

Agriculture & Ecology Committee

HB 1984

Brief Description: *Creating the small farm direct marketing assistance program.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Quall, Morris, Barlean, Cooper, Ericksen, Dunshee, Linville, Hatfield, Ruderman, Poulsen, Conway, Lovick and Kagi.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Creates a small farm direct marketing assistance program to assist small farms in direct marketing efforts.*

Hearing Date: *2/23/01*

Staff: *Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).*

Background:

State law designates the Washington State Department of Agriculture as the agency of state government for the administering state agricultural market development programs and activities, both domestic and foreign. These programs are for products of both terrestrial and aquatic farming. To carry out this function, the department has been granted a variety of powers and duties, including those to: study the potential marketability of various agricultural commodities of this state in foreign and domestic trade; promote the sale of Washington's agricultural commodities and products at the site of their production through the development and dissemination of referral maps and other means; encourage and promote those agricultural industries, such as the wine industry, that attract visitors to rural areas in which other agricultural commodities and products are produced and are, or could be, made available for sale; promote the establishment and use of public markets in this state for the sale of Washington's agricultural products; and publish and disseminate related information to interested citizens. (RCW 43.23.035.) In 1985, the Legislature expressed its intention that these powers and duties be exercised without duplicating established private sector marketing efforts. (Section 1, Chapter 159, Laws of 1985.)

It is the Director of Agriculture's duty to investigate and promote the economical and

efficient distribution of farm products. This may expressly include: aiding producers and consumers in establishing economical and efficient methods of distribution; promoting more direct business relations by organizing cooperative societies of buyers and sellers and by other means reducing the cost and waste in the distribution of farm products; and investigating the possibilities of direct dealings between producer and consumer by parcel post and other mail order methods. (RCW 15.64.010.)

Summary of Bill:

A small farm direct marketing assistance program is created to assist small farms in direct marketing efforts. The program must: assist small farms comply with federal, state, and local rules as they apply to direct marketing; assist in developing infrastructure to increase direct marketing opportunities for small farms; provide information on such opportunities; promote localized food production systems; increase access to information for farmers wishing to sell farm products directly to consumers; identify and help reduce market barriers facing small farms in direct marketing; assist in developing and submitting proposals for grant programs; and perform other assistance functions.

The Director of Agriculture must employ a small farm direct marketing assistant and must by December 1, 2006, issue a report to the Legislature on the accomplishments of the program.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Available.*

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

Termination Date: *These requirements and authorities expire July 1, 2007.*