

ANALYSIS OF HB 2887

House Agriculture & Ecology Committee

February 2, 1998

BACKGROUND:

The state's livestock identification program is administered by the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). The program includes the registration and recording of brands, the inspection of cattle and horses for brands and the collection of brand inspection fees, the issuance of certificates identifying individual horses or cattle, the registration of individual identification symbols for horses and other livestock identification activities. Until July 1, 1998, the fee for inspecting cattle at a mandatory inspection point is set by statute at 75 /head. Beginning July 1, 1998, the fee is reduced to 60 /head. For inspecting horses at these points, the fee is set by the WSDA at not more than \$3/head until July 1, 1998; thereafter, the fee may be not more than \$2.40/head. (Chapter 16.57 RCW.)

Certified Feed Lots; Livestock Markets. The WSDA also administers a licensing program for feed lots and public livestock markets. With certain exceptions, cattle entering or re-entering a certified feed lot must be inspected for brands. Until July 1, 1998, the annual licensing fee for a certified feed lot is \$750. Beginning July 1, 1998, the licensing fee is reduced to \$600. A person operating a certified feed lot must also pay a fee for each head of cattle handled through the feed lot. Until July 1, 1998, the fee is 15 /head. Beginning July 1, 1998, the fee is reduced to 12 /head. (Chapter 16.58 RCW.) For public livestock markets, the licensing fee is based on the daily average gross sales volume of the market. Until July 1, 1998, the licensing fees range from \$150 to \$450; thereafter, the fee range is reduced to \$120 to \$360. The department's responsibilities under the public livestock market statutes include sanitation and disease control. (Chapter 16.65 RCW.)

The fees collected under the statutes for livestock identification, certified feed lots, and public livestock markets are deposited in the Agricultural Local Fund and used for the livestock identification and licensing program.

SUMMARY:

Board. *A state Livestock Identification Board is created. The board is composed of five members appointed by the Governor. It includes one beef producer, one cattle feeder, one dairy producer, one livestock market owner, and one horse producer. The appointments must*

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be made from nominations submitted by organizations representing these groups statewide. Members serve three year terms, although three of the initial appointments are for two year terms to provide staggered terms of office. (Section 2(1).) Members of the board may receive up to \$50/day in compensation and are to receive reimbursement for their travel expenses when carrying out duties as members of the board. (Section 2(4).)

Programs Transferred. The administration of the following programs are transferred from the WSDA to the board: the livestock identification program (Sections 1 - 44); the certified feed lot licensing program (Sections 45 - 59); and the licensing and regulation of public livestock markets (Sections 60 - 94). The WSDA retains jurisdiction under the livestock market statutes regarding certain sanitation, disease control, testing, and inoculation requirements. (Sections 71, 87, and 88.) The board may designate or contract with another entity for registration and recording services or for investigation or inspection work and may hire staff. (Sections 2(2) and 5.) Contracts for livestock identification are exempted from a chapter of state laws governing personal service contracts. (Section 98.) The officers and employees of the board are exempted from the state Civil Service Law. (Section 96.)

Inspections. References to brand- inspection in the livestock statutes are changed to references to livestock- inspection. Inspection is expressly not required for any individual private sale of unbranded dairy breed milk production cattle involving 15 head or less. (Section 18.)

Account. A Livestock Identification Account is created in the state treasury. Monies collected under the livestock identification program and the statutes regulating certified feed lots and public livestock markets are deposited in the account and used by the board. The account is not subject to appropriation. (Section 3.)

Fees. Of the fees used for the livestock identification program and currently scheduled to be reduced on July 1, 1998, only the fee on cattle handled through a certified feed lot is reduced as scheduled. The remainder will not change on that date. (Sections 56 and 99.) The fee for recording a brand and the fee for renewing the brand registration are each increased to \$70 per two year period (from \$25 for the period). The late filing fee for such a renewal is set at \$20. (Sections 4 and 9.)