
**Agriculture & Ecology
Committee**

SB 6471

Brief Description: Requiring labeling of the origin of fruits and vegetables grown in the United States or grown in Washington state.

Sponsors: Senators Honeyford, Rasmussen, Johnson, Sheahan, Stevens, Swecker, Shin, Parlette, Deccio, McCaslin, Hochstatter, Gardner, Hewitt, Spanel, Kastama, Regala, Eide, Oke, Hale and Keiser.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires businesses offering fresh fruit or vegetables grown in the United States or grown in Washington for retail sale to display placards indicating that the product was either "Grown in United States" or "Grown in Washington."
- Establishes monetary penalties for violations.

Hearing Date: 2/25/02

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background:

A rule of the Washington Fryer Commission requires all chickens commonly referred to as fryers, broilers, or fryer roasters that are offered for sale in this state to be labeled as to the state of origin. This rule took effect in 1957. (WAC 16-512-110(1).) The rule suggests, but does not require, that the label include an outline of the state of origin and provides as an example a "this FRYER grown in WASHINGTON" label on an outline of the state of Washington. (WAC 16-512-110(4).) A provision of the state's Uniform Washington Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, currently requires all retail sales of fresh or frozen lamb products imported from another country to be labeled as to the country of origin. This requirement also applies to live lambs imported from another country but slaughtered in the United States. (RCW 69.04.940.)

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of the U. S. Public Health Service samples individual lots of domestically produced and imported commodities and food products and

analyzes them for pesticide residues to enforce the tolerances set by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency. Although processed foods are included in the sampling, the emphasis is on unwashed, whole (unpeeled), raw agricultural commodities. Domestic samples are collected close to their point of production and import samples are taken at their point of entry into U. S. commerce. A May 1997 report to the President of the United States entitled *Food Safety From Farm to Table: A National Food Safety Initiative*, cited a doubling of imports from 1992 to 1997 with no real increase in inspectors.

Summary of Bill:

Businesses offering for retail sale to consumers fresh fruit or vegetables that have been grown in the United States or grown in Washington must place a placard on the bin, shelf, or other location the product is displayed that indicates that the product was either "Grown in United States" or "Grown in Washington." Placards are not required if the product was grown outside of the United States. Placards are also not required if each item in the bin, shelf, or other location contains a sticker or label that indicates where the fruit or vegetable product was grown.

Penalties are provided if a store or other retail location is found to be in violation of this placarding requirement. For the first violation at a location in a calendar year, the Department of Agriculture must issue a warning. For a second violation for the same location in the same calendar year, the Department may issue a civil fine of up to \$250. For the third and subsequent violations for the same location in the same calendar year, the Department may issue a civil fine of up to \$1000.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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