

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6694

As Passed House:

February 28, 1996

Title: An act relating to microchipping of equine.

Brief Description: Microchipping equine.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture & Agricultural Trade & Development
(originally sponsored by Senators Morton, A. Anderson and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Ecology: 2/22/96 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/28/96, 96-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ECOLOGY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 17 members: Representatives Chandler, Chairman; Koster, Vice Chairman; Chappell, Ranking Minority Member; Linville, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Boldt; Clements; Delvin; R. Fisher; Honeyford; Johnson; Mastin; Murray; Ogden; Regala; Robertson; Rust and Schoesler.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background: State law permits the Department of Agriculture, in consultation with representatives of the ratite industry, to develop by rule a system that provides for the identification of individual ratites through the use of microchipping. Ratites include ostriches and emu. The microchip is to be implanted in the pipping muscle of a chick or the tail muscle of an adult. The microchips used are microcircuit transponders that respond to scanning devices by emitting identification signals.

Summary of Bill: Unless otherwise specified by the Director of Agriculture by rule, a microchip used to identify an individual horse is to be implanted in the nuchal ligament of the horse. A person who removes a microchip implanted in a horse or causes it to be removed, or who also implants or causes the removed chip to be implanted in another horse, with the intent to defraud a subsequent purchaser, is guilty of a gross misdemeanor. The Department of Agriculture may conduct an

investigation of an incident where scars or other marks indicate that a microchip has been removed from a horse.

Microchip implantation locations in other livestock may be specified by rule by the director when requested by an association of producers of such livestock.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 20, 1996.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (1) Horse owners have tried alternatives to hot brands by using lip tatoos and freeze brands. Microchip identification is working well in ratites and provides such an alternative. (2) The bill protects horse owners who use microchip identification by making the removal of the chips a crime and allowing the investigation of removals.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Morton, prime sponsor (in favor).