

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2299

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Agriculture, February 24, 2004

Title: An act relating to animal identification systems.

Brief Description: Establishing a system of animal identification.

Sponsors: House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Linville, Schoesler, Kenney, McDonald, Hunt, G. Simpson, Haigh, Shabro, Morrell, Clibborn, Newhouse, Clements, Hudgins and Benson; by request of Department of Agriculture).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture: 2/19/04, 2/24/04 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Swecker, Chair; Brandland, Vice Chair; Jacobsen, Rasmussen and Sheahan.

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: The state's livestock identification program and laws are administered by the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). Among its provisions, legislation enacted last year increased the fees charged to fund the program and identified the evidence of ownership that must accompany cattle or horses when they are moved.

The 2003 legislation also directed WSDA to form an advisory committee to: evaluate mechanisms that may need to be established by the public and the private sectors to comply with federal country-of- origin labeling requirements; evaluate any requirements that may be placed on the meat products industry by federal food safety and traceability requirements as part of homeland security measures; and review the national identification work plan developed by a task force advising the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The WSDA must submit a written report of the findings and conclusion of the advisory committee by December 1, 2005.

On December 30, 2003, U. S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann M. Veneman announced that the USDA would begin the implementation of a verifiable system of national animal identification.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Director of WSDA may adopt rules to support the agriculture industry in meeting federal requirements for the country-of-origin labeling of meat. Any requirements established relating to country-of-origin labeling are to be substantially consistent with and must not exceed federal requirements.

Also, WSDA may adopt rules, in consultation with the livestock identification advisory board, to implement federal requirements for animal identification needed to trace the source of livestock for disease control and response purposes. In doing so, the director may cooperate with and enter into agreements with other states and agencies of the federal government.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The authority for WSDA to adopt country-of-origin labeling rules is conditioned that such rules must be substantially consistent with and must not exceed the requirements established by the USDA.

In adopting rules to implement federal requirements for animal identification for disease control and response, the department is to consult with the livestock identification advisory board.

Recognition is provided that country-of-origin labeling and disease trace back may be two different systems.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This is a companion to a Senate bill that was passed earlier by the committee. The bill is agency request legislation and provides authority to establish rules to implement federal requirements that are now being actively considered.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Leslie Emerick, WSDA; Chris Cheney, WA Dairy Fed., WA Cattlemen's Assn.