

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2048

As Reported by House Committee On:
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to identifying livestock.

Brief Description: Concerning a livestock identification program.

Sponsors: Representatives Schoesler, Linville, Holmquist, Grant and Sump.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 3/5/03 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Describes the purposes of a livestock identification program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Linville, Chair; Rockefeller, Vice Chair; Schoesler, Ranking Minority Member; Kristiansen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Eickmeyer, Grant, Hunt, McDermott, Orcutt, Quall and Sump.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Holmquist, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background:

The following are among the fees authorized by statute for the state's livestock identification program: a brand inspection fee at mandatory inspection points of 60 cents per head for cattle and not more than \$2.40 per head for horses; brand registration and renewal fees set by rule for two-year registration periods; and a fee of 12 cents per head for cattle handled through a certified feed lot. Self-inspection certificate forms are available from the Department of Agriculture. These forms are for the self-inspection of cattle or horses and are signed by the buyer and seller.

Summary of Bill:

The Legislature declares that an effective livestock identification program is essential for tracking, from source to consumer, livestock and products made from livestock to protect the public health and to thwart any attempted bioterrorism. Such a program is also essential for the owners of livestock for verifying ownership, for recovering stolen animals, and for prosecuting theft.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: 1) Operators of certified feed lots support the legislation developed by the Department of Agriculture last spring for the livestock identification program. They support the program, but want its funding to be more equitable. 2) Neither the certified feed lots' cost-effective means of accounting for cattle nor the Department's self-inspection program have caused an increase in theft. Finances, not theft, is the reason for revising the program. The program is bankrupt. 3) The program should apply to all types of livestock identification, not just brands. 4) The program needs fee and other changes.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Wendy Peay, Washington Cattle Feeders Association; and Mary Beth Lang, Department of Agriculture.