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**HOUSE BILL 2500**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2016 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Caldier, Blake, Young, Dent, and Wilson

AN ACT Relating to creating a preferred alternative for the placement and sale of impounded livestock; and amending RCW 16.24.110, 16.24.120, 16.24.130, and 16.24.150.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 16.24.110 and 1989 c 286 s 11 are each amended to read as follows:

Any horses, mules, donkeys, or cattle of any age running at large or trespassing in violation of this chapter ((~~16.24 RCW as now or hereafter amended~~)), which are not restrained as provided by RCW 16.04.010, are declared to be a public nuisance. The sheriff of the county where an animal is found and the nearest brand inspector shall ((~~have authority to~~)) impound such animals ((~~which are not restrained as provided by RCW 16.04.010~~)) in accordance with RCW 16.24.120.

**Sec.**  RCW 16.24.120 and 2012 c 25 s 5 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Upon taking possession of any livestock at large contrary to the provisions of this chapter, or any unclaimed livestock submitted or impounded, by any person, at any public livestock market or any other facility approved by the director of the department of agriculture, the sheriff or brand inspector ((~~shall cause it to be transported to and~~)) must impound the animal in accordance with subsection (2) of this section.

(2) The sheriff or brand inspector must prioritize placing impounded livestock in the custody of any person meeting the criteria specified in (a) of this subsection. If no suitable placement is available under (a) of this subsection, the animal must be impounded in accordance with (b) of this subsection.

(a) A person willing and able to care for an animal impounded under this section may request placement of the animal in the person's custody pending return of the animal to its owner or sale of the animal. The sheriff or brand inspector must grant the placement request if:

(i) The person has a suitable facility to house or keep the animal;

(ii) The person agrees to provide all appropriate services for the animal, including feeding, watering, and veterinary care, at the person's own expense;

(iii) The person allows the county, the department of agriculture, the brand inspector, and others accompanying any county or state official reasonable access to the animal while it is in the person's custody; and

(iv) The official or agency designated by the county to administer regulations pertaining to animals or livestock approves placement of the animal with the person. Approval of the placement may not be unreasonably withheld by the official or agency.

(b) If no suitable placement is available under (a) of this subsection, the animal must be impounded at the nearest public livestock market licensed under chapter 16.65 RCW or at ((~~such place as~~)) any other facility approved by the director of the department of agriculture.

(3) If the sheriff has impounded an animal in accordance with this section, ((~~he or she shall forthwith~~)) the sheriff must notify the nearest brand inspector of the department of agriculture, who ((~~shall~~)) must examine the animal and, by brand, tattoo, or other identifying characteristic, ((~~shall~~)) attempt to ascertain the ownership thereof.

**Sec.**  RCW 16.24.130 and 1995 c 374 s 69 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The brand inspector shall cause to be published once in a newspaper published in the county where ((~~the~~)) an animal impounded in accordance with RCW 16.24.120 was found, a notice of the impounding. If no newspaper is published in the county, copies of the notice must be posted in four commonly frequented places in the county.

(2) The notice shall state:

((~~(1)~~)) (a) A description of the animal, including brand, tattoo, or other identifying characteristics;

((~~(2)~~)) (b) When and where found;

((~~(3)~~)) (c) Where impounded; ((~~and~~

~~(4)~~)) (d) That if unclaimed, the animal will be sold at a public livestock market sale ((~~or~~)), at other public sale((~~,~~)) or if applicable, to any person granted custody of the animal under RCW 16.24.120(2); and

(e) The date of such a sale((~~: PROVIDED, That if no newspaper shall be published in such county, copies of the notice shall be posted at four commonly frequented places therein~~)).

(3) If the animal is marked with a brand or tattoo ((~~which~~)) that is registered with the director of agriculture, the brand inspector, on or before the date of publication or posting of the notice of impoundment, shall send a copy of the notice to the owner of record by registered mail.

**Sec.**  RCW 16.24.150 and 1995 c 374 s 70 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) If no person ((~~shall claim the~~)) claims an impounded animal within ten days after the date of publication or posting of the notice((~~, it shall~~)) of impoundment in accordance with RCW 16.24.130, the animal must be sold:

(a) To any person who meets the criteria of subsection (2) of this section;

(b) At the next succeeding public livestock market sale to be held at the sales yard where the animal is impounded((~~, provided that in the director's discretion the department of agriculture may otherwise cause the animal to be sold~~)); or

(c) At a public sale as directed by the director of the department of agriculture.

(2) Any person who is granted custody of an animal under RCW 16.24.120(2)(a) has a right of first refusal to purchase the animal if it is not claimed within ten days after issuance of a notice of impoundment. To exercise the right of first refusal, the person must pay all costs of transportation, advertising, and care of the animal incurred during the animal's impoundment and the value of the animal as determined by the department of agriculture. The right of first refusal must be exercised within ten days or the animal must be sold at public sale as provided in subsection (1)(b) or (c) of this section.

((~~The legislature intends this to be a clarification of existing law; therefore, this section shall have retroactive effect as of December 1, 1994.~~))

**--- END ---**