

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6382

As of January 30, 2020

Title: An act relating to state-inspected commercial custom meat facilities.

Brief Description: Concerning state-inspected commercial custom meat facilities.

Sponsors: Senators Ericksen and Takko.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks: 1/28/20.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires a person operating a state-inspected commercial custom meat facility to obtain a license from the Washington Department of Agriculture (WSDA).
- Requires WSDA to do a pre-license inspection prior to the initial issuance of a license.
- Allows operators of custom meat facilities and state-inspected commercial custom meat facilities to sell prepackaged inspected meat to any person.
- Requires WSDA to inspect state-inspected commercial custom meat facilities to allow for the selling of state-inspected meat in intrastate commerce while safeguarding consumers from potential harm.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, WATER, NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

Background: Washington State Department of Agriculture. WSDA Animal Health Program is charged with protecting animals and the public from communicable animal diseases. The WSDA Food Safety Program licenses custom meat businesses to slaughter or process uninspected meat food animals such as cattle, sheep, goats, and swine for the sole consumption of the owner.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Custom Meat. Custom farm slaughterers, custom slaughtering establishments, and custom meat facilities must be licensed by WSDA. Before issuing any license to operate as a custom farm slaughterer, custom slaughtering establishment, and a custom meat facility, WSDA must inspect the facility and equipment. Custom farm slaughterers are mobile slaughter units to prepare meat food animals for the consumption of the owner of the animals, done on the owner's farm or at an approved site. A custom slaughtering establishment is a fixed facility to slaughter meat food animals for the owner. A custom meat facility is a facility operated by a person licensed to prepare uninspected meat for the sole consumption of the owner. Operators of custom meat facilities may also prepare and sell prepared inspected meat to household users only, but the inspected meat must be kept separate from the uninspected meat and preparation must be done at different times. Operators of custom meat facilities may also sell prepackaged inspected meat to any person.

Summary of Bill: A person operating a state-inspected commercial custom meat facility must obtain a license from the director of WSDA. Separate licenses are required for each state-inspected commercial custom meat facility. Operators of custom meat facilities and state-inspected commercial custom meat facilities may sell prepackaged inspected meat to any person.

An application for a license must be on a form developed by WSDA and accompanied by a \$25 license fee. The application must include:

- the full name and address of the applicant, including the full name and address of each partner or officer if the applicant is a partnership or corporation;
- the address of the physical location of each facility to be licensed;
- the name and address of a resident of Washington authorized to accept legal notices for the applicant; and
- any other pertinent information prescribed by the director.

WSDA must do a pre-license inspection prior to issuing the initial license. Licenses for commercial custom meat facilities expire June 30th of each year. If an application for renewal of a license and the license fee are not received by June 30th, the applicant must pay an additional \$25 fee before the renewal license is issued. Commercial custom meat facility licenses are not transferable.

Additionally, WSDA must inspect state-inspected commercial custom meat facilities. The purpose of the state inspection is to allow for the selling, bartering, or giving of state-inspected meat in intrastate commerce while safeguarding consumers from possible harm. The requirements for state inspections must be similar to the standards that apply to custom meat facilities and custom slaughtering establishments, but appropriately tailored to provide for the safe selling, bartering, or giving of state-inspected meat in intrastate commerce, and must be at least equal to the requirements for the safety of consumers under the Federal Meat Inspection Act.

Any rules adopted by WSDA that apply to state-inspected commercial custom meat facilities must be limited to requirements for licensing, recordkeeping, inspections, animal identification, equipment, sanitation, preparation, handling, storing, packing, or labeling.

Appropriation: The bill contains a null and void clause requiring specific funding be provided in an omnibus appropriation act.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill will allow a person who lives in the city to buy their beef products from a rancher in their own county. Currently, the only way to purchase beef from a rancher would be to buy a cow or a share of a cow. This bill allows a slaughterhouse to custom package beef, chicken, or pork for sale directly to the customer. This bill is great for the farmer who is able to sell product at a higher price and for the customer who wants to know exactly what they are getting. There are a number of states that already allow for state-inspected facilities to allow a farmer to bring in an animal for slaughter and then sell the meat. This bill will open up new markets for farmers and ranchers. The disadvantage of selling half a pig or a quarter of a pig is freezer space and the meat is labeled not for sale, so it cannot be given to someone else since it is not inspected. This bill serves the needs of the majority of farmers who are running fewer than 100 cows and is perfect for smaller producers that want to provide this option in their communities.

OTHER: USDA has preempted state meat inspection, unless the state has a cooperative agreement with USDA. The state will need to go through the full USDA process and cover everything the USDA requires in a state program, including inspection, sampling, humane handling, consumer protection, food safety, and financial accountability. The bill could require WSDA to work through that process in order to get approval. Currently there are five USDA slaughter facilities in Washington. This legislation provides continued growth in the cottage industry by providing custom harvesting and packaging of meat. There was a 7 percent increase in registered farmers markets between 2013 and 2018 due in part to growth in the cottage food industry, but ancillary services to support them, including custom meat processing, also needs to grow. Custom meat packaging operations provide customers the opportunity to track their meal from hoof to plate and build relationships by offering a direct link between the food product and consumers.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Doug Ericksen, Prime Sponsor; Mark Streuli, Washington Cattlemen's Association; Tom Davis, Washington Farm Bureau; Allen Ostrander, citizen.

OTHER: Evan Sheffels, Washington State Department of Agriculture; Pam Lewison, Washington Policy Center, Agriculture Research Director.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.