot for slaughter; or (b) a federally inspected slaughter plant. WSDA may exempt livestock from this requirement by rule.

WSDA may monitor livestock entering Washington. Persons importing, transporting, receiving, feeding, or housing imported livestock must comply with WSDA requirements and make livestock and related records available for WSDA inspection. The agency may charge a time and mileage fee for inspecting livestock and related records during an investigation. Fees must be deposited into the agricultural local fund and used to carry out animal health functions. WSDA may adopt and enforce implementing rules.

WSDA investigative authority is clarified and modified. The agency may enter property at any reasonable time to investigate whether livestock have been imported in violation of requirements and to conduct tests, examinations, and inspections, take samples, and examine and copy records. Interference is unlawful.

Self-inspection certificates completed after the effective date of the act are no longer satisfactory proof of ownership for cattle. Self-inspection certificates completed before the effective date of the act may continue to be accepted as proof of ownership of cattle, if WSDA determines that the self-inspection certificate, together with other available documentation, sufficiently establishes ownership.

WSDA may adopt rules governing issuance of replacement copies of brand inspection documents and charge a fee of \$25 for copies, which may be increased by rule.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	45	3
House	96	0

**Effective:** June 10, 2010