

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6109

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Agriculture, January 29, 2004

**Title:** An act relating to animal identification systems.

**Brief Description:** Establishing a system of animal identification.

**Sponsors:** Senators Jacobsen, Swecker, Rasmussen, Oke, Esser, McAuliffe and Spanel; by request of Department of Agriculture.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Agriculture: 1/20/04, 1/29/04 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6109 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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 Department of Agriculture (WSDA). 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 the 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 animal identification work plan developed by a task force advising the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The 2003 legislation requires the WSDA to 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. The public comment period has been extended by USDA on the draft animal identification program until January 31, 2004.

The Livestock Identification Advisory Board is composed of six members representing different segments of the livestock industry. WSDA is to consult with the board before adopting rules or altering fees.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The Director of Agriculture may adopt rules to establish a system of animal identification to support the agriculture industry in meeting federal requirements. The director may cooperate with and enter into agreements with other states and agencies of federal government to carry out such a system and to promote consistency of regulation. Any requirements to satisfy federal country of origin labeling requirements must be substantially consistent with and not to exceed federal requirements.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The substitute bill requires the Department of Agriculture to consult with the Livestock Identification Advisory Board. If any requirements of an animal identification system is established for country of original labeling purposes, it must be substantially consistent with and shall not exceed requirements of the United States Department of Agriculture.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** The country of origin labeling requirement for agricultural products was established in 2002 by Congress. That legislation originally established a September 2004 deadline for USDA to adopt mandatory regulations. The bill original's intent was to provide WSDA authority to meet any new federal requirements that pertain to livestock identification.

Formation of a livestock identification program should be done in consultation with the livestock industry though the existing livestock identification advisory board.

**Testimony Against:** There is a concern who will bear the costs of the system and whether a system for country of origin labeling purposes and a system for disease trace back will be integrated.

**Testified:** Jamie Henneman (concerns); Kathy Kravit-Smith, Leslie Emerick, WSDA (pro); Chris Cheney, WA Dairy Fed., WA Cattlemen (pro amend.)